

**MINUTES OF THE
LOUISIANA FOLKLIFE COMMISSION MEETING
Capitol Park Welcome Center
Baton Rouge, LA
Friday, June 15, 2018**

Folklife Commission members present: Cheryl Castille, Brian Davis, Teresa Parker Farris, Jennifer Ritter Guidry, Jim Hogg, Karen Leathem, Charles McGimsey, Susan Roach, John Sharp, Kimberly Walden, Melissa Yarborough.

Folklife Commission members absent: Ray Berthelot, Kevin Billiot, Cynthia Bryant, Steven Fullen, Herman Fusilier, Tommy Ike Hailey, Rebecca Hamilton, Rodneya Hart, Erik Kreusch, Miranda Restovic, Jessica Richardson.

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

I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME NEW COMMISSIONER

Teresa Parker Farris opened the meeting of the Louisiana Folklife Commission at 1:08 pm at the Capitol Park Welcome Center in Baton Rouge. She welcomed new member Jennifer Ritter Guidry who is representing a university position on the commission. She announced that Rodneya Hart has been appointed as the Louisiana State Arts Council liaison. Everyone introduced themselves.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes for the meetings of January 2017 were accepted. Brian Davis moved, and Chip McGimsey seconded.

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

Castille provided the budget report. She reported that they do not yet know about the budget for next year, but assumes that the Lt. Governor will continue to use Office of Tourism funds to support the arts. The Lt. Governor has created a foundation and is looking at ways to fund the arts through it.

LDOA funding from the National Endowment for the Arts is a little higher than last year at \$745,500 plus Poetry Out Loud (\$17,500), Arts in Education (\$29,400), and Folk Arts (\$23,000). The Folk Arts funding is down \$2,000 from last year. LDOA's proposal ranked high, but funding was diluted because more entities applied. This is the first of three years at this funding level.

Castille announced several staff changes: Dana LaFonta has retired as Percent for Art program director and Scott Finch has been hired as her replacement. Gaye Hamilton has retired as Cultural Districts program director and it is expected that the position will be filled soon. The Office of Cultural Development's new Deputy Assistant Secretary is Tiffany Dickerson, replacing Kristin Sanders.

C. Director's Report – Maida Owens

Owens directed commissioners to her written report attached to the agenda and highlighted a few additions to the draft version sent in May. Owens noted the reduced NEA funding for the Folklife

Program and recommended that the three-year plan be revisited accordingly. Cheryl Castille added that additional state money could be available to support a folklife initiative, such as apprenticeships. Owens directed commissioners' attention to the *Baton Rouge Traditions* exhibit on temporary display in the room, stating that promotion is in development. She distributed the Baton Rouge Folklife Bingo card that will be used with the exhibit.

Owens announced that she will retire from her position at LDOA before the next Folklife Commission meeting with her last day planned for August 15. Susan Roach made a motion for a resolution congratulating Owens on her retirement and commending her for her folklife advocacy and esteemed 30-year career. Jim Hogg seconded. The motion passed. Teresa Parker Farris thanked Owens for her service. Castille noted that the LDOA typically organizes retirement celebrations for its long-term employees and welcomed commissioners to be involved in the planning once it is underway.

Castille said that Paula White has implemented a new online grant software. We are planning to restructure the Decentralized Arts Fund (DAF) grants for FY2020. Funding will be by region, rather than parish, in order to support more innovative, sustainable projects, and, in turn, allow higher funding levels. One of the four categories will be Folk and Traditional Arts; the other three are under consideration.

Commissioners discussed convening three, rather than two, times annually and the possibility of moving the meeting to different locations around the state with local tours/field trips. Parker Farris will survey commissioners for their input.

Kimberly Walden announced the Chitimacha Powwow will take place on October 20 and will feature tribes from as far away as Kansas. Her new assistant is in the process of identifying individuals to be trained in various tribal traditions.

IV. BUSINESS

A. Folklife Month 2018 / CODOFIL 50th collaboration – Teresa Parker Farris

Parker Farris reported that six Folklife Ambassadors will participate in 2018: Shane Rasmussen – Creole file' maker (Natchitoches), Tommy Ike Hailey – musician at Arcade Theater (Ferriday), Barry Ancelet – Thomas Deshotels/Cajun Mardi Gras capitaine at Festivals Acadiens et Creoles (Lafayette), Teresa Parker Farris – Sylvester Francis/Mardi Gras Indian museum (New Orleans), Shana Walton and Jonathan Foret – James Sothern/community scholar (Houma), and Joyce Jackson – blues musician (Baton Rouge). They are finalizing their plans to submit in mid-July; events with Francophone associations will be highlighted in honor of CODOFIL's anniversary. LEH is supporting Folklife Month 2018 by funding the artist honoraria. Susan Roach and Teresa Parker Farris reported they were not able to draft a letter to Lt. Governor Nungesser about Folklife Month, but intended to do so. Castille suggested meeting with him and/or new CRT Secretary Richard Hartley to invite them to Folklife Month events and noted that CRT will once again send a statewide press release about the initiative.

Parker Farris asked about the video discussed at the last commission meeting. Owens said that Steven Fullen is making a video on folklife with a focus on the Atchafalaya. This is separate from the 3-minute Folklife Program video being produced by OCD in partnership with Louisiana Public Broadcasting, which will be completed by July 30 and made available online. Commissioners decided to wait to watch the two videos to determine whether a third is needed.

B. Set date for next Commission meeting

Owens will pole commissioners on whether the next meeting will be at 1 pm on Friday, January 4 or 11, 2019.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

On behalf of Ray Berthelot, Owens announced that the Longfellow-Evangeline Historic Site in St. Martinville will host Stories on the Bayou on Saturday, July 14.

Brian Davis announced that Preservation Louisiana's Fall Ramble on vernacular architecture in East Feliciana Parish is scheduled for October 27.

Karen Leathem announced that "Recovered Memories: Spain, New Orleans, and the Support for the American Revolution" is on view through July at the Cabildo and starting in late September, "Soul of the South" featuring the Gitter-Yellen folk art collection will be exhibited at the Capitol Park Museum.

Susan Roach offered Louisiana Folklife Festival posters to commissioners. She announced that the Autrey House (dogtrot) Museum will get foundation repairs with support from Preserve Louisiana and that Louisiana Tech University is doing an oral history project about the university's history.

VI. ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the commissioners agreed to adjourn at 2:40 p.m. Jennifer Ritter Guidry moved, Karen Leathem seconded.

Folklife Program Director's Report – June 15, 2018, Maida Owens

Folklife Commissioners: The Governor appointed Jennifer Ritter Guidry to serve in the university position and Rodney Hart to serve as the representative of the Louisiana State Arts Council.

NEA Funding: The Folklife Program will receive \$23,000 per year for the next three years, which is down \$2,000 from the prior year. With the reduced funding we will revisit the three year plan and revise our strategies for the Musical Instrument Project, the Bayou Teche Project, and reinstating the apprenticeship program.

Archiving Photographs: Owens is working on preparing digital images for archiving by organizing them according to the finding aid, creating photo logs for those without one, and drafting search terms for each folder. After this is completed, an archivist will add them to the finding aid.

Baton Rouge Folklife Survey: The Baton Rouge Traditions traveling exhibit is complete. Megan Barra designed the exhibit which consists of four pull-up banners and the quilt on a frame. An exhibit kit is for those considering exhibiting it. For information about the exhibit and kit, see http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/brexhibit.html. The project attracted additional press coverage with an article in 225 magazine in February. The Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge will host the exhibit at several events from July 7 through September 17, after which it will be offered to the East Baton Rouge Parish Library and then others.

Musical Instrument Project: Holly Hobbs interviewed 20 musical instrument makers and repairers across the state and is preparing an essay. We purchased rights from Marc Savoy to an article about his career "Reminiscences of a Cajun Accordion Builder", http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/lfmsavoymusic.html.

Folklife Video: LPB is making 9 promotional videos for the Office of Cultural Development, one of which features the Folklife Program. It is three minutes or less and will be used on the CRT website, the folklife website, and the OCD Facebook page.

Folklife Website: We are developing strategies to deal with online databases that don't work after new servers are installed. Currently, the two problems are the Creole State exhibit and the Quilt Documentation project. We are looking at creating hardcoded versions that would not have problems with future server upgrades even though they will not have search options like a database.

Bayou Conversations: LDOA supported the Nicholls State University/Louisiana Folklore Society initiative to present land loss issues at the LFS annual meeting in March and to continue the conversation to identify ways that folklorists can help communities dealing with cultural change and displacement.