

**MINUTES OF THE
LOUISIANA FOLKLIFE COMMISSION MEETING
Capitol Park Welcome Center
Baton Rouge, LA
Friday, June 2, 2017**

Folklife Commission members present: Ray Berthelot, Debra Credeur, Brian Davis, Teresa Parker Farris, Herman Fusilier, Tommy Ike Hailey, Rebecca Hamilton, Jim Hogg, Erik Kreusch, Karen Leathem, Charles McGimsey, Miranda Restovic, Susan Roach, John Sharp, Kimberly Walden

Folklife Commission members absent: Kevin Billiot, Cynthia Bryant, Cheryl Castille, Jessica Richardson, Melissa Yarborough

Louisiana Office of Cultural Development (OCD) staff present: Maida Owens, Louisiana Division of the Arts

Guests present: Charlene Bonnette, State Library

I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Teresa Parker Farris opened the meeting of the Louisiana Folklife Commission at 1:06 pm at the Capitol Park Welcome Center in Baton Rouge. She welcomed new members and guests. Everyone introduced themselves. Parker Farris explained that she would chair the meeting and at the end an election of officers will take place. With half of the commissioners being new, she directed commissioners to the packet of materials about the commission and the Folklife Program. She also encouraged commissioners to provide an emergency phone number in the event of a meeting cancellation.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes for the meetings of January 2016, June 2016, and February 2017 were accepted. The minutes for the 2016 meetings had not previously been approved due to lack of quorum.

III. REPORTS

A. Chair Report – Teresa Parker Farris

Parker Farris deferred her report to Business section of the agenda.

B. LDOA Budget Report – Cheryl Castille

Maida Owens provided the budget report because Cheryl Castille was not able to attend the meeting. She reported that the state arts appropriation was cut, but the Lt Governor will continue to use Office of Tourism funds to support the arts resulting in a continuation budget for FY17. There was a mid-year cut, but the agency, anticipating this, had reserved funds. With staff vacancies, no additional cuts will be made this fiscal year. She shared that the Louisiana Citizens for the Arts, a 501c4, has changed its name and bylaws to Louisiana Citizens for Culture, which will address other constituencies of the Office of Cultural Development such as archaeology, historic preservation, and others. She reported that Phil Boggan resigned as Assistant Secretary of the Office of Cultural Development and Kristin Sanders is the Interim Assistant Secretary.

D. Director's Report – Maida Owens

Owens directed commissioners to her written report attached to the agenda and noted that she would elaborate on select activities during the subsequent orientation. She reported that CRT is developing a plan to make the Baton Rouge community aware of the Baton Rouge Folklife Survey results that will consist of three panel discussions in the fall with a culminating event at the Louisiana Book Festival.

IV. BUSINESS

A. Orientation of Commissioners – Maida Owens

Owens explained the relationship of the Folklife Commission to the Folklife Program, Division of the Arts, Office of Cultural Development, and the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. She noted the legislation creating the Folklife Program and the Folklife Commission as well as the latter's bylaws that include the roles of officers. The press release announcing the commission appointments explains the seats and includes the entity's mission. Owens explained the program's National Endowment for the Arts funding and directed commissioners to the required three-year overview of ongoing folklife activities and projects. Owens also pointed out the Folklife Program's two print pieces: a bookmark for the web address and a brochure explaining its services.

Owens noted that commission meetings consist of reports about the Folklife Program activities, with commissioners always receiving a printed copy of the director's report. She, in turn, directed commissioners to the most recent document. Updates included the addition of Von de Leigh Hatcher's essay on Pentecostal hairstyles in Baton Rouge to Baton Rouge Traditions and its forthcoming appearance in the *Louisiana Folklore Miscellany*. For the musical instruments inventory, Holly Hobbs has completed her contract and Joseph Vidrine will be delivering his work by June 15. The inventory will guide fieldwork to be funded by the next NEA Folk Arts Partnership grant. Owens reported that she has been focusing on the photo collection in preparation for librarian Laura Acosta who has been contracted to prepare the images for deposit in the Folklife Program's Special Collection at LSU Library.

Owens reported that funding from the National Endowment for the Arts has been reduced to \$25,000 for next year, a decrease of \$5,000 from current funding. Comments from the grants panel revealed concern about operating support for folklife organizations serving as the program's match as well as the way work samples were presented. The decrease may also be attributed to the increased number of applications the NEA received than in years past.

Owens added that another component of commission meetings concerns initiatives by the commission, such as Folklife Month in collaboration with the Louisiana Folklore Society, for which Owens is the administrator. Over the years others have brought concerns to the folklife commission, such as policy on conservation of folk artifacts in museums and a recommendation for the National Park Service to use the French language at the Liberty Theater shows in Eunice.

Owens concluded by reminding commissioners that they must complete Ethics Training by October 1, 2017.

B. Folklife Month 2017 – Teresa Parker Farris

Parker Farris explained Folklife Month and reported that six Folklife Ambassadors from the commission and Folklore Society recognized tradition bearers in October 2016. Additional information is available online at http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/FM2016.html.

Parker Farris noted that five commissioners or Louisiana Folklore Society members would like to be ambassadors in 2017: Shane Rasmussen (Natchitoches), Susan Roach (Ruston), Mona Lisa Saloy (New

Orleans), John Sharp (Lafayette), and Carolyn Ware (Lafayette). She stated that if any other commissioners would like to participate, they would need to submit plans by July 15, 2017.

Brian Davis asked whether the public could post their own stories on the website. Owens explained that the state agency does not permit this due to security and maintenance issues.

C. Set date for next Commission meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for **Friday, January 12, 2018** at 1 pm.

V. Election of Officers

After a discussion about the commission executive committee, commissioners elected officers. Ray Berthelot moved to nominate Teresa Parker Farris as chair. Debra Credeur seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Jim Hogg moved to nominate Susan Roach as vice chair. Miranda Restovic second. The motion passed unanimously. Teresa moved to nominate Erik Kreuse as secretary. Mona Lisa Saloy seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Following a discussion, Teresa Parker Farris moved to nominate John Sharp, Brian Davis, Mona Lisa Saloy, and Ray Berthelot as executive committee members. Erik Kreuse seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Teresa Parker Farris offered to let someone take over the chair position once the new officers have greater familiarity with the commission.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Miranda Restovic distributed copies of LEH's *Cultural Vistas*, noting that she is looking for ways to include more folklife stories in the magazine, possibly Folklife Month. She asked commissioners to help identify small communities that would like to host the Smithsonian Museum's Museum on Main Street exhibit, *Water/Ways*.

Brian Davis shared information about the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation's revolving fund to save endangered historic buildings and sites.

Susan Roach encouraged commissioners to become active as individuals in lobbying efforts for the arts and culture, both within the state and nationally, even though the commission cannot lobby as a group.

Debra Credeur announced the recently opened Atchafalaya Water Heritage Trail, a self-guided driving trail with 52 sites, kiosks, a website, and maps that explores how bodies of water have affected the local culture.

Tommy Ike Hailey shared information about the Northshore songwriters' night on third Thursdays.

Kimberly Walden announced that the fourth annual Chitimacha Powwow will be in October.

VI. ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the commissioners agreed to adjourn at 2:45 p.m.

Folklife Program Director's Report – June 2, 2017, Maida Owens

Folklife Month 2017: Five past or current Folklife Commissioners or Louisiana Folklore Society board members have committed to being Folklife Ambassadors for 2017: Shane Rasmussen (Natchitoches), Susan Roach (Ruston), Mona Lisa Saloy (New Orleans), Carolyn Ware (Baton Rouge), and John Sharp (Lafayette). If someone else is identified, we can have six ambassadors. All need to be identified and plans submitted by July 15, 2017.

Archiving Photographs: Librarian Laura Acosta is contracted to provide an archival plan and to start implementing the plan during summer 2017. Owens has reorganized the collection (negatives, prints, slides) into categories based on the project or program from which the images are acquired. The digital collection will also be organized using the same categories. She has been working with the American Folklife Center to use the Ethnographic Thesaurus for search terms.

Baton Rouge Folklife Survey: Daniel Atkinson completed his fieldwork on African American tradition bearers in March 2017 and has submitted his field materials and is preparing his essay and revisions. Joyce Jackson completed two essays (African American preaching and bluesman Larry Garner) and is working on the blues materials. The table of contents is online at <http://www.louisianafolklife.org/batonrouge>. Carolyn Ware and I consulted with the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge on strategies to include folklife at Ebb and Flow, their new festival on April 1. The Lt Governor's Office is interested in developing programming to launch the site. They are considering a series of panels in August that focus on the six chapters of the virtual book.

Musical Instrument Project: Two contractors are inventorying musical instrument makers and repairers throughout the state. Holly Hobbs is inventorying southeast and north Louisiana. Joseph Vidrine is inventorying the greater Baton Rouge area and southeast Louisiana. I will then produce an online map of those who want to be featured. From their work, we will identify individuals to be more fully documented next year. We are also determining language abilities and will share those with French abilities to CODOFIL for their French-Friendly project.

Bayou Teche Folklife Project: Planning has begun for the next folklife survey which will focus on the communities along Bayou Teche from Port Barre to Berwick in four parishes. I am developing strategies in collaboration with The T.E.C.H.E Project and the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area to identify traditions that could be documented after the Musical Instrument Project is completed.