

Louisiana
Archaeological
Survey and
Antiquities
Commission

June 11, 2019 Meeting

The Louisiana Archaeological Survey and Antiquities Commission met on Tuesday, June 11, 2019, at 1:30 p.m. in the 4th floor conference room, 1051 N. 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Members Present:

Dr. Chip McGimsey
Dr. George Riser
Dr. Mark Rees
Mr. Mark Hogan
Ms. Kimberly Walden
Ms. Pat Arnould
Mr. Ray Berthelot
Ms. Kathe Hambrick

Members Absent:

Dr. Heather McKillop

Others Present:

Dr. Rachel Watson
Ms. Megan Kenny

Welcome & Introductions

The Vice-Chair, Dr. George Riser, called the meeting to order at 1:40 PM.

All persons at the meeting introduced themselves.

The tape recorder did not function during this meeting and the minutes are developed from notes taken by Dr. McGimsey.

MOTION: *A motion was made by Dr. Ray Berthelot and seconded by Ms. Kim Walden, to accept the minutes of the March 12, 2019, Antiquities Commission Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.*

Old Business

Budget and Division Update

Dr. McGimsey noted that there were no significant changes in the Division's budget. We anticipate the new fiscal year will have a budget essentially the same as the current fiscal year. He noted that Ms. Megan Kenny would be leaving the Division in August.

Dr. McGimsey also noted that the Commission had issued a permit for a field school at Poverty Point in the summer of 2019 to Binghamton University. However, the field school did not attract enough students and will not be held. A graduate student, Tiffany Raymond, will be working at the site under the permit but conducting a much more limited research program. Dr. Mark Rees noted that the University of Louisiana at Lafayette field school scheduled for this summer was also cancelled for a lack of students. He intends to use those funds to support a small crew for four weeks.

Dr. Rees asked about the status of the two vacancies on the Commission. Dr. McGimsey acknowledged that he had not been working on this issue and asked the Commission members for suggestions on who would be good applicants. Ms. Pat Arnould suggested Kathryn Bergeron of the United Houma Nation and Dr. Mark Rees suggested Dr. Tad Britt of the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training.

Dr. George Riser asked if there was going to be any events to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the listing of Poverty Point as a World Heritage Site. Mr. Ray Berthelot replied that there would be a series of demonstrations and tours at the site, but that there were no plans for a big formal event.

New Business

Review of the Division's Duties and Responsibilities

Dr. McGimsey had provided each Commissioner with a copy of the Division's enacting legislation and the current regulations. He noted that Ms. Megan Kenny was leaving the Division, and that her position was focused on logging and tracking the Section 106 correspondence. With the development of a new online submission system for the 106 correspondence, being developed by South Central Planning, it was anticipated that many of her current responsibilities would become moot. The Division is considering how to refocus that position to best meet the Division's and the state's responsibilities and needs. The Division has reached out the professional archaeological community, Tribes, former staff, and the Commission for thoughts and suggestions on how to develop this position moving forward.

Ms. Kathe Hambrick noted the Slave Cemeteries Commission and how this body is looking for assistance in locating slave cemeteries across the state. She hopes

that it will be possible to develop a map and database of cemeteries containing slaves and former slaves. There was group discussion of the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and state cemetery laws as they applied to this situation.

Mr. Pat Arnould also mentioned the ongoing development of a memorial at Jackson Barracks to honor the American Indians who died there during the Indian removals of the 1800s.

Dr. Mark Rees stated that he would like to see the development of a grants program, although he recognized that at this time there was not funding to support this program. He also suggested that the Division create another public outreach position that would focus on developing public archaeology around the state, similar to what Florida has accomplished with its FPAN program. This position would emphasize recording sites and teaching other individuals and groups to do so, and undertake site monitoring. These efforts would incorporate the Louisiana Archaeological Society and state and federally recognized Indian Tribes as individuals to assist in this effort. A clear emphasis should be that these efforts were designed to be public and to create public awareness of sites.

Mr. Ray Berthelot suggested there was a need for an archaeologist to get out into the local communities. The Division position could be a central person to coordinate activities and to be a focal point for projects and efforts to get local individuals involved in archaeology. He noted that this person would clearly be overworked, but this would be a means to try and obtain additional resources to support the program.

Dr. Rees suggested such an effort needed a formal title; he suggested the Louisiana Public Archaeology Program.

Dr. George Riser indicated there was a need for continuing with outreach activities and that a specific goal of the Commission should be outreach to the state about archaeology.

Ms. Kathe Hambrick noted that people enjoy learning about archaeology.

Dr. Mark Rees thought the key for public archaeology is focusing on community archaeology and getting people involved in something that they are already interested in. He noted the strong public interest in both the New Acadia and Thibodaux massacre projects. The broader general outreach benefits of such projects are less clear because they focus on specific locations or communities – he suggested having a booth at fairs and such would be one way for people to learn about such projects.

Mr. Ray Berthelot noted that often you only really reach one student in a class, or 2-3 people visiting a booth at a public event. But if you take away these

programs, you lose the opportunity to reach anyone. He pointed to Archaeology Month as a good example of providing opportunities to reach those individuals who already have an interest.

Dr. Rees replied that from his experience, a focused effort provides greater return.

Ms. Kim Walden raised the concern that in getting people interested in archaeology, you may also inadvertently lead to an increase in collecting and looting of sites. Dr. Rees responded that public education requires teaching people about the relevant laws and history, and that these efforts are most successful in community focused settings.

Other Business

Dr. Mark Rees announced that the Mississippi River Delta Archaeological Mitigation (MRDAM) project is continuing. The goal is to document and monitor sites that are being destroyed along the coast. He has not been very successful in developing funding for this project to date, but is currently partnering with David Watt of Tulane University and Tad Britt at the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training. Dr. Britt was able to obtain \$75,000 from NCPTT which is being coupled with \$75,000 from the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area to support this year's efforts. The priority for this year is to determine which sites need some basic documentation and/or test excavations. The field work will be conducted by David Watt, Tad Britt, and perhaps one other crew member. Dr. Rees noted there would be a meeting about the project on June 26 in Lafayette to which the Division was invited.

Motion: Mr. Ray Berthelot moved that the Commission meeting be adjourned. It was seconded by Ms. Kim Walden. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:03 PM.

