



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Women's Rights History Trail Task Force

State House, Boston 02133

Representative Carole Fiola

Senator Edward J. Kennedy

House Chair

Senate Chair

Minutes

2nd Task Force Meeting

December 6th, 2022 - 3pm

Members Present: Chair Fiola, Representative Kane, Senator Tarr, Representative Haddad, Keiko Orrall, Shaitia Spruell, Amanda Molina Dumas, L'Merchie Frazier, Shannon Jenkins, Anna Clutterbuck-Cook

Opening roll call and approval of the minutes

Chair Fiola welcomed members to the Task Force meeting and called the opening roll.

Public input poll results & Scheduling public hearing

Chair Fiola informed members about the poll results

- It was determined through the poll results that everybody who had responded suggested having a virtual meeting and written testimony accepted. Chair Fiola said the Chairs will work on scheduling a hearing for February
- Only a 1/3rd of respondents said there should be an in-person hearing held, so the Chairs will hold off on scheduling an in-person hearing
- Chair Fiola then gave a brief synopsis of recommendations given by Task Force members in the poll

Overview of State House Art Commission

Susan Greendyke Lachevre, is the current Curator of the State House Art Commission. She gave an overview of the collection, including the number of women represented.

- There are around 270 objects in the collection, in that there are 19 representations of women (5 of which are allegorical to women), and there are 17 female artists. She provided an overview of Women subjects and artists to the Task Force that was published in 2020: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/women-subjects-women-artists-in-the-massachusetts-state-house-art-collection/download>
- Gave an overview of the process that objects go through to be added to the collection. Requirement that materials must be authorized through legislation. From there the Art Commission takes care and custody of items and works with artists and interested parties to ensure proper placement of item (for example, no paintings in a marble hall)
- Chair Fiola asked about status of Mercy Otis Warren Statue, Susan Greendyke Lachevre stated that the artist is developing a clay model, haven't heard from the artist in a little while, waiting for another review.
- Senator Tarr asked if there was anything else coming to the collection soon and what the mechanics were of the process. Susan Greendyke Lachevre said sometimes they come to the Art Commission first before legislation, sometimes afterwards, she stated it is not the Art Commission's job to decide if something is worthy of being in the State House, but helps to guide where that item can make the most sense. When writing legislation, more important to focus on tribute itself rather than modality.

Chair Fiola asked Susan Greendyke Lachevre what recommendations or ideas if any the Art Commission has for the Task Force moving forward

- L'Merchie Frazier a Task Force member from the State House Art Commission stated that knowing the time frame and having that as a reference point would be important for the work going forward. There are so many numerous women even in limited frames of time that the amount of research and time that can be put into this is quite large.
- Representative Kane mentions that it is important that there is a physical place to visit with all of this.
- Shannon Jenkins stated that it is important to look for themes in telling the story. There is potentially a lot of sites and a lot of volume, that is useful for educators and can make a great resource.
- L'Merchie Frazier: Additionally, looking at the intersectionality of how women work, there is a lot of underground and social connections that are not recognized in a formal way, looking at sister societies. Important as well that we talk to communities and ask them who is important to your town's history. May still leave some of them women we are trying to highlight.
- Representative Kane: The reason we talk about sites, women are completely underrepresented as terms of statues and notable places and markers. Part of this process can be to ask a town to what their notable women are and incentivize statues and markers to add showing that there are notable women. This adds to the tourism value, we want to play up those aspects of this legislation.

Chair Fiola asked when the last time a piece featuring a women was added to the collection.

- Susan Greendyke Lachevre said it was the plaque commemorating Cadet Nurses in Nurses Hall, and that this piece came along relatively quickly.

Next Steps

- Representative Kane mentions that the next step should include in this public hearing, inviting and informing members of the legislature, to inform their local groups about the hearing that is set up. Local groups need to be involved and input should be received from every corner of the Commonwealth
- Keiko Orrall echoed Representative Kane's sentiments and added there are a number of women's colleges and institutions that should be invited and brought into this.
- L'Merchie Frazier mentioned that the middle of January is Martin Luther King Jr Day, so ensuring that the hearing should be scheduled around that
- Chair Fiola said she would work with her co-Chair on scheduling that next meeting in the new year with those considerations in mind.

Closing Roll Call

Chair Fiola asked for a motion and called the closing roll call.