

**THE SPECIAL COMMISSION RELATIVE TO THE SEAL AND MOTTO OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH**

**Interim Report**

**December 31, 2022**

## MEMBERS

Brian Boyles (Co Chair)  
Mass Humanities

Michael Comeau, Co-Vice Chair  
Massachusetts Archives &  
Commonwealth Museum

Michael Vincent Amato  
Appointed by Senate Minority Leader

Cheryl Andrews-Maltais  
Chairwoman, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay  
Head (Aquinnah)

Kelly Bennett  
Mass Cultural Council

Representative Antonio Cabral  
House Chair, Joint Committee on State  
Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Donna Curtin  
Pilgrim Hall Museum

Melissa Ferretti  
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Wampanoag Tribe

Brigadier General Leonid Kondratiuk  
Massachusetts National Guard

Senator Marc Pacheco  
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Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Brian Moskwetah Weeden (Co-Chair)  
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Brittney Walley (Co-Vice Chair)  
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John "Jim" Peters  
Executive Director, MA Commission on  
Indian Affairs

Brona Simon  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

D. Brenton Simons  
American Ancestors - New England  
Historic Genealogical Society

Elizabeth Solomon  
Councilwoman, The Massachusetts Tribe at  
Ponkapoag

Representative David Vieira Appointed  
by House Minority Leader

Jim Wallace  
Gun Owners' Action League

Micah Whitson

## INTRODUCTION

The Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth was established in Chapter 2 of the Resolves of 2020, approved by Governor Charlie Baker on January 11, 2021.

The legislation establishes the Commission to

*“investigate the features of the official seal and motto of the commonwealth, under sections 1 to 6, inclusive, of [chapter 2 of the General Laws](#), including those features that may be unwittingly harmful to or misunderstood by the citizens of the commonwealth; and (ii) examine and study the seal and motto of the commonwealth to ensure that they faithfully reflect and embody the historic and contemporary commitments of the commonwealth to peace, justice, liberty and equality and to spreading the opportunities and advantages of education.”*

The legislation requests that the Commission

*“make recommendations for a revised or new design of the seal of the commonwealth and a revised or new motto of the commonwealth and shall make recommendations for an educational program on the history and meaning of the seal and motto.”*

Since July 2021, the Commission members have worked to fulfill the requests of the legislation and make recommendations based on their examinations and collective expertise. Throughout its proceedings, the Commission has focused on listening to and respecting the diverse perspectives of its membership in response to this historic responsibility. With the approach of its December 31, 2022 deadline, the Commission provides the Legislature this summary of its initial recommendations.

We request that the Legislature either extend the reporting deadline, or reconvene the Commission in 2023 in order to supervise the expenditure of funds issued to the Commission and so that a comprehensive final report can be provided to the Legislature and the public.

The Co-Chairs thank the members for their tireless work and their contributions of wisdom and expertise to the meetings and deliberations of the Commission to date. We extend our deepest appreciation to Kate Miller, Chief of Staff to Rep. Antonio Cabral and the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight, for her efforts in support of the Commission.

## INITIAL FINDINGS

- **Massachusetts should create a new design for the seal and motto of the Commonwealth.**

At its May 17, 2022, meeting, the Commission approved a motion to create a new design for the seal and motto. Through the deliberations of the full Commission and its History and Usages subcommittee, the Commission has identified features that are harmful and/or misunderstood by the citizens of the Commonwealth. These include the heraldic charge, or Indigenous figure, which was designed without input from Indigenous residents and does not accurately reflect the history of Indigenous people in Massachusetts; the sword in the crest, positioned above that figure, which can be misunderstood to represent a celebration of the history of violence perpetuated by settlers against Indigenous populations; and the promises of the motto, which do not reflect the experiences of Indigenous people.

- **Massachusetts should incorporate symbols and terms in a new seal and motto that are aspirational and inclusive of the diverse perspectives, histories and experiences of Massachusetts residents.**

Through two surveys completed by Commission members, the Commission compiled a list of appropriate categories for potential symbols and a list of appropriate terms that can serve as the basis for a new design for the seal and a new motto.

- Categories of appropriate symbols
  - Flora (examples: eastern white pine, elm tree, cranberries)
  - Fauna (examples: chickadee, cod, feather, turkey,
  - Geographic feature (examples: ocean, hills, coastline, state shape)
  - A full list of ideas for both symbols and motto terms is attached in Appendix 1.
  - The Commission will further explore the question of Indigenous representation in a new seal and motto.
- Appropriate terms
  - Commonwealth
  - For the common good
  - Equality
  - Hope
  - Liberty
  - Names of Massachusetts tribal nations
  - Peace
  - Reciprocity

- The people of Massachusetts should have the opportunity to provide input into the design of a new seal and a new motto.** The Commission understands that the current seal and motto are highly visible and used in a multitude of ways throughout the Commonwealth, in particular on the state flag, which serves as a banner for our service men and women in the armed forces. The Commission recommends that survey be conducted to gather public input on the new seal and motto, and that all possible measures be taken to make this an inclusive, accessible process that represents the diversity of communities and perspectives in the Commonwealth.
- Massachusetts should dedicate more resources to educating the public about the history and cultures of Massachusetts, in particular, the Indigenous history and culture of Massachusetts, the history and usages of the current seal and motto, the harm inflicted by the current seal and motto, and the efforts to change the seal and motto.**  
 The Commission believes that the seal and motto provide a teachable moment. The current seal and motto are widely used representations of a history that is complicated and unfolding. We must take this opportunity to create information and understanding related to the experiences of Indigenous people in Massachusetts. We believe future generations of Massachusetts residents can learn from the process of exploring these symbols and imagining new ones.

## **PROPOSED NEXT STEPS**

The Commission needs to continue its work in 2023. We request that the Legislature either extend the reporting deadline, or reconvene the Commission during the next legislative session so that it may supervise the expenditure of the \$100,000 provided to the Commission in the following manner:

- The Commission issue an RFP and contract with a consultant to conduct a public survey.**  
 The survey results would be due no later than June 30, 2023 .The results will be incorporated into the final recommendations of the Commission
- The Commission issue an RFP and contract with a consultant(s) to create a syllabus tailored to grade levels so that K-12 students, adult learners, or other learning segments can learn more from this process.**  
 The syllabus would be reviewed and approved no later than the reporting deadline.
- The Commission hire temporary administrative staff to ensure these deliverables are met.**  
 This staff member would work with the Commission to supervise RFPs and contracts, ensure timely delivery of Commission work, and organize the final report.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- List of all symbols and motto terms submitted for consideration by Commission members (November 18, 2022)
- Brief Historical Overview of Great Seal of the Commonwealth, submitted by Michael Comeau and Leonid Kondratiuk (December 8, 2022)
- Notes on Educational Program for Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, submitted by Elizabeth Solomon (December 12, 2022)
- Letter from Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, submitted by Cheryl Andrews-Maltais (July 14, 2022)
- Schedule of Public Meetings and Meeting Minutes

## Attachment 1

### FULL LISTS OF SYMBOLS AND MOTTOS

The Commission members responded to a survey asking for their suggestions on appropriate symbols for a new seal and appropriate terms for a new motto. The survey was conducted November 8 to 18, 2022.

#### Symbols

- Banner with motto replaced by a listing the Tribal Nations of Massachusetts, Wampanoag, Nipmuc, Pocumtuck
- Blue Hills
- Capital Dome
- Cedar tree
- Chickadee
- Circle around the image with selected inspirational/aspirational terms, maybe separated by significant dates: 1621 (Treaty of Peace), 1770 (First Shot), 1776 (Independence), 1788 (Statehood), 1863 (MA 54th Regiment became active), Other significant worldwide recognition dates Massachusetts was known for
- Clasped hands
- Coastline
- Coast with sun rising in the east
- Cod
- Colonial figure
- Cranberry
- Eastern White Pine
- Elm Tree
- Fauna
- Feather
- Flora
- State Shape
- Hills
- Indigenous person
- May Flower (blossom)
- Mountain
- Native American
- Native American symbol (to be determined)
- Ocean
- Ocean/nautical

- One image per County of an industry, natural or recognizable wildlife elements indigenous to or adopted by Massachusetts as repeat elements of a border around the edge of the flag.
- Pine tree
- Quill pen
- Red Tail Hawk, state bird
- Rising Sun
- Scripted Massachusetts Constitution
- Seashore
- State Berry: Cranberry
- State Bird:-Black Capped Chickadee
- State Flower: Mayflower
- State Marine Mammal: Northern Right Whale
- State Shape
- State Tree: American Elm
- Tree
- Turkey
- Waterways/riverways
- White Birch
- White Pine
- White star
- Wild Turkey

## **Terms**

- Commonwealth
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts: For the good of all
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Courage
- Culture
- Education
- Equality
- First
- for freedom, justice, equality
- For the Common Good
- Freedom - Equality
- From our histories, we move forward
- Gratitude
- Hope
- Innovation



- Justice
- Liberty
- Nature
- Opportunity
- Peace
- Peace, Justice, Equality
- Promise - Hope
- Reciprocity
- Resiliency
- Respect
- Respect for all is our common wealth
- Seek
- Service, Justice, Equality
- Striving to \_\_\_\_\_
- We seek Peace, Justice & Equality for All

## Attachment 2

# THE GREAT SEAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

## BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Submitted by Michael Comeau and Leonid Kondratiuk

A “seal” is a device used to create an impression on wax, paper, or some other medium that conveys personal or corporate symbolism or authority. The term commonly refers to either a matrix or die cast from a hard substance on which an image, either in relief or intaglio, has been produced, though the term in some instances can also allude to the actual impression made by the device as well. The use of seals can be traced to early civilizations, and have existed in various forms throughout most of recorded history. As writing in earlier times was a skill mastered by few regardless of station, for centuries people would signify acceptance of a document by affixing their symbols or coats-of-arms on soft wax attached to the manuscript. The seal device was commonly an instrument carried by a person for this purpose, or an engraved marking on a signet ring worn by the owner. Generally, these engravings would be distinctively personalized, as they served as the “signature” of the individual. Likewise, the prevalence of illiteracy forced many to seek absolute assurance of the contents of documents and papers before they would affix their seal. This practice of validating documents with a seal would gradually evolve into the larger convention of authenticating officials records in similar fashion.<sup>1</sup>

The use of national coats-of-arms and seals also date back to antiquity, and continuance of this custom as an assertion of sovereignty extends to the present day. In England, the use of royal seals dates back to the late 7<sup>th</sup> or early 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the earliest seal to survive in contemporary wax impressions being that of Edward the Confessor. Though the tradition of using seals with documents extends back to ancient Mesopotamia, early Anglo-Saxon seal matrices were more probably inspired by contemporary continental precedents such as papal seals.<sup>2</sup>

As colonies in North America were established under the authority of Great Britain, armorial seals were created for their use. In the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the earliest seals - embossed on paper or impressed into wax by a mechanical screw press – validated activity of the General Court and certified proclamations and commissions. In both the New World and back in England, the seal would serve as tangible acknowledgement of the governor’s authority in the colony as well as the King’s sanctification of that authority in absentia.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Massachusetts Archives, *State Seal Correspondence*, (SC1/1954).

<sup>2</sup>Alison Hudson, “Edward the Confessor Seal,” *Medieval Manuscripts Blog*, January 5, 2017  
<https://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2017/01/a-lasting-impression.html>

<sup>3</sup>Cathy Rex, “Indians and Images: The Massachusetts Bay Colony Seal, James Printer and the Anxiety of Colonial Identity,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No.1 (March 2011): 89.

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Chapter VI, Article IV of the Massachusetts Constitution requires that, “All commission shall be in the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, signed by the governor and attested by the secretary or his deputy and have the Great Seal of the Commonwealth affixed thereto.”<sup>4</sup> Custody of the Seal is charged to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, who “shall have the custody of the State Seal; and copies of records and papers in his office, certified by him, and authenticated by the State Seal, shall be evidence in like manner as the originals.”<sup>5</sup>

The New England Colony for a Plantation in Massachusetts Bay was authorized to have a seal by the Charter of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England granted by Charles I in 1629.<sup>6</sup> The first General Letter to Governor John Endecott and his Council in Massachusetts Bay dated April 17, 1629 states “We haue caused a comon seale to bee made, which wee send by Mr. Sharpe.” In a postscript the Governor, still in England, wrote that he had sent over “the Companyes seale in silver, by Mr. Samuel Sharpe, a passenger in the *George*.”<sup>7</sup>

The seal itself was oval in shape, depicting a Native Person holding a bow and arrow, standing between two pine trees. The arrow is held in downward position, as a gesture of peace. A word balloon is attached to the Native Person that reads, “Come over and help us.” This is taken from a prayer of a man of Macedonia to St. Paul (Acts, XVI:9).<sup>8</sup> Authorities of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, like their counterparts in Plymouth, saw Native Peoples as analogous to pagan Macedonians who were desperate for the light of the gospel.<sup>9</sup> As Brona Simon, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Historical Commission and State Archeologist, explains, the inclusion of a Native Person with the word balloon was used by John Eliot as a propaganda tool to convert Indigenous Peoples in the eastern part of Massachusetts and establish “praying towns”. These transculturated Native Christians, or “Praying Indians,” lived in both Anglo and Indian worlds, and were products of the overtly missionizing intent the Colony sought to memorialize on its seal.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, 1780, Massachusetts Archives, SC1/29x.

<sup>5</sup> Mass. Public Statutes, Chapter 15, § 12.

<sup>6</sup> *Charter of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, 1629, SC1/23x

<sup>7</sup> Nathaniel Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England Vol. 1*, (Boston; Press of William H. White, 1853) 392, 397.

<sup>8</sup> “During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready to at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the Gospel to them.”

<sup>9</sup> Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Phillips War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), xvi.

<sup>10</sup> Rex, “Indians and Images,” 64.

In his report to the Committee on the Judiciary that accompanied the Act that codified the state seal in 1885<sup>11</sup>, William H. Whitmore states that the seal delivered by Mr. Sharpe, “was the only one used for over fifty years or until the abrogation of the first Charter in 1684.” In truth, the story was a bit more complex, with more than one (applied by either hand or screw) used by future Governors until revocation of the Charter. Joseph Dudley, serving as president of a provisional council governing Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Maine, Narragansett, and Plymouth, used a similar seal with the figure of an Indian until the arrival of Sir Edmund Andros in December 1686.<sup>12</sup>

Andros, serving as Governor of the Dominion of New England formed in 1686 by James II, was furnished with a new, two-sided seal. On one side, there was the King in his robes with two kneeling figures – a colonist and a Native Person. The reverse side depicted a lion, a unicorn, and a crown. Subsequent Governors affixed their personal seals to commissions issued to officers in the military.

Andros was imprisoned and the Dominion of New England overthrown on April 18, 1689, shortly after news of the Glorious Revolution in England had reached Boston. In its place an extralegal provisional government known as the Council for the Safety of the People and Conservation of the Peace was established. Returning to the form of government in effect in 1684, this new provisional government existed until 1692, when the charter for the new Province of the Massachusetts Bay was brought to Boston.

The new charter, signed by King William and Queen Mary on October 7, 1691 and inaugurated in Boston on May 14, 1692, provided that, “Orders Lawes Statutes and Ordinances Instructions and Directions as shall be soe made under the Seale of our said Province or Territory shall be Carefully and duely observed kept and performed.”<sup>13</sup> The seal itself was the Royal coat-of-arms of William and Mary, and was used with minor variations until 1714, at which time it was replaced by the Seal of George I, followed by that of George II and George III upon their respective ascensions to the throne. As the Governor served as Commander-in-Chief of the provincial forces under the Province Charter, all commissions to officers in the military service were issued under a Privy Seal, bearing the personal coat-of-arms of the governor.<sup>14</sup>

Following the Boston Tea Party in December, 1773, Parliament passed a series of punitive measures in early 1774 known collectively as the “Coercive” or “Intolerable” Acts. Implementation of these Acts by Royal Governor Gen. Thomas Gage resulted in his dissolution of the Assembly in June 1774, at which point the Assembly resolved itself into the first of three Provincial Congresses. After consultation with the Continental Congress in regard to a

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<sup>11</sup> House No. 345, *Report to the Committee on the Judiciary*, (April, 29, 1885), St. 1885, c. 288, SC1/229

<sup>12</sup> Matt B. Jones, “The Early Massachusetts-Bay Colony Seals,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, New Series*, (April, 1934), 14-16.

<sup>13</sup> Massachusetts Archives, *Charter of the Province of Massachusetts Bay*, 1691 (SC1/26x).

<sup>14</sup> House No. 345, *Report to the Committee on the Judiciary*, (April, 29, 1885), St. 1885, c. 288, (SC1/229)

permanent government, a newly elected General Court “resumed” government under a modified version of the 1691 Province Charter on July 19, 1775.

With Gage retaining custody of the Royal Seal, and his authority no longer recognized by the province, a new seal was ordered by the Council, the body in which executive power had been vested. Action in this regard was initiated by a Council Order dated July 28, 1775, forming a “Committee to Consider what is necessary to be done relative to a Colony Seal.”<sup>15</sup> A report attending this order reveals that an initial design of an “Indian holding a Tomahawk & Cap of Liberty,” be replaced with an “English American holding a Sword in the right hand Magna Charta in the Left hand with the words Magna Charta imprinted on it.” The report also for the first time introduces the motto, “*Petit sub libertate quietem.*” The quote, attributed to the English politician, political theorist, and soldier Algernon Sidney, was adjusted to read, “*Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem.*”<sup>16</sup>

As an ambassador to the court of Denmark, Sidney had inscribed these words in a book of mottos which lay in the Kings library (“Every noble stranger who came to Denmark was allowed to write a motto or verse in the King’s book of mottos”).<sup>17</sup> Sidney’s *Discourses Concerning Government*, a defense of republicanism and popular government and repudiation of royal absolutism and the divine right of kings, had some influence on political thinking in the American Colonies at the time of the Revolution.

The full text of Sidney’s inscription reads, *Manus haec inimica tyrannis ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem.* This translates as, *This hand, an enemy of tyrants, seeks with the sword a quiet peace under liberty.* The Massachusetts motto uses only the second part of this sentence. Often loosely translated as, *by the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty*, its more literal translation reads, *she seeks with the sword a quiet peace under liberty.* Within the literal translation, the pronoun “she” alludes to the subject “hand” from Sidney’s full quotation, itself modified by the clause, “an enemy to tyrants.” The seal itself, which was engraved by Paul Revere, became known as the “Sword in Hand” seal, and remained in use for the next five years.

With adoption of the 1780 Constitution for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, it was decided that a replacement seal more symbolic of the history and purpose of Massachusetts – with independence then firmly established in America – be devised. To this end, a joint committee was formed and a report created for submission to the Governor and Council.<sup>18</sup> For reasons impossible to discern from the public record, the report was rejected by the Senate and a special committee was convened, which in turn approved the initial report and referred it to the Governor and Council.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Massachusetts Archives, *Massachusetts Archives Collection*, (SC1/45x), Vol. 6, p. 460.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, Vol. 137, p. 14.

<sup>17</sup> Algernon Sidney, *Discourses Concerning Government*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh, G. Hamilton and J. Balfour, 1750), xiv

<sup>18</sup> Massachusetts Archives, *Massachusetts Archives Collection*, (SC1/45x), Vol. 230, p. 64

<sup>19</sup> Massachusetts Archives, *Senate Journal, 1780-2010*, (SC1/531), Vol. 1, pp. 21-22.

The next evidence of action found in the public record is a Council Order dated December, 13<sup>th</sup> 1780, appointing Nathan Cushing as a Committee to devise a new Seal. It is here that the details later codified into the current coat-of arms and motto were laid out. Cushing's design, which replaced the English-American with a Native Person as the feature element, incorporated a heraldic presentation: the Crest (the ruffled sleeve and hand holding a sword); the Wreath or Torse (the braided ribbon beneath the Crest); the Escutcheon (the shield, of Norman design); the Mullet or Mollette (the 5-point star within the shield); the Heraldic Charge (the Native Person depicted on the shield); and the Bottom Banner in which the motto appears. Cushing's description of the device for the Seal is as follows:

*...Sapphire, an Indian dressed in his Shirt, Moggasins, belted proper, in his right Hand a Bow Topaz, in his left an Arrow, its point towards the Base; of the second on the Dexter side of the Indian's head a Star, Pearl, for one the United States of America.  
Crest On a Wreath a Dexter Arm cloathed & ruffled proper, grasping a Broad Sword, the Pummel and Hilt Topaz, with this motto Ense petit placidam Sub Libertate Quietem -<sup>20</sup>*

Though the artistic representation of the coat-of-arms would vary over time, the basics of its construct remained constant.

There is no record of any subsequent action taken by the Legislature. William H. Whitmore, in his 1885 Report to the Committee on the Judiciary, surmised that, "Probably the members thought that acceptance of the report, referring the matter to the Governor and Council, was sufficient, without the enactment of a law conferring on them the power to define and establish the seal." The lack of legislation defining strict regulation as to the seal's representation, however, resulted in many stylized interpretations – in Whitmore's words, "a ludicrous amount of variation from the standard" – being used over the years.<sup>21</sup>

The lack of legal adoption by authority of the Legislature led to the Great Seal being prescribed in its present form by statute in 1885.<sup>22</sup> It is in this legislative Act that the distinction between the seal and the arms was drawn: the Great Seal of the Commonwealth being the circular boundary bearing the inscription, *Sigillum Reipublicae Massachusettensis*, and the arms consisting of the coat-of-arms and motto positioned within.<sup>23</sup> The specific components of each, as well as the approved color scheme, are also defined within the statute. Pursuant to the statute, the seal,

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<sup>20</sup> Massachusetts Archives, *Executive Records, 1650-1987 (GC3/327)*, Vol. 26, p. 49.

<sup>21</sup> House No. 345, *Report to the Committee on the Judiciary*, (April, 29, 1885), St. 1885, c. 288, (SC1/229)

<sup>22</sup> Massachusetts Archives, *Engrossed Acts, 1687-2019, (SC7/207)*, St. 1885, c. 288.

<sup>23</sup> Collectively known as the "Great Seal of the Commonwealth," the seal and arms are commonly referred to, perhaps for brevity's sake, as the "Seal." This shortened form, however, masks the distinction that the seal and arms are two separate elements, and it is the content and configuration of the arms and motto as defined in 950 CMR 34.01(1)(a) that have spurred most, if not all, of the contemporary debate.

*...shall be circular in form, and shall bear upon its face a representation of the arms of the Commonwealth, with an inscription round about such representation, consisting of the words "Sigillum Reipublicae Massachusettensis"; but the colors of such arms shall not be an essential part of said seal, and an impression from a engraved seal according to said design, on any commission, paper or document of any kind, shall be valid to all intents and purposes whether such colors, or the representation of such colors by the customary heraldic lines or marks, be employed or not.*

The arms, which form the central part of the Great Seal,

*...shall consist of a shield, whereof the field or surface is blue, and thereon an Indian dressed in his shirt and moccasins, holding in his right hand a bow, and in his left hand an arrow, point downward, all of gold; and in the upper corner above his right arm, a silver star with five points. The crest shall be a wreath of blue and gold, whereon is a right arm, bent at the elbow, and clothed and ruffled, the hand grasping a broadsword, all of gold. The motto shall be "Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem."*

Well-known 19<sup>th</sup> century illustrator and painter Edmund H. Garrett, under the direction of Secretary of the Commonwealth William H. Olin, was selected to produce the final design, which was approved pursuant to St. 1898, c. 519.<sup>24</sup> In an article published in 1900 in the *New England Magazine*, Garrett provided insight from his perspective as to the various elements included in his final design, as well as the rationale of he and the principle specialists involved in their selection and application.<sup>25</sup>

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 2, Section 5 places custodial responsibility of the Seal of the Commonwealth upon the state secretary, and all representations of the arms, seal, and flags of the Commonwealth are to strictly conform with specifications prepared by the secretary in 1971.<sup>26</sup> Promulgated regulations for the specifications, use, display, and manufacture of the Great Seal are defined within 950 CMR 34.00.

The use of the coat-of-arms and the Great Seal of the Commonwealth for advertising or commercial purposes is prohibited by law. In addition to commissions, all records certified by the Secretary must bear the Great Seal. Permission to use the coat-of-arms and the Great Seal must be obtained from the Secretary of the Commonwealth.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Massachusetts Archives, *Engrossed Acts, 1687-2019, (SC7/207)*, St. 1898, c. 519.

<sup>25</sup> Edmund H. Garrett, "The Coat of Arms and Great Seal of Massachusetts," *New England Magazine New Series*, Vol.23 (Sept. 1901-Feb. 1901): 623-635.

<sup>26</sup> Massachusetts Archives, *Engrossed Acts, 1687-2019, (SC7/207)*, St. 1971, c. 360.

This Act stipulates that, "All flags of the commonwealth made previous to the effective date of this act shall remain valid, but all flags made subsequent to said effective date shall conform strictly to the specifications issued by the state secretary."

<sup>27</sup> William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth, "The History of the Arms and Great Seal of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," *Citizen Information Service (CIS)*

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/presea/sealhis.htm>

### Attachment 3

#### **Notes on Educational Program for Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts** Submitted by Elizabeth Solomon

Some decisions will need to be made on the audience for these educational programs as their design is highly dependent on the audience. For example, a program designed for middle school students would be very different than one designed for a general adult audience which would be different from one designed for legislators.

I think there are a number of elements that need to be included regardless of the audience. These include:

- Indigenous history and culture of Massachusetts and New England. I believe that this should be the first element explored both because of the long history of Indigenous peoples prior to colonization and the fact that the controversial elements of the current seal and motto are directly related to that history. This must include information on traditional cultures as well as info on the interactions between colonists and native peoples.
- The historical and current uses of seals, coats of arms, flags, and mottos. This must include explanations of the difference between the history and use of each of the elements and how the different elements may (or may not) get combined.
- History and Examples of State seals, mottos, and Flags across the U.S.
- The specific history the seals and mottos of the both colonial and post-colonial Massachusetts
- An exploration of the problematic elements of the current flag and seal. This can and should include multiple perspectives.
- An overview of the history of the effort to change the flag, seal and motto.
- A exploration of where we are now. This section will depend upon the ultimate outcome of the movement to change the seal and motto. If it doesn't change, how was that decision made and why? If it does change, how did it change and what was the process? If nothing has been decided, is there still a push for a change? If so, what is happening.

Here is possible example of an outline for two of the elements.

1. Historical use of seals, coats of arms, flags, and mottos - Why do we have seals, mottos and flags?
  - Difference between seals and coats of arms
    - Seals
      - Used to make an impression in clay, wax, or paper on a document
      - First known use in the Ancient Near and Middle East and later in Greece, Rome and parts of Asia – hypothesized that they were used as a means of identification before the wide use of signatures



- Use in Europe both as identification and a means of authenticating the closure of a document by the sending party
      - Seals for identification were widely replaced by signatures in Europe around the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Wax seals were sometimes still used to verify the closure of a document.
      - How do we authenticate things today?
    - Heraldry and Coats of Arms
      - Originated in medieval Europe and were used as a means of establishing identity in battle.
      - Explain how it was used and why is it called a coat of arms – worn on a tunic
      - Explain elements of coats of arms
      - In 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century Europe used to indicate family history
      - Eventual adoption of coats of arms and its elements by a wide range of organizations
  - Exploration of history and use of flags outside of Europe
  - Mottos
  - Integration of the uses and elements of seals, mottos, and coats of arms
    - Example is the Seal of the Massachusetts Bay Company
2. History and Examples of State Seals, Mottos, and Flags across the U.S.
- How are they designed, who decides?
  - How are they used?
  - Flag and seal are not always the same. Motto may not be part of either the flag or the seal
  - What makes a good design?
  - Examples of recent changes to flags and seals in other states



20 Black Brook Road  
Aquinnah, MA 02535

Phone: 508-645-9265  
Fax: 508-645-3790

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July 14, 2022

Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon Street  
Boston MA 02133

Re: Position of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, a Federally Recognized Sovereign Tribal Government

Good Morning Co-Chairmen Weeden and Boyles and Commissioners,

In reference to the design elements of the Seal, Motto and Flag of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts being considered for removal or revision, please be advised that the following is the official and formal position of the duly elected Tribal Council of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah; a Federally Recognized Sovereign Tribal Nation.

While an entire redesign is the intent of the Seal Commission, our Tribal Council feels very strongly that certain design elements need to be removed, other elements need to be retained and other elements need revisions. We are calling upon the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth to make the following changes and incorporate them into any new design:

1. Totally remove the sword and motto in Latin
2. Keep the image of the Indigenous person, and replace it with the generally accepted image of Ousamequin as presented on Coles Hill (Plymouth)
3. Remove the downward facing arrow

Our Ancestors, the Wampanoag People provided aid and assistance to the English Pilgrim settlers in these lands. It is our desire and intent to not lose that historical imagery or the fact that our assistance played a critical and central role in the establishment of this country; from its founding roots to what it has become today.

In addition to respecting our Tribal Nation and recognizing the centuries of harm inflicted upon our People, whether intentional or unintentional, the result is still the same. The historical trauma and emotional distress that the current iteration and imagery represents, has harmed our People, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who reside within the Commonwealth, including any Indigenous Peoples who see the image. It triggers the knowledge of the atrocities that were perpetrated against our Ancestors, and resurrects and re-inflicts that pain on every generation of our People.

This is the perfect opportunity to demonstrate how a teaching moment can have a transformative impact. We call upon you to incorporate the elements listed above into any new design; to honor and respect the standing and position of our Tribal Government and to recognize the contributions of the Wampanoag People in the founding of this Country.

We would be happy to discuss further. Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation in this important matter.

In Balance, Harmony and Peace,

Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais

## Appendix 5

### THE SPECIAL COMMISSION RELATIVE TO THE SEAL AND MOTTO OF THE COMMONWEALTH

#### Schedule of Public Meetings and Meeting Minutes

##### Full Commission Meetings:

- July 17, 2021
- November 18, 2021
- January 18, 2022
- February 15, 2022
- March 15, 2022
- April 19, 2022
- May 17, 2022
- June 21, 2022
- July 19, 2022
- August 16, 2022
- September 20, 2022
- October 18, 2022
- November 15, 2022
- December 13, 2022

##### Meetings of the Subcommittee on History & Usages:

- April 15, 2022
- May 10, 2022
- June 7, 2022
- September 13, 2022
- October 25, 2022

##### Meetings of the Subcommittee on Public Consultation

- April 12, 2022
- June 7, 2022
- July 12, 2022
- September 13, 2022
- October 6, 2022

##### Meetings of the Subcommittee on Research & Design

- July 14, 2022
- September 8, 2022
- October 27, 2022

Archived recordings of the public meetings can be found at [Commission's page on the Legislature's website](#)

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
November 18, 2021, at 1:30PM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

Commission Members Present:

John Peters, Michael Comeau, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Rep. David Vieira, Brona Simon, Brian Boyles, Kelly Bennett, Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Elizabeth Solomon, Melissa Ferretti, Brian Moskwetah Weeden, Micah Whitson, Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, James Wallace, Brittney Walley, Donna Curtin

Absent: Sen. Marc Pacheco, Sen. Bruce Tarr or appointee

- 1:35PM Meeting began with overview provided by CABRAL
- 18/19 appointments have been finalized
    - Notified of Governor's final appointments in September
    - Awaiting notification from Senate Minority Leader
  - Chair and Vice-Chair to be selected by Commission members, not predetermined in language of resolution
  - Commission will remain in place till 60 days after submission of report
  - Conflicting advice from House and Senate Clerks and Counsel Offices on how to extend commission and reporting deadline
    - Senate believed Commission had the unilateral authority, by 2/3<sup>rd</sup> vote, to extend itself and submit a report when completed
    - House believed that because the report was not submitted on time, the Commission was legally resolved, so it would not be able to submit a report to the House Clerk's office.
      - Need legislative language passed to revive and extend the Commission's work
  - Amendment to extend the reporting deadline to July 21, 2022, was included in the Senate ARPA spending bill; awaiting the final legislative approval (expected in early January)
  - Concerns raised regarding personnel capacity and securing financial support for the Commission's work – CABRAL, ANDREWS-MALTAIS

1:43PM VIEIRA – raised question of whether the Mass Archives could offer staff support  
COMEAU – agreed to make that approach to the Secretary of State's office

1:47PM Discussion on the previous suggestion to elect Co-Chairs, consisting of one tribal leader and one non-tribal leader and extending that idea to the Vice-Chairs–  
VIEIRA, WALLEY

\*Technical Point: to change the structure of the Commission, the Commission should record a formal vote

- 1:48PM MOTION to select two Co-Chairs, one tribal and one non-tribal, and two Vice-Chairs, one tribal and one non-tribal, to lead the Commission made by VIEIRA
- 1:50PM CABRAL made suggestion that PETERS reach out and coordinate a discussion amongst tribal leaders; CABRAL's office will reach out to non-tribal leaders
- 1:50PM SOLOMON requested greater clarity on the proposed responsibility of each position; CABRAL suggested the Chair and Vice-Chair would work together to organize meetings, oversee the progress of the Commission, call for meetings, coordinate details, etc.
- 1:52PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested the group establish a standing committee due to the significant time commitment Commission participation will likely require
- 1:54PM WALLACE suggested a temporary chair be appointed to coordinate meetings until the Chairs and Vice-Chairs had been selected
- 1:56PM MOTION SECONDED by WEEDEN
- 1:57PM CABRAL reminded Commission that meeting is being livestreamed on Legislature's website
- 1:58PM Further Discussion on the Motion – heard none
- 1:59PM By VOICE VOTE: unanimous, none opposed; MOTION ADOPTED by Commission
- 2:00PM PETERS requested clarity on the authority of the Commission to make recommendations and the ultimate objective of the work; CABRAL suggested the Commission will make legislative recommendations that would be considered before the Legislature to change the seal, motto, and flag; COMEAU – the last time the legislature went through this process was in 1885
- 2:05PM VIEIRA requested WEEDEN provide details on the process the Town of Mashpee recently used to change their seal, a proposal currently pending before the Town Meeting; WEEDEN provided a brief overview
- 2:06PM WEEDEN suggested Commission should consider nominations for an acting Chair to better coordinate preliminary work; CABRAL suggested we might not be ready to put names into consideration
- 2:12PM KONDRATIUK sought clarity on the question of whether the purpose of the commission is to investigate whether or not changes to seal and motto need to be made or to make recommendations for what those changes should be; ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested Commission should include design elements in the recommendation; COMEAU highlighted that the report should also provide a historical analysis and investigation of the past, to be backward-looking as well as forward-looking

- 2:15PM VIEIRA suggested COMEAU present that historical perspective at next meeting and suggested that the next meeting could be at the Mass Archives; COMEAU will investigate the possibility
- 2:16PM WALLACE suggested a regional listening tour to engage with the wider public and solicit their input
- 2:18PM WHITSON offered his experience and expertise from previous work on the Mississippi flag project for insight on how different designs could be rendered on different materials and surfaces, and what a process could look like
- 2:19PM WEEDEN suggested the Commission be very deliberate in seeking both perspectives, tribal and non-tribal, to receive quality input and offered to deliver a presentation on the Mashpee process at the next meeting
- 2:20PM WEEDEN suggested the Commission accept nominations or gauge interest in filling the Chair & Vice Chair positions
- 2:23PM WALLACE suggested the Commission select a temporary chair in the interim; CABRAL offered to continue to facilitate meetings, not as a temporary chair, but as a member of the Commission, until the Commission can decide on its Chairs and Vice-Chairs; no opposition expressed for that plan
- 2:24PM VIEIRA made suggestions for standing meeting times, no consensus reached; CABRAL said his office will reach out to the group to find consensus on the date and time via doodle poll  
\*Technical point: meetings organized by Legislators are subject to the streaming capacity of Legislative Information Services and must accommodate the hearing and session schedule.
- 2:31PM Discussion on the capacity and requirement to stream the Commission meetings live to the public; decision the Commission should make; logistical challenges if Commission commits to a regional tour.
- 2:32PM CURTIN suggested we open the next meeting with a round of introductions, general agreement
- 2:33PM BENNET suggested the auditorium in the State House would be a good venue for a public hearing, general agreement
- 2:35PM Several Commission members requested updated contact information; CABRAL's office will distribute contact list to Commission
- 2:40PM Meeting concluded.

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
January 18, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

Commission Members Present:

John Peters, Michael Comeau, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Sen. Marc Pacheco, Rep. David Vieira, Michael Vincent Amato, Brona Simon, Brian Boyles, Kelly Bennett, Brittney Walley, Elizabeth Solomon, Melissa Ferretti, Brian Moskwetah Weeden, Micah Whitson, Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, James Wallace, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused: Cheryl Andrews-Maltais

- 11:02AM Meeting Called to Order by CABRAL
- Standing Meeting Schedule set for 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 11:00AM
  - Reporting Deadline officially extended to July 31, 2022
  - Senate Minority Leader has made his appointment, Michael Vincent Amato; commission now has full representation of 19 members
- 11:05AM Commission Member Introductions
- 11:11AM Discussion on Nominations of Officers
- 6 Indigenous Members met in November to have discussion on co-Chair and Co-Vice Chair
  - Non-Indigenous Member were unable to meet privately due to Open Meeting Law/Public Meeting restrictions
  - Brian Boyles had emailed interest in serving as Chair or Vice-Chair to CABRAL
- 11:13AM PETERS made a Motion to Nominate BRIAN WEEDEN as Co-Chair; Seconded by VIEIRA
- 11:14AM PETERS made a Motion to Nominate BRITTNEY WALLEY as Co-Vice Chair; Seconded by CABRAL
- 11:15AM PACHECO asked if there were any other nominations from the floor; hearing none, made a Motion to Close Nominations; Seconded by CABRAL, VIEIRA
- 11:16AM WEEDEN gave statement
- 11:17AM WALLEY gave statement
- 11:18AM CABRAL made Motion to Elect BRIAN WEEDEN as Co-Chair and BRITTNEY WALLEY as Co-Vice Chair
- 11:18AM Motion APPROVED unanimously by Voice Vote, no objections

11:19AM CABRAL made motion to nominate BRIAN BOYLES as Co-Chair; seconded by SIMONS

11:20AM CABRAL asked if there were any other nominations from the floor; hearing none, made motion to close nominations; seconded by VIEIRA

11:21AM BOYLES made statement

11:23AM PACHECO made motion to Elect BRIAN BOYES as Co-Chair; seconded by CABRAL

11:23AM Motion APPROVED unanimously by Voice Vote, no objections

11:24AM CABRAL initiated conversation on Co-Vice Chair position

11:25AM CABRAL made motion to nominate MICHAEL COMEAU as Co-Vice Chair; seconded by WEEDEN

11:26AM COMEAU accepted nomination with understanding that he does serve on other boards and his capacity may be limited at certain times

11:26AM CABRAL asked if there were any other nominations from the floor

11:27AM PACHECO suggested that all elected officers check with their employers to ensure no potential conflicts of interest exist that could affect their ability to serve as an officer on the Commission

11:27AM CABRAL agreed that was a logical caveat to add to the motion

11:28AM PACHECO made motion to elect MICHAEL COMEAU as Co-Vice Chair pending approval of no conflict of interest from employer; seconded by CABRAL

11:29AM Motion APPROVED unanimously by Voice Vote, no objections

11:30AM Discussion of topics for the consideration of the Chairs -- responsibility for record-keeping, public point of contact, standing meeting schedule

11:31AM PACHECO offered continued assistance of legislative staff for logistical and administrative concerns and needs – meeting minutes, keeping Commission records, streaming public meetings on the legislature’s website

11:33AM WALLACE questioned whether, given the language in the establishing resolution, state resources (staff time, livestreaming) can be used for this Commission going forward

11:34AM CABRAL clarified that the Commission, under current restrictions, will not be given a budget from the state to help cover needs specific to the Commission’s charge – ie, a consultant, project manager, grant writer, website management, etc – but, as the Legislators are members of the Commission, the staff and resources available to the Legislators as elected members of the Legislature, can be used to assist them with their responsibilities to the Commission



11:35AM CABRAL transferred chairing responsibilities of the meeting to BOYLES

11:36AM BOYLES moved to next item on the agenda – presentations from Commission Members

11:37AM WEEDEN presented on his experiences and the process used by the Town of Mashpee to redesign their Town Seal (attached)

11:43AM WEEDEN will email Cabral Staff to distribute slideshow presentation to Commission members

11:44AM CABRAL reminded Commission that meeting must end at 12:00PM due to competing priorities for livestreaming

11:45AM COMEAU presented a brief historical review of the seal, motto, and coat of arms; will email presentation to full Commission (attached)

11:55AM SIMONS had question regarding the Paul Revere design

11:57AM BOYLES suggested next presentation be postponed to the next meeting due to time constraints

11:58AM KONDRATIUK agreed and commented that he found the structure of these meetings unsatisfactory, would prefer more time and in-person dialogue

11:59AM BOYLES asked if Commission was required to use the Microsoft Teams platform and stream through the Legislature’s website

11:59AM Cabral Staff replied: to stream the meetings live on the Legislature’s website, the Commission would need to comply with LIS’s process, which does use Microsoft Teams. The Commission could make other arrangements, but they must be comparable to meet OML/Public Meeting requirements. The decision is at the discretion of the Chairs and the members of the Commission.

12:00PM CABRAL will check in with Legislative Information Services (LIS) regarding the ability to extend time for future meetings

12:00PM WALLACE & VIEIRA suggested Secretary of State’s office might have meeting space and virtual meeting & livestreaming capacity; COMEAU said that he would check what technological resources might be available to organize a hybrid meeting

12:02PM CABRAL mentioned that the resources available through the Legislature are secure and would meet the Open Meeting Law/Public Meeting requirements and when the State House is opened to the public, it could also be used a venue for in-person meetings and offer a hybrid meeting option

12:02PM WALLACE made Motion to Adjourn, seconded by CABRAL; approved by Voice Vote, no opposition

12:03PM WEEDEN adjourned meeting

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
February 15, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

Commission Members Present:

Brian Boyles (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice Chair) John Peters, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Sen. Marc Pacheco, Michael Vincent Amato, Brona Simon, Kelly Bennett, Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Elizabeth Solomon, Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, James Wallace, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused: Brian Moskwetah Weeden (Chair), Rep. David Vieira

- 11:00AM Meeting Called to Order by BOYLES
- 11:01AM Review of Minutes; no discussion or edits offered
- 11:01AM MOTION to ACCEPT November 18, 2022, meeting minutes made by SIMONS;  
SECONDED by COMEAU
- 11:02AM APPROVED by voice vote; no opposition, no abstentions
- 11:03AM MOTION to ACCEPT January 18, 2022, meeting minutes made by COMEAU;  
SECONDED by SIMONS
- 11:03AM APPROVED by voice vote; no opposition; one abstention from ANDREWS-  
MALTAIS
- 11:04AM BOYLES offered condolences on behalf of the Commission to Brian Weeden, and  
the people of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, on the recent passing of this  
grandfather, Everett Tall Oak Weeden
- 11:05AM BOYLES presented the Chairs Report
- Chairs & Vice Chairs have met and will continue to meet to debrief after every meeting; will establish practices for reaching out individually to Commission members for feedback
  - Meeting Structure & Administrative Structure:
    - Staff from Rep. Cabral's office (Kate Miller) will continue to assist with administrative functions - take meeting notices, post public meeting notice and be public point-of-contact
    - Intend to keep virtual meeting format for the time being and would provide a month's notice to Commission members and general public for a change in format
    - Design agendas for a 90-minute meeting
    - Continue with standing meeting schedule of third Tuesday of the month from 11:00AM to 12:30AM
    - Chairs will rotate responsibility

- Reporting deadline has been extended to December 31, 2022

- 11:08AM BOYLES began review of Commission's establishing language and charge; shared screen; intention to review clause by clause as a group & offer feedback on the purpose and scope of the work
- 1<sup>st</sup> clause – to investigate
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> clause – to examine the status quo
- 11:12AM WALLACE commented that evident within the 1<sup>st</sup> clause is the assumption that some will take exemption to the current features of the seal, motto, and flag and change must occur; confusion within the second clause – is Commission offering changes or investigating changes?
- 11:14AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS commented that the sword has been problematic for indigenous peoples for a very long time and she is glad to be at this point; would like to review the imagery from/with a tribal context, ie, how does the sword make modern people feel?; would like to review, make recommendations and bring the historical effect of the imagery on indigenous peoples into the record; acknowledge the work of decades of indigenous people and other supporters to have their experience be heard and respected
- 11:17AM COMEAU suggested we focus on the action verbs in the language: investigate, examine, and study; if part of the charge of the Commission is to understand how the seal, motto, and flag have been misunderstood, then the Commission should analyze the full historical context that brought the flag into its current state
- 11:19AM WALLEY commented that it is important to understand the process of how we got here -- but for the indigenous people this is an intergenerational issue with over 30 years of their people saying this imagery is offensive and harmful; that harm is real, has not been acknowledged, and resurfaces/reinforced with each conversation that examines the historical context absent of the indigenous experience; the intent of the design is different from the impact; but, willing to go through the historical context if the indigenous perspective is included and formally recorded in the record
- 11:21AM CURTAIN suggested the Commission strategically and deliberately review every feature of the flag, and make sure to not focus solely on those features which have already been identified as being offensive – ie, the shape of the shield or the color of the background; identify different features of the flag for examination and enumerate every aspect of the seal
- 11:24AM WHITSON suggested the Commission also examine the functional aspects of the use of the seal in modern times; compared to other states, MA applies the seal liberally; What is an appropriate use of the seal? How is the seal deployed? What would be the timeline for changing the seal? What would be the impacts of a change in the seal?
- 11:25AM BOYLES recapped the conversation to this point:
- Understanding the images/features and the harm done is important
  - Going through the history can be harmful & offensive to the indigenous people
  - Understand that the assumption is that change will be needed

- Need a deeper analysis of all components of the image
- Understand the function purpose of the seal and motto
- Part of the charge of the Commission is to reflect on how the seal and motto reflects our contemporary understanding of peace, justice, liberty, and equality

11:28AM BOYLES began conversation on 2<sup>nd</sup> clause – make recommendations for revised and/or new design; commitment to an educational program to explain the design and intent of the seal

11:29AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS commented that the discussion on tribal history must include tribal governments, communities, and native people with expert knowledge – and not rely on traditional educational resources and the organizations that the legislature typically defers to

11:30AM COMEAU suggested that the 2<sup>nd</sup> clause puts the ‘cart before the horse’ because it is based on the assumption that changes are needed; supports the educational component because there is not one available now and it is absent from the current understanding of the seal and motto, but any educational program must include more perspectives than the indigenous, must be inclusive and expansive

11:32AM WALLEY commented that the language clouds the deliverables of the Commission and does provide guidance on how to use the wealth of knowledge of the Commission members

11:34AM SOLOMON commented that it is important to understand how the Commission came together; it took over 30 years of effort from the indigenous peoples to bring this issue into mainstream conversation; does not want to get so bogged down in the history that the Commission forgets its ultimate charge; the history is one of theft from the indigenous peoples; as a representative of the Massachuset tribe, which gives its name to the Commonwealth, their perspective and approval should be a primary concern

11:37AM BOYLES commented that there is a question on the scope of the Commission’s review – To answer the question of ‘how we got here?’ are we looking at the 30+ years of advocacy required to create this commission or are we looking at the history of the seal itself?

11:38AM SOLOMON replied that the Commission should not just focus on the seal, but the full history of the Commonwealth, as the seal is the symbol of that history; the Commission provides the opportunity to provide educational context

11:40AM BOYLES recapped this segment with the idea that materials produced by the Commission need to include the indigenous voice and input; and the work of the Commission will be part of a larger examination of the history

11:41AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS asked what other organizations/people were involved in advocating for the Commission? Who else was instrumental beyond the indigenous communities? What was the impetus for their involvement?

- 11:44AM WALLACE commented that we should be able to figure out who submitted testimony on the original resolution; work to create a list of groups to reach out to for input
- 11:45AM CABRAL mentioned that former Rep. Byron Rushing filed legislation for many years, would be an excellent resource for the history; the legislature can find the history
- 11:47AM PETERS commented that Massachusetts is one of the last states to have an egregious state seal (as compared to many southern states who have been doing the work to address their confederate history); alteration would bring a conscience to the Commonwealth
- 11:48AM PACHECO commented that he believes the ‘time has come’ for this issue; mentioned that the formal sessions in the legislature end on July 31, 2022, so it maybe be beneficial to keep that in mind when establishing a work plan; any legislative proposal that comes from the Commission – and the language within the resolutions clearly says they ‘shall’ make recommendations for a revised seal – would be making substantial changes to current MGL and would need to be approved in a formal session; time to get that done within the current legislative session will run out before the reporting deadline of December 31, 2022.
- 11:52AM CURTAIN mentioned that she would be against bypassing the historical record because the general public is most likely not aware of the 46-year effort to change the design and the Commission needs to find a way to acknowledge that this struggle and conversation has been going on for nearly 50 years and is not a new issue
- 11:55AM BOYLES commented that the Commission’s process could become a model for the rest of the nation for how to conduct this conversation; documenting how we got to this point and recognizing the hard work of the advocates is part of history/process
- 11:56AM WALLEY commented that if Massachusetts truly is the ‘spirit of America’ then the Commission must model that behavior in how Commissioners treat each other and the topic
- 11:57AM COMEAU commented that there is a difference between the intent of Confederate monuments in the South, which were clearly and specifically designed to enforce racial superiority and segregation, and the Massachusetts seal & motto which, however inadequately, came from better intentions and were not meant to be offensive
- 11:59AM BOYLES summarized that a conversation on intent is important
- 11:59AM CABRAL commented that the Commission should not rush its work to meet a July 31, 2022, deadline; it is much more important to get it ‘right’; any legislative proposal would come before the Joint Committee on State Admin & Regulatory Oversight, over which, Cabral & Pacheco are the co-chairs, and would have influence over the process from that point

- 12:01PM WALLACE added that his experience with legislative lobbying would suggest that the Commission will only get once chance to get this right; recommends that the Commission document/explain to the public why features are problematic and hold opportunities for public comment across the state
- 12:04PM PACHECO commented that his purpose was only to provide information on the legislative schedule for consideration; a Dec 31<sup>st</sup> reporting deadline would bring the legislative aspect of this work into the next session where the landscape might change
- 12:08PM FERRETTI commented that issue will resonate across the country and this work should lead to action; glad that work is finally starting, but should produce a quality outcome
- 12:09PM AMATO asked a procedural question about going into 2023; important to see action, seems to have had a slow start
- 12:10PM SIMONS commented that there seems to be some disagreement over whether the goal is to include the history of those 46 years of advocacy and create a record of the experience OR including the entire history of the seal as it has come to be today
- 12:12PM COMEAU commented, as the Director of the State Archives, the report will be included in the archivable record, and the final product should be as complete as possible for it will be saved into the history
- 12:14PM BOYLES began conversation on 3<sup>rd</sup> clause on the reporting requirements, the need to define deliverables in a meaningful way, and offered the suggestion that the Commission make recommendations for Next Steps
- 12:16PM ANDREW-MALTAIS commented that part of the recommendation can be a timeline for legislative action and have that codified into law
- 12:19PM WALLACE suggested the establishment of subcommittees would allow for the subcommittees' reports to be included in the final report
- 12:20PM BOYLES summarized goals as a need to create a timeline for legislation and suggested that the Commission should analyze other models for a plan for how incorporate public input successfully
- 12:21PM WALLACE made a motion to create the following subcommittees – (1) a subcommittee to look at the features of the seal and motto piece by piece and research which other organizations have offered support; (2) a subcommittee to receive public input, suggested a listening tour model; and (3) a subcommittee to analyze models from other processes – with a goal of producing a report to be shared with the entire Commission a week before the next meeting to allow time for the report to be reviewed
- 12:24PM WALLEY commented that we need to make sure these subcommittees are answering what the Commission's needs are; subcommittees must also make sure the conversation publicly

they are adhering to the Open Meeting Law, not meeting a quorum, and are having

12:26PM AMATO agreed that subcommittee work can move the process along much faster

12:27PM BOYLES asked if the Commission should establish subcommittees now or at the next meeting; suggested that the historical examination and the conversation on the seal's features could be two separate subcommittees

12:28PM KONDRATIUK approved the ideas of subcommittees, but suggested that including a historical record of the last 46 years is not necessary and beyond the scope of the charge of the Commission; would prefer to stay on topic

12:29PM BENNET suggested the Commission share an image of the seal and look at the seal together and identify the features as a group so everyone can visualize the image on the same terms

12:30PM COMEAU commented that one of the interest groups most impacted by the seal is the military; important to have that perspective included in the conversation

12:31PM KONDRATIUK agreed and mentioned that he had a presentation prepared to brief the Commission on the military usage of the seal, but had been cut from the agenda

12:32PM WALLACE wanted to clarify that a subcommittee would report back to the full commission for their input/approval and would not be making any significant decisions on its own, only sharing and distributing the work

12:34PM BOYLES summarized the conversation on subcommittees as:

- Public Input/Output Subcommittee
- Research into Comparable Models Subcommittee
- Historical Perspective Subcommittee – which would include a study of the harm that has been created by the current seal and look at the military use and history of the seal

12:36PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested that the Public Input/Output subcommittee be retitled “Public Consultation” and that the Research subcommittee be reworked to “Research & Design” to look both at current models and to research design elements

12:37PM KONDRATIUK suggested that the 19-members of the Commission were charged with analyzing this issue and public input is not necessary

12:38PM BOYLES suggested that public input was necessary because this seal represents everyone in Massachusetts; also asked whether one subcommittee could look at both the history of harm and the use/history of the seal?

12:39PM WALLACE agreed that there should be two separate subcommittees

12:39PM WALLEY commented that the history of the seal and the history of the harm are related; the history of the features has been created in the absence of the indigenous perspective, until this moment, potentially; a question of storytelling and storying; supportive of including both elements in one subcommittee



- 12:42PM SOLOMON commented that separating the histories assumes the two histories/experiences are unrelated; they are different perspectives on the same history; the conversation will be a struggle, but should be together
- 12:43PM COMEAU suggested the subcommittee can flush out the analysis of individual elements of the seal and report back to the whole
- 12:44PM CURTAIN agreed that when analyzing the historical context, the experience of the features – the history of responses, including non-indigenous experiences – needs to be made to help identify misunderstandings that exist across society; should be in one subcommittee
- 12:48PM BOYLES suggested that the subcommittees be described as:
- Histories & Usages
  - Research & Design
  - Public Consultation
- 12:49PM WALLACE suggested that researching the features of the seal and examining the history of oppression should be kept separate
- 12:51PM SOLOMON reiterated that the history of oppression speaks to the history of the features, and they shouldn't be separated
- 12:52PM WALLEY commented that the history is oppression; the experience of the features of the flag has been oppressive; the two issues are tied together
- 12:53PM BOYLES made a MOTION TO ESTABLISH the following subcommittees:
- Histories & Usages
  - Research & Design
  - Public Consultation
- 12:54PM Motion SECONDED by SIMONS
- 12:54PM Motion APPROVED unanimously by voice vote; no opposition, no abstentions
- 12:55PM MOTION TO ADJOURN made by WALLEY; SECONDED by CURTAIN
- 12:55PM Motion APPROVED by voice vote; no oppositions
- 12:55PM Meeting ADJOURNED by BOYLES

**Next Meeting:**  
Tuesday, March 15, 2022  
11:00AM to 12:30PM  
Via Microsoft Teams

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
March 15, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

APPROVED AS AMENDED

on 4/19/2022

Commission Members Present:

Brian Boyles (Chair), Brian Weeden (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice Chair), Rep. Antonio Cabral, Sen. Marc Pacheco, Rep. David Vieira, Brona Simon, Kelly Bennett, Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, James Wallace, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused: John Peters, Michael Vincent Amato, Elizabeth Solomon

- 11:01AM Meeting Called to Order by WEEDEN
- 11:02AM Review of Minutes; no discussion or edits offered
- 11:01AM MOTION to ACCEPT February 15, 2022, meeting minutes made by CURTIN;  
SECONDED by FERRETTI
- 11:03AM APPROVED by voice vote; no opposition, no abstentions
- 11:03AM WEEDEN presented the Chairs Report
- Members received subcommittee assignments via email. The goal was to balance Indigenous members and legislators across the three subcommittee.
  - Would like to establish ground rules and standard operating procedures for discussion within the Subcommittees; set regular schedule to make planning easier
  - Please send or notify Kate of media requests, so Chairs can prepare to respond and follow the external interest in the Commission
- 11:05AM WEEDEN transitioned to Discussion on Subcommittee Assignments
- 11:06AM Staff mentioned that SOLOMON, who was not able to attend, accepts her subcommittee assignment
- 11:07AM MOTION to ACCEPT Subcommittee Assignment made by ANDREWS-MALTAIS; seconded by VIEIRA
- 11:08AM WEEDEN opened motion for Discussion
- 11:08AM PACHECO requested to remain unassigned to any subcommittee citing his role as Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on State Administration & Regulatory Oversight, which may receive the recommendations of the Commission for

consideration, and the pressure of this schedule; claimed he was unfamiliar with the Subcommittees or their responsibilities

- 11:09AM WEEDEN agreed that Commission could allow flexibility for Senator Pacheco on this basis
- 11:10AM COMEAU mentioned the subcommittee descriptions were detailed in the email the Commission received the prior week, but open to discussion on the descriptions if necessary
- 11:12AM MOTION to accept AMENDMENT to the previous motion to remove Sen. Pacheco from any subcommittee made by VIEIRA; seconded by CABRAL
- 11:12AM APPROVED by voice vote; no opposition, no abstentions
- 11:13AM MOTION to APPROVE base motion to accept subcommittee assignments as amended, made by VIEIRA
- 11:13AM APPROVED by voice vote; no opposition, no abstentions
- 11:14AM WEEDEN transitioned to Old Business, requested BOYLES report
- Need to consider Next Steps for the subcommittee work
  - Must think through how to set the right tone for the discussion; how/what types of presentations would be useful for the full Commission
- 11:15AM CURTIN questioned if it were possible to have breakout rooms from the main discussion, what would the logistics entail; must meet the requirements of the Open Meeting Law
- 11:15AM WALLEY described Next Steps for subcommittees within 3 frameworks: (1) nature and frequency of meetings; (2) expectations for work product, “homework” from each meeting; and (3) establishing guidelines for the conversation
- 11:17AM WEEDEN stated that subcommittees can use their discretion on how to conduct its work, but should establish ground rules for the conversation
- 11:17AM COMEAU is generally a proponent of meeting in-person, but that might not be feasible at this time. As to the focus and speaking to the Histories & Usages subcommittee, he believes the goals are well defined in the description – explore the elements, usage, and historical context of the seal; recommends using that checklist and moving forward – perhaps beginning the conversation with sharing an image of the seal.
- 11:20AM WALLEY stated that virtual meetings would be preferred given health concerns and geographical locations of the Commission members; recommends subcommittee create standing meetings for planning purposes and can operate independently of each other, but the work of one subcommittee may help direct the focus of the others

- 11:22AM CABRAL suggested a hybrid model that would allow individuals to decide whether to meet in-person and raised the possibility of using breakout rooms as executive sessions for subcommittee conversations during the regular monthly meeting
- 11:24AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS prefers a hybrid model given that travel time to Boston for such a short meeting is prohibitive and supports using the time within the standing meeting productively
- 11:27AM Staff mentioned capacity for having breakout rooms during a livestreamed event would need to be investigated before it could be considered an option
- 11:27AM WALLEY raised concerns that if the Commission uses the regular monthly meeting for subcommittee discussion it would not provide enough time to complete the work; expected the subcommittee would meet outside of the monthly meeting and report back to the full commission at the regularly scheduled meeting
- 11:29AM COMEAU agreed that the general meeting is the opportunity for the subcommittee to present their work and suggestions to the entire group; the subcommittee should work independently to expand the time allotted for the conversation; subcommittees should take notes to include in report to the full commission
- 11:30AM VIEIRA also agreed that subcommittees should meet separately and recommended that Commission reach out to Attorney General's Office to get clarity on whether subcommittee meetings would need to be posted and publicly-accessible; suggested meeting at the State House in the Great Hall where all the seals are displayed in stained glass windows
- 11:33AM WALLACE agreed with suggestion that Commission get a formal response on the Open Meeting Law requirements; suggested working backward from deadline to establish a timeline for subcommittee work
- 11:35AM WALLEY agreed that deadline is important to structure work
- 11:36AM BOYLES mentioned that official deadline is December 31, 2022; the deliverables for the commission are the focus of the subcommittee work
- 11:37AM WEEDEN suggested members can go through subcommittees to give input on these topics
- 11:38AM KONDRATIUK emphasized that subcommittees need to start meeting ASAP, preferably before the end of the month; would like to see sit-down meetings at the Mass Archives
- 11:39AM PACHECO mentioned that although the reporting deadline is December 31, 2022, the last day of formal session is July 31, 2022, when the formal consideration of the legislative proposals will end.
- 11:40AM VIEIRA recommended the Commission request an extension of the reporting deadline into the next session; CURTIN agreed that an extension is needed for the full conversation

- 11:43AM CABRAL mentioned that deadline for legislation is July 31, 2022, but report can be accepted by the Clerks at any time to December 31, 2022; unlikely the Legislature would work on any legislative proposal in this session because the bill would need to be filed and have a public debate; does not foresee Legislature acting on any proposal the Commission would file between now and July 31, 2022.
- 11:46AM COMEAU agreed that subcommittees must begin meeting ASAP and would do the substantive work and report back to the full Commission at the monthly meeting
- 11:47AM VIEIRA reiterated recommendation that Commission extend deadline past Jan.4, 2023, and the start of the new session which would relieve the pressure; suggested Feb. 15, 2023, this would allow Commission to complete work in 2022 and would allow Commission to introduce legislation in new session; need to find a vehicle to request the extension – supp budget or FY23 operating budget
- 11:49AM CABRAL commented that Commission should entertain the idea of an extension and there would be several legislative vehicles available to file an extension; filing legislation is no promise the Legislature will act on it because the public must be given an opportunity to process recommendations and make their own suggestions; believes the subcommittee work is important and willing to hold space in his schedule for a weekly meeting
- 11:52AM WALLEY is in favor of requesting a February deadline extension; would like to create a schedule and deadlines for each subcommittee to report to the full Commission
- 11:54AM PACHECO wanted to clarify that he was not recommending a July deadline, only trying to make Commission aware of deadlines for passing legislation; agrees that extending the date to February 2023 is a good idea and might even not be enough time; agreed Commission should work backward from the deadline to set the pace of subcommittee work
- 11:57AM BOYLES stated that the case for an extension is strong, but not a decision to be made at this meeting and perhaps subcommittees can have conversation on the timing of the request; suggested a discussion of Next Steps for the subcommittees; suggested Histories & Usages and Research & Development report first, followed by Public Consultation
- 12:00PM WEEDEN proposed discussion on the reporting deadline extension be put on the agenda for the next meeting and that the work of the subcommittees should begin quickly once Commission receives clarity on the requirements of the Open Meeting Law
- 12:00PM MOTION TO ADJOURN made by KONDRAIUK; SECONDED by CABRAL
- 12:55PM Motion APPROVED by voice vote; no oppositions
- 12:55PM Meeting ADJOURNED by WEEDEN

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

11:00AM to 12:30PM

Via Microsoft Teams

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
April 19, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

Commission Members Present:

Brian Boyles (Chair), Brian Weeden (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice Chair), John Peters, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Michael Vincent Amato, Brona Simon, Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Elizabeth Solomon, Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, James Wallace, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused: Sen. Marc Pacheco, Rep. David Vieira, Kelly Bennett, D. Brenton Simons

- 11:01AM Meeting Called to Order by BOYLES
- 11:02AM Roll Call of Commission Members for Attendance Record
- 11:04AM MOTION to Approve Minutes from the March 15, 2022, meeting, made by SOLOMON; seconded by COMEAU
- 11:04AM Discussion on Minutes
- Donna Curtin's last name was misspelled in two places
  - Vincent Amato should be recorded as Absent/Excused
- 11:05AM ROLL CALL vote to approve minutes as amended; unanimously approved
- 11:06AM BOYLES delivered Chairs' Report
- Diane Feltner from Mass Humanities will reach out to members to assist with scheduling subcommittee meetings
  - Reminder to submit certificate of receipt of Open Meeting Law Guide
  - Extension of reporting deadline to be discussed in Old Business
- 11:09AM COMEAU delivered report from the History & Usages Subcommittee
- Held first meeting on April 15, 2022
  - Reiterated charge of subcommittee as examining the component of the seal, discussing the intent and perception of the seal, the history of harm, and the movement to change the seal
  - Examined each element of the seal to create a common language to describe each feature
  - General Kondratiuk provided a perspective on the military's use of the seal and historical context
  - Rep. Vieira asked the Indigenous members to provide their perspective on the history of harm and violence between the settlers and the native peoples, debunking some of the mythology surrounding the "50 years' peace" between the settlers' arrival and the violence of the 1670s

- 11:14AM WALLEY added that the agenda for the subcommittee was designed to provide structure to the conversation, but still allow for free-flowing conversation; will aim to provide subcommittee meeting minutes to full Commission prior to the next meeting to give them time to review notes
- 11:15AM BOYLES asked, with their set agenda, what specific issues did they look at during this meeting
- 11:16AM COMEAU answered that they went back and forth on the idea of intent vs. perception; this conversation focused more on the intent of the design provided by the historical evidence through each phase of the design from 1780 to the introduction of the current seal in 1885; reminded that the image under discussion is actually the ‘coat of arms’; recognized that many opinions can exist on all these points and there are passionate feelings behind every perspective, but working towards commonality and diving deeper into all these angles and nuances; purposefully crafted a broad agenda to provide the time and space for every member to be heard and say what they need to say
- 11:20AM WALLEY added that assigning terminology for each component will allow a common language for the conversation; highlighted that the concepts behind perception and intent can be viewed through a cultural lens, a historical lens, and an anthropological lens
- 11:22AM COMEAU added that breaking down the heraldry terms and creating a common terminology provided a basic context for certain elements of the coat of arms
- 11:23AM BOYLES acknowledged that a shared language would help move the conversation along
- 11:23AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS reiterated that the historical context only provides one side of the history and there is a need to address the Indigenous lens of that history; dissecting the one-sided historical record should not be the main focus, but finding ways to incorporate the Indigenous experience into that history by acknowledging their presence and the roles the Indigenous people played in that history; that is the next page we need to get to
- 11:26AM BOYLES delivered the report of the Subcommittee on Public Consultation
- Recommendations will be predicated on the work of the History & Usages Subcommittee
  - Need to determine how far this Commission wants to go in the redesign process
  - Discussed the question of whether to manage current public input vs. planning for the next phase of public outreach; educator and libraries are examples of partners for the next phase of outreach and can help develop an intentional plan for engaging with the public
- 11:28AM WALLACE added that the Commission needs to decide if the goal is a complete or partial redesign; need answer to that question before substantive work can move forward



- 11:29AM PETERS agreed that the work of the History & Usages Subcommittee would inform that decision
- 11:30AM BOYLES agreed that Wallace had enunciated the big question that should be the Commission's focus in the coming months and proposed the goal of coming to a conclusion on the complete or partial redesign question at the June meeting
- 11:31AM COMEAU suggested on the question of reworking or tweaking elements, the Commission start with 'to what degree are changes being recommended?' and 'where is there agreement on the changes?'; answering these questions will be the work of all the subcommittees through different lenses
- 11:33AM PETERS mentioned that the Commission will need public input on what elements should be changed
- 11:33AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested a straw poll to gauge the public's interest on a major change vs. minor tweaks to the design; results from that poll could help produce a framing paper which could narrow scope and create a mandate from the public to help direct work
- 11:35AM WALLEY proposed that the subcommittees all work to answer the same question – is the goal a complete redesign or partial redesign?
- 11:37AM COMEAU seconded Walley's suggestion and offered that Secretary Galvin supports comprehensive public inclusion because the outcome needs to reflect the modern-day goals of the Commonwealth
- 11:38AM BOYLES recapped the goals the of the subcommittee discussions:
- Public Consultation can look at the incoming public input
  - Research & Design can look at how to design public input process
  - All Subcommittees will look at answering the redesign vs. tweak questions with the goal of having an answer at June meeting
- 11:40AM BOYLES opened discussion on Old Business
- Current reporting deadline is December 31, 2022, which raises the question of what would happen to this report if filed on the last day of the session; suggested that the Commission would want to still be in existence when the Legislature comes back into session to see any legislative proposal be filed.
  - Proposed extending deadline to February 15, 2022
- 11:41AM WALLACE commented that the Commission does not need to cut the deadline short, if asking for an extension, suggested extending reporting deadline further out in the legislative calendar
- 11:42AM AMATO agreed to Wallace's suggestion for the pushing the reporting deadline out further citing that public consultation can take time
- 11:43AM CURTIN seconded Wallace's and Amato's comments to extend the deadline further into the calendar to give the public consultation committee more time to develop a straw poll; would like to give subcommittee's more time to provide input; believes<sup>40a</sup>

more deliberate plan will create a stronger, more informed process internally as well as externally

- 11:46AM CABRAL commented that he has no strong opinion on the final deadline and reiterated that the filing of the report itself will not trigger legislative action; the Commission would need to find a legislator to file the recommendations as a bill, in which case, the bill would come before the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight which, in turn, would schedule a public hearing to formally gather input from the general public; given the public's interest, there may be more than one hearing; the formal legislative process provides opportunities for the public to weigh in on the issue
- 11:49AM KONDRATIUK added that the Commission must understand that a piece of legislation based on the Commission's recommendations may not go through the entire process and pass
- 11:50AM CABRAL agreed and added that once the recommendations are filed as legislation, changes most likely will be made as the proposal is reviewed by the House, Senate, and Governor; the recommendation is not guaranteed to become law; the Commission would become an advocate for its recommendations
- 11:51AM BOYLES requested that legislators provided guidance on how to file an extension
- 11:52AM WALLACE suggested that the full Commission be sent information on how a bill becomes a law to better understand the legislative process; reiterated that anything can happen once the bill hits the floor
- 11:54AM CABRAL offered to approach House leadership to request that the reporting deadline be included in the final technical amendment of the House FY2023 budget debate beginning on 4/25; would need the new reporting deadline date confirmed before approaching House Ways & Means; however, there will be several legislative vehicles to use to approve a deadline extension in the coming months
- 11:55AM COMEAU mentioned that the Secretary of State's website has a Citizens' Guide on the Legislative Process that can be shared with the Commission
- 11:56AM AMATO mentioned that the Commission need a motion to extend the reporting deadline to February or December 2023
- 11:57AM WALLACE made a MOTION to request a reporting deadline extension to December 31, 2023; motion SECONDED by AMATO
- 11:57AM BOYLES expressed concern about extending the deadline that far into the future and suggested June 30, 2023, to correspond with the end of session
- 11:58AM WALLEY mentioned that the Commission has been slow to get started and hesitates to approve such a long extension; believes that establishing checkpoints along the way would be beneficial and help Commission to not lose momentum

- 12:00PM COMEAU also suggested that there a risk to extending the deadline too far in that the Commission will appear meandering and indecisive, but Commission also needs time to produce something meaningful and comprehensive
- 12:01PM CABRAL agreed with Boyles, Walley, and Comeau that an earlier deadline would be more useful; seasonably filed legislative proposals are filed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in January; bills filed after that date go through another step in the process, but not complicated; Cabral committed to seeing to the filing of an extension, but believes that December 2023 is too far out
- 12:03PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested the Commission working backward from the legislative deadlines makes sense and to keep in mind that the fall elections could have an impact on maintaining momentum
- 12:03PM CABRAL mentioned that he has received inquiries on the Commission's progress from the Speaker's Office and other colleagues, so there is legislative interest in the work and an extension to December 2023 may not sit well
- 12:05PM WALLACE stated that he is also open to a closer date and suggested March 31, 2023, as an alternative; this would allow the Commission to set goals to serve as markers between now and then
- 12:06PM CABRAL mentioned that date made sense because, technically, when the Legislature returns in January there are no committees or Chairs, and leadership spends January through February establishing the Joint Committees; March is when the public hearings for legislation typically begin
- 12:07PM BOYLES amended the MOTION to request a reporting deadline extension to March 31, 2023; motion SECONDED by KONDRATIUK
- 12:08PM ROLL CALL vote to approved motion as amended; passed unanimously
- 12:08PM BOYLES recapped that the Chairs are working towards establishing a good, solid structure, a schedule for subcommittee meetings, and will work on a timeline for subcommittee work
- 12:09PM BOYLES asked if there was any other business
- 12:09PM WEEDEN notified the Research & Design Subcommittee that he will be reaching out soon to schedule the first meeting
- 12:10PM BOYLES asked if there was no other business, could there be a motion to adjourn
- 12:10PM KONDRATIUK made MOTION to ADJOURN; motion SECONDED by WALLACE
- 12:11PM ROLL CALL vote to adjourn; passed unanimously; meeting ADJOURNED

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

11:00AM to 12:30PM

Via Microsoft Teams

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
May 17, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

Commission Members Present:

Brian Boyles (Chair), Brian Weeden (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice Chair), John Peters, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Rep. David Vieira, Brona Simon, Kelly Bennett, Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Elizabeth Solomon, Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, James Wallace, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused: Sen. Marc Pacheco, Michael Vincent Amato

- 11:01AM Meeting Called to Order by WEEDEN
- 11:02AM Roll Call of Commission Members for Attendance Record
- 11:04AM MOTION to Approve Minutes from the April 19, 2022, meeting, made by FERRETTI; seconded by BOYLES
- 11:04AM Discussion on Minutes
- 11:05AM WEEDEN led a ROLL CALL vote to approve minutes; unanimously approved
- 11:06AM WALLEY delivered History & Usages Subcommittee Report for 5/10/22; full statement included below:

The histories and usages subcommittee *charged with the responsibility to examine the features of the seal, its current usage, and historical context by discussing a historical analysis of the individual elements of the seal as well as its history of harm, Indigenous experiences, and movement to change it* continued the conversation from where we left off in our April 15th meeting.

Both the April 15th history and usages subcommittee meeting and the April 19th full commission meeting had left us with the question of clarifying if the heraldic charge (in other words the native figure) alone is problematic or if there is harm because of the way the charge (or figure) is depicted in relation to the other elements of the seal, or if it is both, or something different.

In the beginning of our conversation on May 10th Ponkapoag Massachusetts Councilwoman Elizabeth Solomon offered that we must also consider that the charge, or Native figure, is inside of a coat of arms which is a very Eurocentric concept, and that this alone is indeed disrespectful. I myself the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Representative offered that the lack of input from Indigenous communities in the current seal is very concerning.

A discussion of how to represent the Commonwealth's relationship with Indigenous people unfolded, with a point of importance being that without Indigenous communities, colonies, such as Plimoth, would not have survived and Massachusetts would not exist or be as it is today.

In addition to discussing the Indigenous experience of this seal and its imagery we've introduced the point of remembering the aspirational aspect of what a new seal could express, and that in such an endeavor we should not lose sight of the fact that such a process would not solely be an Indigenous and Colonial issue, and that of course there is a broader spectrum of stakeholders in the Commonwealth. While considering this point, we should remember what Brigadier General Kondratiuk offered in this meeting, the fact that one reason for the current seal's creation was to unify all the state departments under one seal.

Additionally, we should think about what our **state archaeologist, Brona Simon** said and reiterated, which was that we have good starting guidelines to come up for the framework in which Native imagery could be included in alternate design to the seal.

I believe that the **New England Historic Genealogical Society president and CEO Brenton Simons** offered us some great closing remarks by using the example of the 1980s unmarked burial law about ancestral Indigenous remains and how just earlier this month, the Society for American Archaeology finally issued an apology for the decades where the archaeological community refused to give up Native ancestors, or, skeletal remains.

At this point I believe our subcommittee has the aspiration to discuss what the current usages of the seal and motto are aiming to express, as far as values go, in addition to considering the aspirational aspects of the seal and the other people and communities in a way that is better for all of us in the Commonwealth.

In echoing **Brenton's** words from this meeting, a reflection of this discussion back to the full committee is important.

Please, if I have misinterpreted your contributions to this meeting, or if anyone feels as though something needs to be added to this summary, make it known..

**Correction: In my misreading "Simon" and "Simons" this write up inaccurately recounts what was said by Brona Simon and Brenton Simons. These related statements should be swapped in order to correctly reflect a summary of the 5/10/2022 meeting.**

11:10AM SIMONS mentioned that his comments and Brona Simon's comments were reversed in subcommittee meeting minutes; Walley will make correction

11:11AM WEEDEN reiterated everyone's right to speak and encouraged all Commission members to participate in the conversation; the goal of this meeting is to understand each Commission member's perspective on whether the goal is a full revision of the seal & motto or a partial revision; the Indigenous members support a complete redesign; the question is "where do you stand on complete change, partial change, or no change?"

- PETERS – present, but did not respond to roll call at this point (seemed like technical issue)
- COMEAU – as an appointee of the Secretary of State, expected to provide the historical context, along with colleague Gen. Kondratiuk, for the Commission; the Secretary does not want to impact decision-making process, but wants to ensure it includes full public participation, and in light of that charge, defers to the final decision of the Commission
- PACHECO – absent
- CABRAL – wants to work with Commission, but going to pass on deciding at this point
- AMATO – absent
- VIEIRA – needs to show change; the Commission needs to provide specific recommendations or describe the need for change
- SIMON – the perspective of Indigenous peoples needs to be heard at the full Commission level; they have stated their issues and desire for full redesign
- BOYLES – Full statement included below:

I believe a full redesign of the seal and motto are necessary given the charge of this special commission:

*To determine if the seal and motto are unwittingly harmful to or misunderstood by the citizens of the commonwealth; and (ii) examine and study the seal and motto of the commonwealth to ensure that they faithfully reflect and embody the historic and contemporary commitments of the<sup>45</sup>*

*commonwealth to peace, justice, liberty and equality and to spreading the opportunities and advantages of education.*

There is no way I can examine the seal or the context in which it was created without concluding that it is harmful, both to each of us as residents and to the reputation of Massachusetts.

There is no interpretation that leads me back *to peace, justice, liberty, equality and education.*

At this historic moment, we have a unique opportunity, as residents of Massachusetts, to do the hard work. To create a seal and motto that do justice to the best that this commonwealth has to offer, and to reckon with the history represented, both visually and in its origins, by the current seal and motto.

I base my feelings in the wisdom received from my colleagues on this commission, who were named to this commission because of their expertise and their leadership in their communities. The words of our Native colleagues as expressed in the History and Usages subcommittee on May 10 hold particular weight with me, and I hope we can continue to foster this historic moment with collaboration and respect as we envision the path forward to a new seal and motto.

As the leader of an organization that supports hundreds of local history programs, I see every day the will of people around the commonwealth to reckon with our history, to not settle for stereotypes, to respond to a changing population, to dig into their archives and records to elevate the voices of people—in particular, Native people—who were marginalized and erased from the stories we tell about Massachusetts. People in Massachusetts are wicked smart and they are bold and they should not settle for a seal that sells all of us short.

We have discussed the context and historical record. I base my belief that a full redesign of the seal and motto are necessary on the historical record left by Edmund Garrett, the designer of the 1898 seal, who in 1900 [wrote an artist's statement](#) for the New England Magazine, Vol. 23, easily located through a google search. I note particularly:

1. The **charge**, or figure of a Native man: The face of the Native figure was taken from a photograph, plucked by the Bureau of Ethnology in Washington, DC, by then Secretary of the Commonwealth William Olin, of Thomas Little Shell, a Chippewa leader who

never resided in Massachusetts. The figure is based on a skeleton held in the Peabody Museum in Harvard. No Native residents were consulted in this selection, a reflection of centuries of intentional exclusion on the part of the Commonwealth, from land, laws, and historical records.

2. The figure in the **shield** holds a bow that, according to Garrett, was taken from an unnamed Native man shot by a settler named William Goodnough in Sudbury in 1665. This bow serves as a reminder that, should any person know the full context and record, they would understand that the seal emerges from the violence brought on a people in their own land.
3. The sword in the **crest** is modeled on that of Myles Standish.\* We know for the record that Standish slaughtered native people living on their own lands. He was reprimanded for this by some of his Pilgrim colleagues.
  - \* Correction made by Kondratiuk, Comeau, & Simons – according to historical record and standards of heraldry, the sword in the crest would not be directly linked to Myles Standish.
  - Does not necessarily change the intent of the artist; the harm of the sword as a feature still stands – Walley, Boyles, Andrews-Maltais

These are elements of the seal. The intentions were quite clear and the construction was done in harmful ways.

In consideration of the **motto**: "By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty." Given these origins and the known history, those words do not ring true. They, too, must go.

I see no way to tweak or edit them that could do justice to the long history of erasure and oppression of Native peoples since the arrival of the Pilgrims. I see no way to redeem those symbols. To do so would be to give priority to people whose violence should not be a source of pride but of apology and reconciliation.

I base my feelings on my conversations with my 8-year old son, Ivan Ward Boyles, resident of Leverett, Massachusetts. When I walked him through the elements and origins of the seal as described above by Garrett, he reacted with astonishment. "Of course it should be changed!!" A child can see it. We can all see it.

We should now move forward to create a process that establishes a seal and motto that are aspirational and that reflect the greatness of Massachusetts and its unique promise as an incubator of ideas and equality in this country. We should share that responsibility as an example for our fellow residents on what it means to address past wrongs and to learn together and to envision a more just future.

**I look forward to partnering with all of the members of the commission on that work.**

- BENNETT – here to support the work of the Commission and help shape recommendation for change, particularly where harm has occurred to native peoples



- WALLEY – supports full redesign; there have been 7 generations of native people who have fought and worked for change; when thinking about the future, will the Commission leave the next generation more work to do or will the Commission focus on aspirational intent?
- ANDREWS-MALTAIS – wants to reiterate Walley’s and Indigenous goals, looking for a complete change - ideally, without losing sight that this is a teachable moment, an opportunity to use our shared history to teach all residents of the Commonwealth – without the assistance of Indigenous People there would be no country; the Indigenous people had three choices when the Pilgrims landed – do nothing, kill, or assist, and they chose to assist; realistically, open to just making changes to elements of the design, but those elements that cause harm need to be removed or replaced; Commission should focus on pivoting to the future by asking “How do the residents of Massachusetts want to be portrayed?”; ultimately, can live with certain elements, because although Indigenous people have been harmed the most, they also recognize that they are a subset of the overall population; willing to work toward consensus.
- SOLOMON – supports a full redesign; the name of the Commonwealth is taken from the Massachusetts tribe and their concerns about how their name is used have never been taken into consideration before; the Seal & Motto is meant to reflect all of the state – that includes the Indigenous history of the state and everything else that has happened since the European invasion; would like to see an aspirational focus because this is not only an issue of addressing harm, but also of how the state is representing itself to the world; the values we hold are not currently reflected in the seal we use; this is an opportunity to teach and reflect on the history of the Commonwealth, but also to change the narrative
- FERRETTI – was a child raised in Plymouth, MA, where Indigenous people were invisible; had to drive by Myles Standish Park, named after a man, lauded for this violence against native people, everyday; supports a full redesign, but could live with certain elements staying in place, but as a proud resident of Plymouth and the Herring Pond Wampanoag, believe the state can and should do better
- WHITSON – Full statement included below:

Does our seal reflect the ideals of the commonwealth without causing harm? No. Harm is present.

No individual bit of art can reflect the complete story of all the people of Massachusetts. But we can assure that what is included shouldn’t actively harm. Symbols carry the burden of their history and their origin story, we have a well documented process of where and how we’ve arrived at our seal and our motto. It wasn’t by accident.

I think if a design brief were created, based on ideals, our current seal and motto wouldn’t be appropriate solutions. We should explore to see if there are other shared elements of the commonwealth - flora, fauna, topography, high ideals of education and inclusion - that has

existed in the past that could be day-lit again. We have robust archives and a deep well of visual symbolism over 400 years that we can dig through.

Ultimately, this seal, motto and flag will be given context by us - residents of the Commonwealth.

We have a unique and exciting charge to reset our visual and verbal language of Massachusetts. We shouldn't line edit, but approach it fully new.

- KONDRATIUK- not against redesign of the seal, but must mention that 17,000 Massachusetts soldiers have died under this flag since 1787 and their sacrifice should always be honored
- SIMONS – supports a new design, remove the sword and crest and create a new motto; Massachusetts is rich with iconography that can better reflect who we are and what we aspire to be
- WALLACE – would be best to approach design with a clean slate; you can reintroduce current elements that might still work into a new design, but can't just revise what is there; should refer back to the charge of the Commission for a motto, "justice, peace, and liberty for all,"; it would be easier to go back to the drawing board; would like to make a MOTION to proceed under the guidelines of the clean slate
- CURTIN – we are dealing in the world of symbols which are rooted in inherited assumptions; it would be difficult to alter current symbols to communicate values we hold today; Is there any element that can serve us today? My feeling the answer is NO; no change is not in keeping with our duty as citizens of the Commonwealth today, nor is a partial revision; we need a complete redesign; it is not just about representing native people and colonialism, but we need to steer towards a larger goal; it is not easy, but necessary
- PETERS – the state seal is a true depiction of what the native people have been through; for 3 or 4 decades we have been trying to make a change – goes back to the work of my father and Byron Rushing; the seal and motto represent the state, which includes the native peoples, but concerned that we will spend another 30 or 40 years to make the changes we are discussing today; believe that the seal should fairly represent the Commonwealth and our shared history
- CABRAL – suggested that the Commission invite Byron Rushing to a future meeting to speak to the work he has done on this issue and hear his perspective on how we could move forward; in a redesign, we need to be reflective, and we do need a complete new design or redesign; we need to keep the differences between the flag, seal, and motto in mind as we go through this process – but the design should reflect the people of Massachusetts today, the Indigenous people and everyone else, because images are important; the Commission has the ability and capacity to come up with a design and motto that will better reflect everyone in the state today while being respectful of the past – and I want to see it happen now.

- 11:51AM WEEDEN moved to OLD BUSINESS and asked about the reporting deadline extension
- BOYLES replied that Rep. Cabral’s office is working on it and will notify the Commission when completed
- 11:52AM WEEDEN moved onto NEW BUSINESS
- BOYLES mentioned that the next meetings for the Subcommittee are being scheduled and all three should have conversations about the Commission’s charge going forward; have invited Micah Whitson to speak to the Research & Design Subcommittee and will reach out to Byron Rushing to begin to gather other perspectives; the History & Usages Subcommittee can begin a conversation on the values we would want to see reflected in the redesign
- 11:54AM WALLACE made the MOTION to move forward with a “clean slate” understanding as the goal; SECONDED by FERRETTI
- 11:55AM Discussion on MOTION
- 11:56AM CABRAL suggested AMENDING the MOTION by changing the wording to “complete redesign”; seconded by KONDRATIUK
- 11:56AM COMEAU suggested clarifying by making the language suggestion of a “comprehensive revision of the state seal”
- 11:57AM CABRAL further suggested “comprehensive redesign” in place of “revision”
- 11:57AM SOLOMON agreed that “revision” implies partial changes to the current design
- 11:58AM General agreement to move forward with “comprehensive redesign”
- 11:58AM WALLEY asked WHITSON to reflect on his experience with this process in Mississippi
- 11:58AM WHITSON replied that “redesign” might not clearly include the motto as that is a verbal element; suggested “design a seal and draft a motto” to broaden the from the possible constraints of the terminology of “redesign”
- 12:00PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested “revised or new design of the seal and motto”
- 12:00PM BOYLES made a FURTHER AMENDMENT to the MOTION that the Commission will create a new design of the seal and a new motto; SECONDED by CABRAL

- 12:01PM WALLACE asked if it made sense for him to withdraw his original motion and create a new one
- 12:01PM CABRAL mentioned that Commission can vote on a further amendment without withdrawing the underlying motion
- 12:02PM VIEIRA countered that the Legislature follows Cushing's Rules, not Robert's Rules, and that a withdrawal may be needed for the Commission
- 12:03PM WALLACE, on point of order, WITHDREW his original MOTION to move forward with a "clean slate" understanding
- 12:03PM BOYLES made a new MOTION to state that the Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth commits to making recommendations on a new design of the seal and a new motto; SECONDED by CABRAL
- 12:03PM WEEDEN led a ROLL CALL vote to approve the MOTION; passed unanimously by Commission
- 12:05PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested that the Commission charge the subcommittees with discussing the values and ideas to reflect in the new design
- 12:06PM WALLACE asked how the Commission is going to proceed to the public; Will the Commission present a completed recommendation which includes its ideas before going to the public for input OR will the Commission reach out to the public for comment before it submits its recommendations?
- 12:07PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested the Public Consultation Subcommittee can make recommendations for how to proceed with public input, which should be clear on expectations for public participation
- 12:08PM CABRAL suggested the Commission host a public hearing in the beginning to allow the public to participate directly, then follow-up with a second hearing after the Commission has drafted its recommendations
- 12:10PM WHITSON agreed that public input from the beginning can be helpful and serve as guide for the recommendations; getting feedback at both the beginning and the end is good, but having input upfront is important
- 12:10PM WALLACE said that past experience suggests that allowing the public to offer specific elements for inclusion will not work well, need to focus on the image as a whole
- 12:12PM CABRAL returning to the public input process said that the Commission can frame the scope of the public hearing and put parameters on what testimony will be heard or submitted; suggested that the Commission get into the habit of

requiring participants to turn on their camera when speaking because that is likely to be a disability-access element of the new laws on the Open Meeting and Public Meeting Law that the Legislature will pass soon

- 12:14PM WALLACE reiterated that attempting to incorporate individual symbols of importance to particular segments of the community is going to be difficult; the overall design needs to represent the whole
- 12:15PM SIMONS agreed that the simpler design is better because the design will not be able to accommodate every idea; crafting a narrative of the values that the image is supposed to represent is a good place to explain ideas
- 12:16PM WALLACE asked about the possibility of scheduling an in-person Commission meeting?
- 12:16PM WEEDEN replied that they will discuss that idea in the next Chairs' Meeting
- 12:16PM COMEAU returned to discussion on the design and suggested the Commission emphasize aspirational elements, find points of commonality and shared values and focus on those ideas
- 12:18PM WEEDEN indicated that the Chairs and Co-Chairs will discuss the concerns and ideas brought up today; asked if there was no other business, could there be a motion to adjourn?
- 12:18PM WALLACE made MOTION to ADJOURN; SECONDED by ANDREWS-MALTAIS
- 12:19PM ROLL CALL vote to adjourn; passed unanimously; meeting ADJOURNED

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

11:00AM to 12:30PM

Via Microsoft Teams

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
June 21, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

Commission Members Present:

Brian Boyles (Chair), Brian Weeden (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice Chair), John Peters, Brona Simon, Kelly Bennett, Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Elizabeth Solomon, Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, James Wallace

Absent/Excused: Rep. Antonio Cabral, Sen. Marc Pacheco, Rep. David Vieira, Michael Vincent Amato, Donna Curtin

- 11:01AM Meeting Called to Order by BOYLES
- 11:02AM Roll Call of Commission Members for Attendance Record
- 11:04AM MOTION to Approve Minutes from the May 17, 2022, meeting, made by WALLACE; seconded by SIMONS
- 11:04AM Discussion on Minutes
- Misspelled Brenton Simon's first name in document – CORRECTED
- 11:07AM KONDRATIUK made a point of clarification that the inference that the sword depicted in seal is Myles Standish's is inaccurate
- 11:12AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS and WALLEY countered that the sword as long been affiliated with Myles Standish, whether that was the original intent or not, and that interpretation has to be considered in this conversation
- 11:14AM SIMONS made a MOTION to amend the 5/17/22 minutes to include two footnotes under that statement in the final document: SECONDED by ANDREWS-MALTAIS
- 11:14AM BOYLES led a ROLL CALL vote to approve minutes as amended; unanimously approved
- 11:15AM COMEAU delivered History & Usages Subcommittee Report for 6/7/22
- Subcommittee agreed that the focus of their work needed to change; need to document the historical record along with the history of harm and prepare a statement that could serve for archiving purposes
  - Discussed the value mentioned in the establishing language – peace, liberty, equality, and the advantages of education

- Solomon noted that the Commission should be careful of the buzz words as those “values” have not been realized for many people in the state; need to shift to an aspirational focus and envision what we want to be as a state
- Simons suggested the subcommittee produce an explanatory statement to accompany the redesign that explains the intent of the artist’s vision
- Concluded that the subcommittee should focus on creating a statement and historical summaries for the final report.

- 11:20AM BOYLES asked if there were any questions for the Subcommittee
- COMEAU mentioned that he will consult with this colleagues Kondratiuk and Simon to draft a statement on the historical record; need to better understand the resources available to document the history of harm
- 11:22AM WALLEY suggested that it would be important to discuss the interpretations of the values rather than focusing solely on the imagery
- 11:22AM BOYLES recapped the Next Steps as (1) creating a framework and resources for the historical record and (2) having deeper conversations on how the imagery reflects the values
- 11:23AM BOYLES delivered the Public Consultation Subcommittee Report for 6/7/22
- Byron Rushing was unavailable to join the subcommittee, so it was a brief discussion on how to refocus on a new charge
  - Discussed a process for inviting individuals or groups to give testimony or present to the subcommittee; suggested people involved in the change movement and educators as key
  - Need to establish a process for gathering input from the public in order to move forward
  - BENNETT to provide a list of entities that could assist with gathering and disseminating information
- 11:25AM BOYLES delivered the Chairs Report
- Work of the Commission has entered a new phase after the decision to go forward with the intent to create a new design; decided to invite WHITSON to present to the full commission to help subcommittee focus their work and offer suggestions on how to proceed
- 11:27AM WHITSON presented on his experience on the Mississippi Flag Redesign Project – shared screen. Highlights include:
- MA has no communal icon to rally around, so the flag becomes the most prominent symbol of the Commonwealth
  - MA currently links the coat of arms, the seal, and the flag; same imagery used in all three elements, as opposed to:
    - Alabama which has separate imagery for each element
    - Texas which relies heavily on the ‘lone star’ in its imagery, but still has separate designs

- Adhering too closely to history for history’s sake can cause problems
- Including human imagery can limit representation; many opt for localized animals and fauna
- Seal vs. Flag – do not put the same burden on both pieces
  - Seal can be more complicated, but a flag should be easier to see and understand; a child should be able to draw the image; it should include meaningful symbolism, but no lettering
  - Rhode Island mentioned as an example of state that has a good follow-through between their coat of arms, seal, and flag with the image of an anchor and the word ‘Hope’
- MA has state symbols the Commission could pull from. Examples include the chickadee, cranberry, wild turkey, elm tree, cod fish, etc.
- Up until 1971, the pine tree was an emblem on the back of the MA flag
  - 60% of MA is forest area
  - Pine tree also features in the Wampanoag creation story
  - The Golden Dome at the State House has a pinecone finial at the top
- Seal will take longer to design
  - Different iterations of the seal must be adaptable to different materials
    - Fine line work vs. digital renderings
- Mottos
  - Bad: Maryland
  - Good: New Hampshire’s “Live Free or Die”
    - Rhode Island’s “Hope”
    - California’s “Eureka”
    - Texas – the word “Texas” means friendship in the native language of the Indigenous People in the territory, so the motto of the state of Texas is “Friendship”
- Recommendations:
  - Motto – present lawmakers with two options
  - Seal – Commission should decide the content of the seal and decide if it must include motto, ie, set the design parameters; then an expert illustrates ideas; Legislature approves; then experts render the design in different materials and forms
  - Flag – need to be clear whether a change in the design of the flag is within the charge of the Commission; if so, provide guidelines for flag design and vet with vexillologists
  - Conduct non-binding polls to gauge public input
  - Present legislators with distinct options

11:57AM BOYLES asked for questions for Micah Whitson

11:57AM WALLEY mentioned that on the Mississippi flag, the Choctaw Star is balanced with neighbors.



- WHITSON explained the stars represent the sequence of the state's admission to the union and can get confused with the Choctaw star
- 12:01PM BENNETT asked about the artist selection process used in Mississippi
- WHITSON replied that the MS Department of Archives distributed a call for submissions; those submissions were vetted by vexillologists and the final artwork was rendered by graphic designers on staff
- 12:02PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS returned conversation back to the Commission's charge; Commission needs clarity on whether redesigning the flag is part of their charge and purpose or not. Requested that the Legislators look into this matter.
- 12:06PM Staff mentioned that in Massachusetts General Law, the seal, motto, coat of arms, and the flag are separate elements, but are linked together, so changing one element will have a ripple effect on the others
- COMEAU reaffirmed this linkage
- 12:08PM BOYLES asked about the Call for Designs and the budget connected to the MS flag redesign project
- WHITSON replied there was a budget connected to operations, but not the design process
- 12:09PM BOYLES asked the Commission on their ideas on how this presentation helps the group move forward
- 12:10PM WALLEY would like to see a theme carry through each element and appreciates the different focuses of the seal and flag; would like clarity on the linkage in the law
- 12:12PM KONDRATIUK asked if it was time to reach out to graphic designers for ideas?
- BOYLES replied that the Commission should create a framework for the RFP
- 12:12PM SIMONS suggested that the Commission should be presented with a poll of themselves first to determine which images resonate with the members as a starting point
- 12:13PM COMEAU suggested the Commission set parameters for designs for the experts to work with; there are over 30 state symbols that could be included; would welcome more input from design experts; believes that design should be simple for both the image and the motto
- 12:16PM WHITSON suggested that the design brief could include specific design requirements; a poll could help identify popular ideas, images, etc; then commission uses those common themes to draft the design brief

- 12:18PM BOYLES summarized the goal to create nonbinding polls of the Commission members to get information and find common ground on the images that resonate with this group
- 12:18PM WALLEY recognized the synergy developing between the subcommittees; a conversation on values to focus the selection of images; referenced the use of “Massachusetts” as the state’s name, which is the tribe’s name – how do we respect that connection in this conversation?
- 12:21PM COMEAU relayed his experience with the state rock; symbols need to be self-explanatory
- 12:22PM WHITSON suggested first step would be to seek out illustrators to help envision the idea; then move toward; the MS Project had a \$50,000 budget for operations and another \$14,000 for additional costs
- 12:23PM BENNETT asked if the artist received a stipend.
- WHITSON replied that they were compensated \$100 for their designs, but the process did not call out for ‘experts’
- 12:24PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS returned to the question of a straw poll of the public that was discussed several months ago as a way to show public approval for a full change, partial change, or no change; questioned whether the Commission could/should move forward without that initial public input
- 12:26PM BOYLES suggested that was an important point; need to decide how many polls are needed and is there a way to combine both ideas
- 12:26PM WHITSON mentioned that polls were only successful when the old flags were removed and public was presented with new options to choose from; understand this Commission was charged with presenting changes
- 12:28PM BOYLES recapped the Next Steps as follows:
- Conduct non-binding polls of the Commission regarding state symbols to consolidate options for public
  - History & Usages Subcommittee would continue conversation about values and focus on reworking the motto
  - Research & Design Subcommittee would analyze the framework for the design and determine what instructions are needed
- 12:30PM WALLACE asked about the reporting deadline extension; still pending, but expected
- 12:31PM COMEAU agreed with the new charges of the subcommittees and the decision to break up responsibilities for the seal vs. the motto

- 12:32PM BOYLES agreed that the work should be attention to the Massachusetts tribe when crafting the redesign of the seal and motto
- 12:32PM WALLEY agreed that the Commission should consciously not repeat harm as its moves forward designing the new process
- 12:34PM BOYLES called for a Motion to Adjourn
- 12:34PM COMEAU made MOTION to ADJOURN; SECONDED by WALLEY
- 12:35PM Voice vote to adjourn; no opposition; meeting ADJOURNED

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, July 19, 2022  
11:00AM to 12:30PM  
Via Microsoft Teams

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
July 19, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

Commission Members Present:

Brian Boyles (Chair), Brian Weeden (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice Chair), John Peters, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Michael Vincent Amato, Brona Simon, Kelly Bennett, Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Elizabeth Solomon, Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, James Wallace, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused: Sen. Marc Pacheco, Rep. David Vieira

- 11:03AM Meeting Called to Order by WEEDEN
- 11:02AM Roll Call of Commission Members for Attendance Record
- 17 of 19 Commissioners present; quorum reached
- 11:07AM MOTION to Approve Minutes from the July 19, 2022, meeting, made by ANDREWS-MALTAIS; seconded by FERRETTI
- 11:08AM ROLL CALL to accept minutes; approved with 16 ayes and 1 abstention from CURTIN
- 11:09AM Report from the 7/12 Public Consultation Subcommittee delivered by BOYLES
- Heard from Steve Koczela, MassINC Polling on how to use polling to gauge public interest on iconography
  - Presented 3 possible options:
    - Formal poll to be administered directly statewide (representative poll)
    - Sampling a particular population (targeted poll)
    - Creating a public link to an online survey and creating a public campaign to spread the word (self-selective poll)
    - All have different costs, ranging from \$10,000s to \$100,000s and varying levels of effectiveness
  - Recommendation:
    - Statewide poll with a link to be open and available for set timeframe – ie, 2 weeks
    - Target 5 demographic groups
    - Ask 30 specific questions with proposed words and symbols to choose from; not open-ended
  - Commission would also need a partner to analyze the data

- 11:13AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS mentioned that with such a large potential constituency, millions of MA residents, experience suggests that consensus would be difficult to find; should narrow down options to 4 or 5 data points; also mentioned the need to have an alternative to internet-based surveys to accommodate elderly citizens or those without access to electronic devices, suggested bifurcated process to include email poll and also physical mailing
- 11:15AM BOYLES agreed that those were good points and that there should be a serious conversation around the language included in phone, print, or email polls
- 11:16AM Report from the 7/14 Research & Design Subcommittee delivered by FERRETTI
- Micah Whitson shared his presentation again
  - Conversation on motto:
    - “Spirit of America” – put on license plates during Dukakis era
    - Current motto’s reference to strength/weakness does not connect with a modern MA resident
  - Image should find a way to communicate values visually; focus on nature, environment, to give a sense of place; colors can also represent place
  - Discussed Matt O’Brien’s 5 points of design and Mississippi flag as an example
  - Curtin appreciated the use of the pine tree which resonates with many, but is also part of the Wampanoag creation story and connected to eternal life
  - Cabral suggested that all 3 elements – the motto, seal, and flag – should be addressed at once now
  - Whitson suggested the aim should be to present options to legislators
  - Cabral suggested the cranberry could be a symbol as it resonates with the local tribes and the Cape Verdean community; Ferretti countered that many Indigenous people have a love/hate relationship with the cranberry because it fueled colonization
  - Set next meeting for 7/28 *(To note: This meeting was rescheduled to a later date.)*
- 11:23AM WEEDEN opened discussion on the Committee Reports
- 11:23AM WHITSON offered a correction on his name and place of residence
- 11:24AM CURTIN mentioned that the intersection between the design elements of the seal, motto, and flag should be clearly described in the design brief
- 11:25AM WEEDEN mentioned that the Research & Design Subcommittee will discuss the relationship between the seal, motto, and flag and debrief the full Commission
- 11:26AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS mentioned that she had provided a letter to the Commission members from the tribal council of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah that detailed their priorities and suggestions for the design which includes removing the sword and motto, including the representation of an Indigenous figure – specifically, Ousamequin – and removing the downward

facing arrow with the explanation that they did not want to lose the historical connection between the Wampanoag and the original settlers and that if the Indigenous figure is removed, their history will be forgotten.

- 11:29AM WEEDEN informed Andrews-Maltais that she would be provided the opportunity to read the letter into the record under the New Business section of the agenda
- 11:29AM BOYLES mention that the Chair's Report did not have any updates
- 11:30AM WEEDEN moved to Old Business
- COMEAU mentioned that the History & Usages Subcommittee was not able to reconvene since the previous commission meeting, but was going to focus their attention on the motto
- 11:31AM WEEDEN moved to New Business and invited ANDREWS-MALTAIS on behalf of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, to read the letter into the record (*see attachment*)
- 11:35AM WHITSON asked for more information on the statue of Ousamequin,, Yellow Feather, the Massasoit, in Plymouth that is referenced in the letter as an acceptable representation of an Indigenous figure in Massachusetts
- 11:35AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS responded that the statue stands on Cole's Hill in Plymouth; it is an image that is accepted by tribal leaders as a respectful representation of Massasoit Ousamequin, the tribal leader who signed the mutual aid agreement between his tribe and the English settlers in 1621 which led to the "First Thanksgiving"
- 11:40AM SOLOMON responded that she believes tribal governments should be a part of the public comment period, so no single tribe should have more sway than the others
- 11:42AM WEEDEN mentioned that the Indigenous members of the Commission will meet to discuss outreach to tribal governments
- 11:42AM CABRAL asked if all Indigenous Peoples in Massachusetts were Wampanoag; would appreciate clarification on that point and suggested that the Commission needed a list of all the tribes in Massachusetts
- No, not all Indigenous Peoples in Massachusetts are Wampanoag
  - Commission members also include Hassanamisco Nipmuc and Ponkapoag Massachusett
- 11:43AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS mentioned that the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs has a list of federally and state recognized tribes which can be provided to the Research & Design Subcommittee

- 11:44AM WALLEY suggested the list of Commission members and their tribal affiliations be sent to everyone and that Jim Peters could take care of that task
- 11:45AM WEEDEN shifted conversation to the Discussion on Imagery & Symbols including cranberry, cod fish, pine tree, etc.
- 11:47AM KONDRATIUK mentioned that from 1953-1965 a pine tree emblem was on the reverse side of the flag, but that practice stopped because it was too burdensome to make a flag with two different sides
- 11:47AM SOLOMON mentioned that cod-fishing was one of the main reasons settlers came to the area in the first place, so it will be important to keep in mind that every symbol will have two sides to the interpretation; the cod has both positive and negative symbolism and that dualism would need to be explained in the educational materials
- 11:49AM WALLACE mentioned the “Minuteman” is being discussed as a symbol of one who fights for freedom
- 11:49AM CURTIN expressed that this conversation is highlighting the problematic nature of using human representation, which is based on an exclusionary principle since it represents one group of people over all others; Commission should work towards finding an equally powerful symbol to non-Indigenous people to better represent the broad scope of people living in the state today; the subcommittee should look for other images that could speak to those common values
- 11:52AM BENNETT suggested the Commission would need clarity on any estate or copyright issues regarding the use of the image of Ousamequin before considering that suggestion
- 11:52AM COMEAU agreed that the Commission should take care that the symbols do not represent one group; suggested that the broad concept of the “Commonwealth” or for the common good, which is meant to be inclusive, be considered as basis for discussion; current conversation should be taken a cautionary note
- 11:54AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS responded that while the issue of copyrights does need to be taken into consideration, she reiterated her opinion that Ousamequin has been disregarded and disrespected by history by not being recognized as the individual who agreed to help the Plymouth settlers in the First Thanksgiving, an act of compassion and generosity in keeping with their People’s cultural beliefs, and a decision which allowed for the formation of this country; honoring him is a way of keeping that history relevant and not erasing his presence in the history of the state and this country
- 11:58AM SOLOMON countered that there were multiple tribal entities in Massachusetts at the time of colonization interacting with European settlers; being “inclusive” does

not mean excluding the experience of other Indigenous people and presenting one tribe's history as the only history; an image of a person is exclusive, a mascot is never one particular person; the name of the state is Massachusetts and Ousamequin was not a Massachusett, so there is already dissonance

- 12:01PM WALLACE echoed concerns expressed by Comeau and Curtin, that the Commission had just experienced an example of the minefield that putting a person on the seal and flag would be
- 12:01PM SIMONS mentioned that the narrative description of the iconography will be very important and should include an inclusive statement to explain the intent of the image and the history represented by it; a narrative description will be needed
- 12:03PM WHITSON referred to the idea of a "Commonwealth" with its possible similarity to the use of 'friendship' in Texas; believes it possible to connect the idea of the 'common good' with the fact that the name of the state, "Massachusetts", comes from the people who were here before the European settlers
- 12:05PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS agreed that having the explanation to help develop the educational curriculum is important; the explanation ties to the educational charge and the critical need to provide the background and context for the image; a picture is worth a thousand words, so there should be a two-fold goal: the image and the narrative; the general public does not understand the connection between the Wampanoag, first contact, and Thanksgiving
- 12:08PM WEEDEN suggested the Commission can email ideas to Kate Miller or co-Chairs after the meeting
- 12:09PM WEEDEN mentioned the next meeting of the Commission will be August 16, 2022, at 11:00AM and called for a Motion to Adjourn
- 12:09PM SOLOMON made MOTION to ADJOURN; SECONDED by BOYLES
- 12:10PM ROLL CALL vote to adjourn; no opposition; meeting ADJOURNED

*\*See attachment below\**

**Next Meeting:**  
Tuesday, August 16, 2022  
11:00AM to 12:30PM  
Via Microsoft Teams





20 Black Brook Road  
Aquinnah, MA 02535

Phone: 508-645-9265  
Fax: 508-645-3790

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July 14, 2022

Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon Street  
Boston MA 02133

Re: Position of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, a Federally Recognized Sovereign Tribal Government

Good Morning Co-Chairmen Weeden and Boyles and Commissioners,

In reference to the design elements of the Seal, Motto and Flag of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts being considered for removal or revision, please be advised that the following is the official and formal position of the duly elected Tribal Council of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah; a Federally Recognized Sovereign Tribal Nation.

While an entire redesign is the intent of the Seal Commission, our Tribal Council feels very strongly that certain design elements need to be removed, other elements need to be retained and other elements need revisions. We are calling upon the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Special Commission Relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth to make the following changes and incorporate them into any new design:

1. Totally remove the sword and motto in Latin
2. Keep the image of the Indigenous person, and replace it with the generally accepted image of Ousamequin as presented on Coles Hill (Plymouth)
3. Remove the downward facing arrow

Our Ancestors, the Wampanoag People provided aid and assistance to the English Pilgrim settlers in these lands. It is our desire and intent to not lose that historical imagery or the fact that our assistance played a critical and central role in the establishment of this country; from its founding roots to what it has become today.

In addition to respecting our Tribal Nation and recognizing the centuries of harm inflicted upon our People, whether intentional or unintentional, the result is still the same. The historical trauma and emotional distress that the current iteration and imagery represents, has harmed our People, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who reside within the Commonwealth, including any Indigenous Peoples who see the image. It triggers the knowledge of the atrocities that were perpetrated against our Ancestors, and resurrects and re-inflicts that pain on every generation of our People.

This is the perfect opportunity to demonstrate how a teaching moment can have a transformative impact. We call upon you to incorporate the elements listed above into any new design; to honor and respect the standing and position of our Tribal Government and to recognize the contributions of the Wampanoag People in the founding of this Country.

We would be happy to discuss further. Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation in this important matter.

In Balance, Harmony and Peace,

Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
August 16, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

Commission Members Present:

Brian Boyles (Chair), Brian Weeden (Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice Chair), John Peters, Michael Vincent Amato, Brona Simon, Kelly Bennett, Cheryl Andrews-Maltais, Elizabeth Solomon, Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused: Michael Comeau (Vice Chair), Sen. Marc Pacheco, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Rep. David Vieira, Jim Wallace

- 11:02AM Meeting Called to Order by BOYLES
- 11:02AM ROLL CALL of Commission Members for Attendance Record
- 14 of 19 Commissioners present; quorum reached
- 11:04AM MOTION to Approve Minutes from the July 19, 2022, meeting, made by FERRETTI; seconded by SOLOMON
- 11:04AM Discussion on Minutes
- 1 typo fix at 11:16AM for grammar suggested by CURTIN
- 11:05AM ROLL CALL to accept minutes; approved unanimously
- 11:06AM Chairs' Report delivered by WEEDEN
- Presented draft document on Meeting Ground Rules containing 6 points as a broad overview of operation procedures
- 11:09AM Discussion opened on Meeting Ground Rules
- 11:10AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS that she was charged with representing her tribal council on this Commission; views expressed are not personal, but approved by her Council, which fought to be included on the Commission
- 11:11AM CURTIN expressed thanks for Chairs for creating clear and helpful guidelines for the Commission
- 11:12AM WEEDEN commented that these guidelines should also apply to the subcommittee work to help create a smooth process and clear connection between subcommittee work and Commission meetings

- 11:14AM WEEDEN made a MOTION to Accept and Approve Seal & Motto Commission Meeting Rules for usage: SECONDED by SOLOMON
- 11:14AM ROLL CALL to Accept Meeting Ground Rules; approved at 11:15AM with one abstention by ANDREWS-MALTAIS
- 11:15AM BOYLES added new point to agenda –
- Discussion on the Massachusetts General Law (MGL) as it relates to the Motto, Seal, Coat of Arms, and Flag
  - Led by Co-Chair Brittney Walley
- 11:16AM WALLEY mentioned that currently MGL states that the motto is a part of the coat of arms and the seal and the flag must portray a representation of the coat of arms (Sections 1-3 in Chapter 2 of the MGL); therefore, changing the imagery will automatically change the seal and the flag of the Commonwealth as the MGL is currently written; the Commission could decide to modify the relationship between all these pieces in their final recommendation and are not necessarily bound by what is currently in MGL; can examine the scope & details of the seal vs. the flag and Sections 1-3 in Chapter 2 may need to be modified depending on the Commission’s final recommendations – but ultimately, whatever recommendations the Commission makes in its report, it will be suggesting modifications to the MGL, so understanding the legal language can inform expectations and output for the Subcommittees and the Commission at-large; for example, the MGL on the seal currently includes the requirement that the seal must be circular and include the name of the state in Latin; these are the type of details that could/should be points of discussion as the Commission deliberates.
- 11:22AM BOYLES opened discussion on the MGL Review
- 11:22AM WHITSON asked for clarification if the current language in the MGL applies only the present, but does not have to hold for future -ie, is not binding on the design proposal that the Commission may recommend; if Commission is not bound by “the seal must be circular, and the state written in Latin” it should be another piece of the conversation
- 11:24AM WALLEY confirmed that the Commission may make recommendations that alter the link between motto, seal, coat of arms, and flag, but if it does so, it must be thorough in its language and clearly describe the new relationship between all these components
- 11:25AM CURTIN raised a technical point on the physical use of a seal; does a seal have to be circular because it is also used as a stamp?
- 11:26AM WHITSON confirmed that seals are usually circular

- 11:26AM KONDRATIUK agreed that it is a heraldic standard to have a circular seal, but it does not necessarily need to be, most are round, but it is a design decision, and some states use a shield as an alternative
- 11:27AM SIMON reiterated that the Great Seal of State is a gold seal which embosses a blue ribbon on formal documents; the notary republic seals are also round
- 11:28AM KONDRATIUK agreed that seals are traditionally circular
- 11:28AM CURTIN emphasized that the seal is not just an emblem, but a physical object, typically forged in metal, which serves an official purpose and is used as a stamp; need to keep the physical usage in mind for design
- 11:29AM WHITSON recommended the Commission break the link between the elements and the requirement that one must be a part of the others and focus on defining what each piece should look like
- 11:31AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS agreed that if we are changing the MGL, the Commission should be methodical about it; it makes sense for each element to be uniform across the board, but each piece does have a different purpose.
- 11:31AM WEEDEN summarized the conversation; Commission needs to decide on its do's and don'ts; Commission has decided to start from scratch, so all pieces should be open to discussion; Weeden likes the idea of a circle and its connection to the sun, the circle of life, and that no one is ahead of another in a circle; Weeden does not particularly like the Latin transcription of the state; would like to see decisions made on the use of the pine tree, cod fish, cranberry, human imagery, etc, and suggested the Research & Design Subcommittee can work towards the goal of defining those images; the Commission has heard from individuals, but he would like to find a consensus on these topics
- 11:35AM BOYLES recommended sending this goal to the subcommittees and requested they be very intentional in discussing the connection between each element
- 11:36AM WALLEY commented that currently the state has the 'seal on a bedsheet' design esthetic and this could be something the Research & Design Subcommittee can discuss; making changes, even small changes, does require careful consideration in the language
- 11:37AM BOYLES recommended inserting this discussion into agendas for subcommittees to allow every person to speak
- 11:38AM BOYLES opened discussion on Old Business
- Reporting deadline extension and the proposed \$100,000 budget are trapped in the stalled economic development bill which failed to be passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor

- The conversation on the potential funding came quickly and was not anticipated
  - Pending guidance from Leadership on the likelihood of reviving pieces of the bill in informal session
- 11:39AM WHITSON asked about the parameters for funding designated for “administration and operating expenses”; BOYLES replied that he believed it could be applied to some of the design work and crafting the educational component as well
- 11:40AM BOYLES opened discussion of New Business – Timeline of Proposed Work
- Used December 31<sup>st</sup> as the deadline; will adjust if funding and extension are approved
  - Shared a presentation with outline of goals, proposed schedule and syncing of subcommittee work with full commission meetings
  - Suggested focus of each subcommittee:
    - Research & Design: make decision on human representation, begin outreach to designers
    - Public Consultation: determine format of public forums/meetings/input process
    - History & Usages: focus on terms for motto
  - Each subcommittee meeting should determine a decision point for full commission at next meeting
- 11:46AM BOYLES suggested the Commission reconvene in 5 minutes to give members an opportunity to look through timeline
- 11:51AM BOYLES called meeting back into deliberation
- 11:51AM CURTIN questioned whether the implementation of the polling fit with the rest of the schedule; What is the goal of the polling? Its length? Specifics, etc?
- 11:53AM BOYLES commented that the polling would be dependent on resources; could last as long two weeks; 10/18 Commission meeting could confirm who would conduct the poll & then the polling would begin after that point; it would require a great deal of work from the Public Consultation Subcommittee to be prepared
- 11:54AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS commented that the integration of public comments and poll into this timeline would be tough; requested that information on all subcommittee meeting be circulated to full commission (*to note: this is already standard procedure*); would Commission build a website for the public to go to for the survey?
- 11:54AM WALLEY commented that the form and shape of the polls would change depending on whether the Commission receives a budget or not; need to prepare a plan if no budget comes through

- 11:57AM BOYLES stated the ideas and the scope for public feedback will be dependent on circumstances; Research & Design could help narrow the scope of the poll
- 11:57AM WHITSON questioned whether there would be enough time between 10/18 full commission meeting and the subcommittee meetings to produce an RFP for designers; feels Commission would need public input to help frame a productive RFP; the RFP could not be sent before public feedback
- 11:58AM BENNETT also commented that a 10/4 or 10/11 date for the RFP for illustrators will not give Commission time to receive the poll results
- 11:59AM KONDRATIUK mentioned he liked the idea of a poll, but unlikely to be implemented without funding; does like the framework of the timeline, but believes that even \$100,000 might not be enough; would like to meet in-person
- 12:00PM WEEDEN took a moment to recognize BOYLES for putting together the roadmap; asked WHITSON how much money Mississippi gave to the process? What would the wish-list look like?; reiterated that subcommittees need to step-up and be prepared in advance; need 48 hours notice for agenda
- 12:02PM PETERS questioned how realistic this plan might be; very difficult timelines to accomplish goal; would like to break extension out of the economic development bill
- 12:04PM BOYLES recognized that the timeline needs to be adjusted given this input; polling would be difficult to conduct without funding, but Commission can prepare questions; will adjust timing of polls vs. RFP
- 12:07PM WHITSON recommended that designers should be given specific set parameters, but should not be asked for input on ideas or definition of those parameters
- 12:08PM BOYLES asked if the motto needs to be incorporated into public input?
- 12:09PM WALLEY commented that the terms in the Commission's charge need to be discussed (peace, liberty, education, etc) as they relate to the motto; should be included in public input; also questioned whether the final recommendation is a specific concept/vision/design or is the recommendation a plan?
- 12:10PM BOYLES mentioned that public input needs to happen and needs to happen soon; that feedback will help answer many of these questions; recommends using October to plan public input and put into place in November; believes that the timeline sequence is good, but need to adjust to get the right timing
- 12:12PM BOYLES will circle back to Commission after adjustments have been made to the timeline; will connect with PETERS on plan to break extension and budget out of

economic development bill; will set schedule for subcommittees to allow others to sit in

12:14PM WEEDEN mentioned that he had sent an email to the Research & Design Subcommittee for schedule a 9/8 meeting

12:14PM BOYLES requested that any Commission member with experience with polling and public input processes to reach out to him with ideas and suggestions

12:15PM BOYLES made MOTION to ADJOURN; SECONDED by WALLEY

12:16PM ROLL CALL vote to adjourn; no opposition; meeting ADJOURNED

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

11:00AM to 12:30PM

Via Microsoft Teams

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
September 20, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

Commission Members Present:

Brian Boyles (Chair), Brian Weeden (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice Chair), John Peters, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Rep. David Vieira, Brona Simon, Kelly Bennett, Elizabeth Solomon, Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, Jim Wallace, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused: Brittney Walley (Vice Chair), Sen. Marc Pacheco, Michael Vincent Amato, Cheryl Andrews-Maltais

- 11:02AM Meeting Called to Order by WEEDEN
- 11:04AM ROLL CALL of Commission Members for Attendance Record
- 15 of 19 Commissioners present; quorum reached
  - Read public meeting notice and agenda
  - Reiterated Ground Rules
- 11:04AM MOTION to Approve Minutes from the August 16, 2022, meeting, made by SOLOMON; seconded by SIMONS
- 11:04AM Discussion on Minutes
- 11:07AM ROLL CALL to accept minutes; approved with one abstention by VIEIRA
- 11:08AM Chairs' Report delivered by BOYLES
- Subcommittees are working through timeline; require a productive discussion on values and consideration of the options before the Commission
- 11:10AM Research & Development Subcommittee Report delivered by CURTIN
- Discussed the use of human representation in the design, but did not complete a draft motion; while many state seals include human figures, the subcommittee decided that the design should not include human representation because it cannot represent everyone; subcommittee will continue looking at other symbols which can better express diversity; will draft a recommendation
- 11:12AM WEEDEN stated that the issue is up for a formal vote before the full Commission
- 11:13AM CURTIN also mentioned that, during the meeting, Rep. Cabral brought up the reality that the recommendation for a new design will also have to be something



that the Legislature is willing to approve; representation of the original peoples of the state is important for many, the decision to remove a native figure on the flag must be done thoughtfully

11:14AM WEEDEN added that the tribes are not sure how to include only one figure to represent the Indigenous people or what sort of message that would send to all the other peoples in MA; if we choose a male, what message does that send to women, etc?; human representation is problematic because it is not inclusive

11:15AM VIEIRA asked if the subcommittee had considered other ways to represent the Indigenous community outside of including a human figure?

11:16AM WEEDEN responded that the subcommittee had discussed the idea of incorporating the Nation names into the motto to replace the Latin; they also discussed using images of the cranberry and cod fish, but each Indigenous group has its own perspective and history with these things

11:17AM PETERS mentioned that for the Indigenous groups, the sword is the primary problem; changing the motto and removing the sword would be enough for many in the community

11:18AM CURTIN added that the subcommittee did not advance to the stage of including other images or ideas in the discussion, focused on human representation and popular natural elements

11:19AM WEEDEN offered a technical point that the subcommittee had voted to table the meeting minutes because two sets of minutes were produced and they need to be reviewed and reconciled before a formal vote

11:19AM Public Consultation Subcommittee Report delivered by BOYLES

- David Detmold, from Change the Mass Flag, presented the history of his organization and summarized the work they have done on the issue of high school mascots and organizing locally to have municipalities adopt motions to recommend a change in the flag; they would put the motion on the Town Meeting agenda and have generally had a positive response because most people, once they understand what is really on the current flag, support changing it – even in conservative areas like Central Mass and the Worcester area; useful conversation for the Commission because their approach represents a possible way forward
- Mass Poll at UMass Amherst invited the Commission to add questions to the poll they intend to conduct in October; WALLACE is working on categories of questions that could be asked; it would not allow for in-depth question, but it is a free; poll would reach 1100 people online
- Two Question for Commission to Consider:
  - Does the Commission want to participate in the poll with MassPoll?

- Are these the topics we want the questions to include?
  - Creation of a new seal
  - Changing the motto of the Commonwealth
  - Images to use on the flag, presented as a multiple-choice question
  - Images or symbols that would be opposed

- 11:25AM BOYLES opens the topic up for discussion
- 11:25AM VIEIRA suggested that the questions include the current motto and image of the seal, so people have a point of reference and understand what they would be changing
- 11:26AM KONDRATIUK are more aware of the image on the flag, but it would be important to explain the relationship between the seal and the flag, so that the connection between the two are clear to those answering the poll
- 11:27AM COMEAU added that the coat of arms is the image that the Commission would be changing; technically, the seal is just the circle surrounding the image with the name of the Commonwealth in Latin
- 11:28AM SOLOMON agreed that most people probably have no idea what the current imagery on the flag actually is, so including it in the questions makes sense; also asked how UMass Amherst identifies residents on their call list; the Commission should be aware of the demographic data of the people who are responding; also, how a question is worded can influence how the question is answered, so the Commission should get input from someone with experience with survey versus polling
- 11:31AM CURTIN observed that the minutes for the Public Consultation Subcommittee meeting had slightly different wording for the redesign question, which specifically included reference to the flag as well as the seal, yet it seems that the word “flag” was dropped during this conversation; may want to consider adding it back into the question
- 11:33AM BOYLES summarized the input received as
- ask MassPoll to include an image of the flag and seal in the question as a reference for respondents
  - Explain the relationship between the seal and flag clearly
  - Ask about how MassPoll identifies its targets
- 11:33AM BOYLES transitioned into a review of the subcommittee’s discussion on the Public Input Sessions:
- What is doable through the end of the year?
  - Poll can help gather information
  - Suggested 2 in-person and 2 virtual input sessions

- PETERS offered to help organize the in-person session through the Commission on Indian Affairs
    - BENNET offered to assist with the virtual session through the Mass Cultural Council
  - Asked any Commission members with experience to volunteer to organize and conduct these public input sessions
- 11:37AM VIEIRA offered to help facilitate the in-person session; has experience as a moderator at Town meetings/organization
- 11:38AM PETERS mentioned that they would need a guide on how to lead a successful dialogue and a way to make sense of the feedback and input received
- 11:39AM SOLOMON stated that the Commission would also need to figure out how and where the feedback will be stored and consider how to analyze the qualitative data from the Mass Poll results; asked if the in-person session organized by the Commission on Indian Affairs would be open to the public
- 11:40AM PETERS responded that the in-person session would be open to the public, but primarily targeting Indigenous population
- 11:40AM WALLACE suggested the Commission could utilize universities outside of Boston to host the in-person session
- 11:41AM CURTIN suggested it would be important to have one session in Boston and one session somewhere else outside of the city; recommended that Lisa Brooks, an Indigenous studies scholar at Amherst College, could provide a geographic base for the conversation
- 11:42AM SOLOMON stated the Commission should be geographically diverse in terms of where and how it is gathering input; also suggested that the Indigenous community doesn't necessarily need a targeted forum
- 11:43AM PETERS responded that he wants to make sure that the Commission is reaching out adequately to the Indigenous community
- 11:44AM WEEDEN mentioned that the Mashpee Wampanoag would be willing to host a Southcoast input session and could work with VIEIRA to organize it
- 11:45AM VIEIRA suggested the Commission consider one in-person session at a university and then one at a tribal cultural center or headquarters; this follows the breakdown of the Commission leadership as co-chairs, so it makes a certain amount of sense to have an Indigenous location and a non-Indigenous location
- 11:47AM SOLOMON was concerned that hosting a forum at a tribal headquarters would keep people from expressing their opposition to changing the image because it

might be considered insulting; said it was important to keep this perspective in mind before deciding on a location

- 11:48AM BOYLES summarized the input as follows:
- Identify a facilitator to maintain respectful and productive conversation
  - Explore potential partners to host forums
  - Include geographical diversity in the planning
  - Determine materials that need to be presented to the public
  - Determine process for analyzing public input
  - Important to understand limitations before Commission solidifies its plan; this will help shape scope and capacity
- 11:51AM CURTIN suggested public libraries as a possible alternative to tribal spaces to help address SOLOMON's concerns
- 11:52AM WEEDEN stated that the Commission can incorporate Ground Rules at the public input session to reaffirm that it is a safe space where everyone's opinion will be respected
- 11:53AM History & Usages Subcommittee Report delivered by COMEAU
- Analyzed the concept of "Commonwealth" -- which was purposefully chosen by John Adams when writing the Massachusetts constitution
  - Subcommittee liked the concept of 'commonwealth', but also concluded that the specific word doesn't necessarily need to be used
  - Explored whether principles outlined in the resolution creating the Commission could be useful for a motto: peace, justice, liberty, equality, education; Does the Commission agree with these goals?
  - Discussed how action words, such as "seek" can set an aspirational tone
  - Agreed that motto should be easily recognizable and understandable by all
  - Discussed that the seal and motto could be independent and would like to have that idea included in the public input process
  - Want to seek a balance between the history of the Commonwealth and its aspirational goals
- 12:00PM SOLOMON sees a need for the History & Usages Subcommittee to have a better connection to the Research & Design Subcommittee; the motto and the image do not have to be the same, but do need to be congruent, and should be on the same theme
- 12:02PM BOYLES asked about the discussion on "reciprocity"
- 12:02PM SOLOMON explained that, in contrast to the dominant culture where interactions between people tend to be transactional, within the Indigenous community there is a strong sense that we are all responsible for our environment and for taking care of each other – a reciprocal relationship; this idea can tie very closely with "Commonwealth", although it is broader than the people-focused "common

good”, it could represent a way to push the concept of the “commonwealth” forward

- 12:04PM COMEAU stated that the Subcommittee will work on presenting a few terms to the full Commission and suggested that these ideas be included in the polling
- 12:06PM WEEDEN, moving onto the next item on the agenda, asked if the Commission would like to move forward or table the question on considering human representation on the seal?
- 12:06PM VIEIRA recommended the Commission should wait to vote until after the public input session; should remain open to the possibilities at this time
- 12:07PM KONDRATIUK agreed that it would be premature to rule out what should or should not be on the coat of arms at this point
- 12:08PM COMEAU agreed that the Commission should not rule anything out
- 12:08PM WEEDEN asked if there were any objection to waiting; hearing none, the vote is tabled.
- 12:09PM BOYLES made a MOTION to Join the polling conducted by MassPoll at UMass Amherst, pending clarification of questions to be asked: SECONDED by COMEAU
- 12:09PM SOLOMON mentioned that she was forwarded an article from the Hampshire Gazette which misrepresented the decision-making process of the Commission and the concepts to be included in the poll
- 12:12PM BOYLES reminded the Commission that the media is watching and making their own conclusions and everyone should be conscious of that
- 12:13PM ROLL CALL VOTE on the motion; unanimously approved by Commission
- 12:15PM COMEAU stated that the History & Usages Subcommittee is looking for input from the full Commission on key terms and concepts; would ask the Commission members follow-up with him or Co-Chair WALLEY with any suggestions; not ready to recommend a vote
- 12:16PM WEEDEN opened discussion on Old Business, a status update on funding and the reporting deadline extension
- 12:17PM CABRAL stated that the economic development bill, which included the deadline extension and budget, is still pending; his office has reached out to House Ways & Means to get language included in the FY23 closeout budget as an alternative

pathway; believes this budget bill will move in October, but could be realized in either bill

- 12:18PM BOYLES transitioned to the discussion on New Business with Timeline Updates
- Public Consultation will continue to work out the logistical challenges with the poll
  - Research & Design will begin outreach to designers and think critically about what to present to the public at the input sessions
  - History & Usages will recommend potential terms and concepts to be included in the motto
  - For the October meeting:
    - Schedule and draft questions for poll
    - Consider educational program
  - Meetings for History & Usages and Public Consultation have been scheduled; Research & Design will work to schedule next meeting
- 12:21PM BOYLES made MOTION to ADJOURN; SECONDED by WALLACE
- 12:22PM ROLL CALL vote to adjourn; no opposition; meeting ADJOURNED at 12:23PM

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, October 18, 2022  
11:00AM to 12:30PM  
Via Microsoft Teams

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
October 18, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

Commission Members Present:

Brian Boyles (Chair), Chairman Brian Weeden (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice Chair), John Peters, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Rep. David Vieira, Michael Vincent Amato, Brona Simon, Kelly Bennett, Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews Maltais, Elizabeth Solomon, Micah Whitson, Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused: Sen. Marc Pacheco, Melissa Ferretti, James Wallace

- 11:01AM Meeting Called to Order by BOYLES
- 11:02AM ROLL CALL of Commission Members for Attendance Record
- 16 of 19 Commissioners present; quorum reached
  - Read public meeting notice and agenda
- 11:04AM MOTION to Approve Minutes from the September 20, 2022, meeting, made by ANDREWS-MALTAIS; seconded by WEEDEN
- 11:04AM Discussion on Minutes; no comments
- 11:04AM ROLL CALL to accept minutes; approved with one abstention by ANDREWS-MALTAIS
- 11:04AM Chairs' Report delivered by BOYLES
- Public Consultation Subcommittee did meet to work on timeline for public facing component; the other two subcommittees were unable to meet
- 11:05AM Report of Public Consultation Subcommittee delivered by BOYLES
- Extension and budget still in legislative limbo
  - Working with a December deadline; the Commission should move forward to create recommendations
- 11:06AM Report of History & Usages Subcommittee delivered by COMEAU
- H&U subcommittee was unable to meet, but looking for input on key terms and concepts from wider Commission; would like to connect with the Research & Design Subcommittee ensure suggested motto terms align with the images being proposed for the seal; intend to compile a list of terms and concepts to release for input

- 11:07AM WALLEY added that the Commission should pause to appreciate how much work has been done with little to no outside support; reminded Commission that, realistically, there was about 60 days to December deadline, then another 60 days following the filing of the report before the Commission would legally dissolve; should ask what support Commission might realistically expect as it moves forward?; Commissions charged with this task typically take a very long time to complete their work; what support is there from the Legislature for the work of this Commission?
- 11:10AM BOYLES, to summarize, added that there are two questions at play (1) level of support for the budget request and (2) what would the Commission like to realistically accomplish in its report/recommendations?
- 11:11AM WALLEY added that the Commission needed a plan for (1) the next 60 days before the reporting deadline and (2) the 60 days after the filing when the Commission is still in legal existence
- 11:12AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS stated that with the upcoming elections, the Commission should not expect financial support and should move forward without that assumption; however, everyone should log their expenses and save receipts if the budget should materialize; believes the Commission should focus on the elements that were identified as offensive 50 years ago:
- Motto in Latin
  - Image of the sword over the native figure
- Could be synthesized down to fundamental questions to gauge if there is an appetite to change the flag, seal, motto, and coat of arms; and bring that to the public for comment; but important to convert work into action
- 11:15AM WALLEY added that the Commission would need to determine how to assess the public outreach, determine what questions to ask and figure out how to reach the right audiences; how would the Commission get statistically relevant information?
- 11:17AM CURTIN suggested that without more financial support, the Commission is stuck between a rock and a hard place; the more aspirational goals would require public input and partners with professional expertise that could help the Commission envision a new flag; but a more positive spin on the situation leads to the realization the Commission might be able to make clear recommendations on what NOT to do or continue:
- Address the Harm – make recommendations on what not to do
  - Recommendations on ideas to focus on
  - Outline a public input process because public buy-in is critical
- 11:20AM BOYLES said there was a need to document the conversation we have had to make sure we are all on the same page



- 11:21AM SIMONS suggested that the Commission survey its members on symbols, themes, figures, and elements of the seal and motto as a way to document the Commission's thoughts if we cannot accomplish anything more; it would be a way to take an affirmative vote
- 11:22AM BOYLES asked if this would be a survey and then a vote on the consensus elements?
- 11:23AM SIMONS clarified this idea would provide an internal ranking system of Commission members' perspectives, ie, where does the cod rank versus the cranberry?; could use a survey monkey poll to gather this information from Commission members; a vote would signify that the Commission has agreed to remove the motto and the sword
- 11:24AM BOYLES mentioned that the Commission has voted to start over with a complete redesign, but does like the idea of survey of Commission members
- 11:24AM COMEAU mentioned that he and General KONDRATIUK are crafting a written document with the historical context of the current image and to document the disagreements over different elements of the current flag; they do not feel that the historical background on the motto and sword have been fully understood
- 11:26AM BOYLES commented that the Commission does need a document to summarize the history of the harmful interpretation of those elements
- 11:27AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS added that the report should not look backwards, but document that the harm was real; it should include the elements that everyone agrees are offensive and provide recommendations for a process to use for next steps, to create a roadmap for the legislature to consider; Legislature can decide to extend Commission or reconfigure the work; after 50 years of effort, this report is just the next step in a very long process
- 11:30AM BOYLES stated that he would like the subcommittees to prepare their recommendations over the next 6 weeks
- 11:31AM VIEIRA mentioned that he served on the Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning and one of their recommendations was that the Dept of Education create a Working Group to act on the recommendations suggested by the Commission; an executive working group does not necessarily need legislative approval; recommend codifying that another entity do the deeper work, pursue a budget, and implement the recommendations – in that way the Commission provides the policy recommendations and the next entity would implement those policy recommendations and sort out the fine details
- 11:33AM CABRAL mentioned that the State Administrative & Regulatory Oversight (SARO) Committee could provide that process; this Commission could make its

recommendations for the pros & cons on the imagery and motto; SARO could manage the public input process and producing a final recommendation to present to the Legislature as the ultimate decision-maker; although the Commission has been focused on producing a finite design, its recommendations do not have to be so concrete; likes the idea of outlining the negatives; As to the extension and budget, it could survive in the economic development bill or the closeout FY23 budget, but Commission should work with a December deadline in mind

- 11:38AM VIEIRA suggested a recommendation to allow SARO to gather more information and make it an issue in the next legislative session
- 11:39AM CABRAL mentioned he would like Commission to work on recommendations, but SARO would be the vehicle to move this idea forward; Commission would then shift to an advocacy role
- 11:42AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS asked what the process might be for conducting a survey or questionnaire at polling locations? Would that be an appropriate or legal option?
- 11:43AM VIEIRA mentioned that it would not be possible to get a question put on a ballot
- 11:43AM CABRAL mentioned that there are no informal processes to use polling locations for this purpose on Election Day; would require gathering signatures and making a formal motion
- 11:44AM AMATO asked if an informal poll could be conducted at a town meeting?
- 11:45AM VIEIRA mentioned that he is on the Board of the MA Moderators Association and would be willing to arrange a meeting to discuss the possibility
- 11:46AM Report of the Research & Design Subcommittee delivered by WEEDEN who called on WHITSON to report to the Commission
- 11:46AM WHITSON suggested 3 recommendations from R&D could be:
- Recommend law be changed so that the seal and flag do not have to be the same
  - Need funding to execute task to a professional level; can use Commission poll and public input to help direct the design brief; include elements that are good or not acceptable
  - Consider using artifacts (hats, tools, etc) to represent people instead of a human representation
- 11:50AM CURTAIN stated that R&D could prepare a preliminary list of categories that could produce design elements – such as: human representation, natural world, human culture/artifacts, geographic features, colors, etc.

- 11:52AM SIMONS agreed that it would be beneficial to present a list of categories to whole Commission to gauge ranking through a vote
- 11:52AM BOYLES summarized the goals as:
- Detaching the seal & flag
  - Funding & inputs needs to create a design brief (Whitson)
  - Addressing human representation
  - Categorize elements (Curtin)
  - Commission will then vote/rank those elements
- 11:54AM WALLEY had a design question for WHITSON; should Commission be considering best practices from a design point of view when creating these categories? Should we be concerned with how well an image will scale? What colors do not work well in combination? Etc; conversation has been focused on the meaning, but should we consider basic design elements at this point in time?
- 11:56AM WHITSON suggested that those considerations are probably too far down in the design process to be helpful to consider now; first, Commission needs to understand what we want to consider and what we don't and describe that clearly in a design brief
- 11:57AM PETERS remarked that "Massachusetts" translates to the Place of Great Hills
- 11:58AM COMEAU mentioned that he, KONDRATIUK, and SIMON have worked together on this document for H&U; the need for change to the imagery is not monolithic, people come to it from many varied perspectives; their document is missing the legacy of harm, should it be a companion piece for the H&U report?; will work on producing a list of possibilities for terms and concepts for the motto
- 12:01PM SIMONS mentioned that the Historical Commission has the oldest library on heraldry and he would like to review the history and explanations in this document
- 12:02PM WALLEY agreed that the H&U Subcommittee should focus on creating a list of terms and concepts; would like the historical context document to be shared because it will be a challenge to condense all the perspectives of the members; wants to make sure the history is not conflated with an excuse or justification for the harm; oral histories of Indigenous peoples are usually missing from historical record; will reserve judgment until draft is circulated
- 12:06PM BOYLES summarized conversation as:
- Need to distribute document to entire subcommittee
  - Need to complete an equal document on the harm
  - Need a deadline and a word count
  - List of terms and concepts

- 12:08PM WALLEY raised the concern of equity in the workload distribution; a volunteer cannot match someone who is paid to use their time to work on the Commission; a volunteer cannot match the resources or capacity of Mass Archives in their spare time
- 12:10PM CURTIN asked if documents on the Indigenous advocacy over the last 50 years were ever created? Could that balance the resources available in the archives?
- 12:11PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS mentioned that although there have been 5 decades of work, there is no central archive of documents that she is aware of, but some would possibly be stored with the MA Commission on Indian Affairs
- 12:12PM PETERS explained that they do have records, but they are not categorized or stored like a library or archive
- 12:13PM BOYLES acknowledged the unequal resources on each side, but it is important to provide a summary of the key points of harm
- 12:13PM SIMONS mentioned that archives come in all shapes and forms and that personal impact statements and first-hand accounts from individuals can be more impactful than traditional documentation
- 12:15PM COMEAU clarified that their brief is a recounting of conversation we have had to date and does not include a tremendous amount of detail; needs more review to provide more context; need to document the ‘need for change’ from many different angles and it is important to understand those differences
- 12:18PM Report of Public Consultation Subcommittee delivered by BOYLES
- Schedule input sessions
  - Confirm questions to be asked
  - PETERS agreed to host a virtual meeting; Mass Humanities will host another
  - Having conversations with moderators
  - Organizing public input sessions will be a lot of work, so the question then becomes
    - Do we continue with the plan to hold public input sessions? Or
    - Outline input process in report recommendations?
- 12:21PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS believes it would be worthwhile to have some preliminary public input to help direct recommendations
- 12:22PM CURTIN suggested that the Commission still hasn’t made their own conclusions, so it would be premature to go to the public with ideas
- 12:23PM SIMON asked about including questions in the October UMass poll?

- Boyles responded that UMass will go forward with their original plan and share information, but partnership hasn't grown

- 12:24PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS asked if the residents would have to vote to change the seal, motto or flag design? Would that change how we approach next steps?
- 12:26PM CABRAL replied that the Legislature has the authority to make the change and does not need a public referendum or ballot question; the general public always has the option of launching a ballot initiative, but it is a long process and takes several sessions; the Legislature is the final court of decision
- 12:29PM COMEAU agreed that the Legislature make the change through legislation
- 12:29PM BOYLES reiterated that the Commission needs to make a decision on going forward with the public input session planning or not; ANDREWS-MALTAIS rescinded her statement after more conversation
- 12:30PM BENNET seconded CURTIN's suggestion that it is too early to process to conduct public input sessions and that the Commission should come to consensus first
- 12:31PM CABRAL suggested the Public Consultation Subcommittee focus on providing recommendations for how the legislative hearing process should be conducted; suggested using the Redistricting Committee as an example to reference
- 12:31PM BOYLES summarized next steps as:
- Considering how the legislative process could provide the needed public input
  - Work with Rep. Vieira on the town meeting option
  - Will follow up with individual members on their action points because we need a lot of work to get done before November meeting
- 12:21PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS made MOTION to ADJOURN; SECONDED by CABRAL
- 12:22PM VOICE VOTE to adjourn; no opposition; meeting ADJOURNED at 12:33PM

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, November 15, 2022  
 11:00AM to 12:30PM  
 Via Microsoft Teams

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
November 15, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

Commission Members Present:

Brian Boyles (Chair), Chairman Brian Weeden (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice Chair), John Peters, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Michael Vincent Amato, Brona Simon, Kelly Bennett, Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews Maltais, Elizabeth Solomon, Chairwoman Melissa Ferretti, Micah Whitson, Brigadier General Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused: Sen. Marc Pacheco, Rep. David Vieira, James Wallace

- 11:02AM Meeting Called to Order by WEEDEN
- 11:02AM ROLL CALL of Commission Members for Attendance Record
- 16 of 19 Commissioners present; quorum reached
  - Read public meeting notice and agenda
- 11:04AM MOTION to Approve Minutes from the October 18, 2022, meeting, made by ANDREWS-MALTAIS; seconded by SIMONS
- 11:05AM Discussion on Minutes; no comments
- 11:05AM ROLL CALL to accept minutes; approved with one abstention by SOLOMON
- 11:07AM Chairs' Report delivered by BOYLES
- Stated that updates are included within the main agenda
- 11:07AM Report of the History & Usages Subcommittee delivered by WALLEY
- At the 10/25 meeting, the subcommittee discussed the nature and content of the document prepared by Comeau, Kondratiuk, and Simon; decided to separate the factual history from interpretation; discussed creating synergy with the Research & Design subcommittee and joined the conversation at their 10/27 meeting; result of that discussion created the survey that Commission members were asked to respond to
- 11:09AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS apologized that her traveling commitments prevented her from contributing to the survey, but she did email her suggestions prior to the release of the survey (Boyles did incorporate her ideas into tally); believes that it is important to have this information centralized
- 11:10AM WEEDEN asked for additional input on the joint subcommittee meeting

- 11:11AM CURTIN agreed with Walley's use of the term 'synergy' and that the joint meeting was helpful and led to a productive conversation; would like to see more joint meetings moving forward
- 11:12AM BOYLES led discussion on Old Business
- The Commission did receive a \$100,000 budget in the recent economic development bill, but did not receive a deadline extension
  - Will need to investigate the parameters for allocating this funding; does it need to be expended by deadline or the end of the FY23 fiscal year?
- 11:15AM CABRAL STAFF reported on the status of the budget and the deadline extension; efforts continuing
- 11:15AM WALLEY stated that she would prefer a deadline extension; from a sociological perspective, concerned about rushed polling/efforts reaching an inclusive audience and be able to adequately include the Indigenous perspective; need to reach out to research institutes to produce a quality product and to spend the funds responsibly
- 11:17AM SOLOMON supports Walley's concern with spending budget responsibly; need to identify partners that would produce a quality product and cannot and should not spend taxpayer money on anything less
- 11:19AM BOYLES redirected conversation to how to use these funds; could produce an RFP that would clearly define what the Commission sees as the next steps for continuing this work; would like to revisit deliverables for Commission
- 11:20AM WEEDEN led conversation to the Commission Survey Results
- 11:21AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS asked what parameters the language on the budget established?
- 11:22AM CABRAL staff stated that the language created this budget for the operation and administration of the Seal and Motto Commission; it is fairly broad and would function like an earmark
- 11:23AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested the Commission needed to make a list of needs to create a budget or appropriate categories of needs
- 11:24AM CURTIN mentioned that Commission has discuss its intent to use funds for a survey and this should fit within the context of the legislative intent for use of the money; may still be possible to achieve
- 11:26AM WALLEY suggested the Commission reach out to the Center for Civic Research at UMass Boston for guidance on what could be reasonably achieved on such a

short timeline; concerns that the time left puts constraints on the quality of the outcomes

- 11:27AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested the Commission deconstruct the process – is the Commission considering a focus group vs. polling the general population?, a mass mailing to participate in public forum to discuss the terms collected by the Commission?; need to consider the different cost of time and money depending on the scope; need to pick a direction to focus attention
- 11:30AM WALLEY mentioned the Commission should reach out to a research facility to help get answers to those questions; feels that a statewide survey is not ideal because of difficulties of getting the information to and from the populations that the Commission needs to reach within the timeline
- 11:31AM SOLOMON mentioned that data collection strategy also depends on the questions being asked; need to determine which questions we want to be answered and that would help direct which type of data collection would make the most sense
- 11:32AM COMEAU reminded the group that an RFP would most likely be subject to a public bid process and the Commission would need to consider other options
- 11:33AM CURTIN suggested that the Commission create an RFP to get proposals in place for survey and then have another entity take over
- 11:34AM BOYLES suggested that if the money has to be expended by 12/31/22, the RFP could be the fiscal entity to move the process forward; is the highest priority for the Commission the survey and public poll?; if Commission accepts budget, it would need to look for a fiscal agent
- 11:36AM KONDRATIUK mentioned that the Commission was charged with making recommendations for a new design of the seal; should the Commission focus on hiring a designer to produce an image based off the ideas discussed to date?
- 11:36AM WHITSON mentioned that he has cost estimates from designers to give the Commission an idea of the cost, but also raised concerns about the timeline because designers may also have backlogs and it could be very difficult to get any product by the deadline
- 11:37AM WEEDEN said that the co-Chairs will follow-up on those details
- 11:38AM WEEDEN opened up discussion on New Business – analysis of the survey results from Commissioners
- 11:39AM BOYLES shared screen to show Commission the outcomes of his consolidation of the results of the survey



- 11:40AM SOLOMON mentioned that she does not believe she received the survey; Boyles forwarded the email and link to her
- 11:41AM WHITSON confirmed that there were only 8 responses; suggested including an open field and a ranking method
- 11:42AM BENNETT suggested grouping elements, combining trees into one category
- 11:43AM CURTIN said that it would be helpful if more members of the Commission filled out the survey
- 11:43AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested putting timeframe on responses because of the deadline; mentioned that this mixed result of the Commission itself shows how complicated and difficult getting suggestions from any group is
- 11:45AM BOYLES said his next steps would be (1) resend survey (2) create a ranking system for ideas that received more than one response and include an open field and (3) get the new survey out by Monday to complete this process by the end of November
- 11:46AM WALLEY stated that the subcommittees hoped to create a ‘laundry list’ of items to help define this survey, but they did not receive enough response from the subcommittee and had to combine this effort into this one survey; agrees that a ranking system needs to be put in place
- 11:48AM WHITSON suggested Boyles resent survey to everyone on the call right now and use some of the meeting time for that purpose to shorten the timeline for response
- 11:48AM BOYLES resent survey to entire Commission
- 11:49AM CURTIN suggested the Commission also be surveyed on priorities for the budget
- 11:53AM WEEDEN mentioned that the survey had been sent to everyone and asked that they fill it out if they haven’t already
- 11:54AM BENNET asked if the Commission is going to discuss color as part of the design?; mentioned that blue, gold, and cranberry are the state colors
- 11:55AM WHITSON mentioned that the seal should be rendered in one color, but hatch marks can be rendered in a different color; would suggest leaving color out of the conversation for now, but important to consider down the road
- 11:56AM CABRAL mentioned that the current colors on the flag are blue, gold, and white; do we want to consider changing this?

- 11:57AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS said that the Commission needs to set parameters before this survey can be useful – Do we want to recommend all these changes to the seal, motto, flag, and color?; initially voted for a full redesign, but was then checked on that vote and had to pull back; Was the charge to recommend changes or to produce the change document?; likes the survey and ranking system; not sure if Commission can build consensus on an end-goal when the full Commission might be unclear on that point
- 12:00PM WALLEY mentioned that the MGL dictates the link between all the pieces and maintaining or changing that is another question that hasn't been answered in full; these designs could be different
- 12:03PM CABRAL mentioned that he has not responded to the survey and is not sure if he will be able to because of his potential future role over the future proposal by virtue of his appointment as the House Chair of the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
- 12:05PM WHITSON mentioned that the state colors approved in 2005 were gold, blue, and cranberry, but the state's website doesn't mention why those colors were chosen
- 12:05PM CABRAL STAFF mentioned that the currently the MGL does not say that the state colors need to be incorporated into the seal or flag
- 12:07PM BOYLES asked the Commission to respond to the survey by 11/18/22
- 12:08PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS made MOTION to ADJOURN; SECONDED by SOLOMON
- 12:22PM ROLL CALL vote to adjourn; no opposition; meeting ADJOURNED at 12:10PM

Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
December 13, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams &  
Hearing Room A2, State House, Boston, MA

DRAFT MINUTES

Prepared by Kate Miller in Rep. Cabral's Office

Commission Members Present:

Brian Boyles (Chair), Brittney Walley (Vice Chair), John Peters, Rep. Antonio Cabral, Brona Simon, Kelly Bennett, Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews Maltais, Elizabeth Solomon, Chairwoman Melissa Ferretti, Brigadier General Leonid Kondratiuk, Brenton Simons, Donna Curtin

Absent/Excused: Chairman Brian Weeden (Chair), Michael Comeau (Vice Chair), Sen. Marc Pacheco, Rep. David Vieira, Michael Vincent Amato, Micah Whitson, James Wallace

- 11:03AM Meeting Called to Order by BOYLES
- 11:03AM ROLL CALL of Commission Members for Attendance Record
- 12 of 19 Commissioners present; quorum reached
  - Boyles, Curtin, and Kondratiuk attending in-person
- 11:05AM MOTION to Approve Minutes from the November 15, 2022, meeting, made by CURTIN; seconded by FERRETTI
- 11:05AM Discussion on Minutes
- Correction made to point referenced at 11:44AM
- 11:05AM ROLL CALL to accept corrected minutes; approved unanimously
- 11:08AM Chairs' Report delivered by BOYLES
- Mentioned that the Commission truly got underway in January of 2022 charged with addressing terms and symbols that recognize 400 years of history, an effort last taken up in 1898; much conversation focused on the timeline for deliverables and securing extra time so the Commission could come together on the ideas and inputs that it is putting together now; the Commission cannot reflect and address all of the history, a drive from western MA indicates the challenge of incorporating Indigenous history in a sensitive and truthful way as a driver speeds past signage highlighting massacres and the history of violence; the Commission was a collection of expertise and dedication and has come away with actionable items that it can be proud of; this work is just one step in a long process
- 11:11AM WALLEY added that the Commission put in a lot of work and effort and while it may not be landing in the place originally hoped for, the Commission has worked through a difficult topic, which will be recorded and highlighted in the report

- 11:13AM BOYLES stated that the goal of this meeting was to be an editing session for the draft interim report, to hear from Rep. Cabral on next steps and to attach names to the outstanding deliverables
- 11:15AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS reiterated that her tribe asked her to pull back from the initial unanimous vote on a complete redesign and wants to ensure that addendum is added into the record
- 11:16AM BOYLES shared a slideshow presentation summarizing survey results and the recommendations to be put forth in the interim report, including the survey results from the 11/8 and 12/5 survey of Commission members which built toward a consensus on a few recurring priority symbols and ideas which could then offered as a list to the public and the legislature for consideration; asked if a tree, the coastline, and the shape of the state were symbols the Commission wanted to include in its recommendation?
- 11:19AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested the shape of the state would be relevant to all citizens and improve overall awareness of the geography; also suggested that it would be helpful to leave an open-ended option in the survey
- 11:20AM CURTIN suggested categorizing symbols, such as natural flora and fauna versus geography may offer more flexibility by providing a sense of the sample, but not recommending particular symbols
- 11:21AM BOYLES summarized the suggestion as offering up categories: flora, fauna, and geographical features and include specific symbols as examples within those overarching categories
- 11:21AM SOLOMON suggested the Commission not label these categories as 'recommendations', but describe them as symbols & terms the Commission agreed upon as appropriate for consideration
- 11:22AM SIMONS seconded Solomon's idea reiterating that the ranking system was used to capture the Commission's ideas as a collective, but that is not to say that these ideas would be the final recommendation; believes that trees should be separated into their various types because of their individual symbolic meanings and histories and feels it was disservice to the survey and he would have appreciated more conversation about the specifics
- 11:24AM WALLEY added that these were valuable points of information, but codifying and organization is the true topic; the first survey did include more specific information
- 11:25AM BOYLES asked if the Commission wanted to be more specific or recommend broader categories?

- 11:25AM SOLOMON summarized the descriptive framework should be that in the Commission's deliberation, it came up with these three categories- flora, fauna, and geographical features - and then provide examples and an explanation of the ranking system, and describe these categories as the areas where the Commission came to a consensus that these ideas/symbols were appropriate for consideration; also agreed on the tree breakdown, but inclusion of a type of tree is also dependent on the explanation attached to it
- 11:27AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested all ideas be listed and that these categories were the top vote-getters, explain the process, and be clear that these were the symbols/ideas that were not disagreeable to the full Commission; explained that she did not want the opinion of her constituency to get lost within the interim report
- 11:29AM BOYLES summarized the suggestion as trending towards Solomon's concept to (1) list all suggestions and (2) acknowledge the Aquinnah Wampanoag's tribe disagreement and (3) clearly explain that these were suggestions generally agreed upon by the Commission and include full categories in appendix
- 11:30AM CURTIN, building on Solomon's idea, suggested the Commission frame this as the Commission reviewed several categories and these are the symbols the Commission agreed deserved more analysis – the white pine, the feather, etc – offer specific example within the categories
- 11:32AM BENNETT wondered if the Commission would want to include the MA state symbols – the cod, chickadee, and elm tree – next to the first choices?
- 11:33AM BOYLES said they can denote that these are state symbols within the categories
- 11:34AM WALLEY said that they could use as asterisk next to any symbol that has a Commonwealth designation
- 11:35AM BOYLES called for a MOTION that the Commission recommends that the next state seal design look at the symbols in the categories of flora, fauna, and geographical features and base the symbols included on the examples provided by the survey of the Commission
- 11:36AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS wanted to ensure that the interim report lists all the suggestions made by Commission members
- 11:36AM BOYLES modified the Motion to include a list of all the symbols suggested
- 11:37AM MOTION so moved by SOLOMON; SECONDED by CURTIN

- 11:38AM PETERS (experiencing technical difficulties with his sound) mentioned through the chat function that he questions whether we are providing a true depiction of the state's history
- 11:39AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS asked Peters to provide clarity as to whether his statement applied to the categories being discussed or to the conversation in general
- 11:40AM BOYLES mentioned that he hesitates to move forward with this vote without hearing Peters full feedback; LIS technical support services provided a call-in number for Peters
- 11:41AM PETERS (through chat) stated that native image is important with adjustments; will try to call in to keep conversation on terms moving forward
- 11:42AM BOYLES opened conversation on terms to use in the motto; mentioned he was open to categorizing these as well and will put forward full list in interim report
- 11:43AM SIMONS stated that he does not believe it is necessary to categorize the words and suggested the Commission just present the full list
- 11:44AM BOYLES stated that he was fine with not categorizing the terms, just made the suggestion given the conversation on symbols
- 11:44AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS agreed that she was OK with not using categories for the motto terms
- 11:44AM BENNETT suggested the Commission include Massachusetts tribal names on list
- 11:44AM KONDRATIUK joined Boyles and Curtin in Hearing Room A2
- 11:45AM MOTION to include all terms brought by SIMONS and SECONDED by WALLEY
- 11:45AM SOLOMON commented that they should include "for the common good" as a separate concept from Commonwealth in the list
- 11:46AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS stated that the interim report should list all suggestions from the Commission in the index and model it off the excel spreadsheet of the survey results
- 11:47AM ROLL CALL on the Motion; approved with one abstention from KONDRATIUK
- 11:48AM BOYLES asked Cabral to provide an update on the legislative efforts to extend the deadline and its timing

- 11:48AM CABRAL mentioned that he was having conversations with the Speaker’s Office and the House Committee on Ways & Means (HWM) to find an appropriate legislative vehicle that could be amended to include the deadline extension, not every bill could be amended in this way, typically only money bills could entertain an amendment like this; recommended that the Commission prepare to submit an “interim report” or “report of findings” to emphasize that it is not intended to be the final recommendation, by the 12/31/22 deadline; the Legislature itself would have until 1/3/23 to act on any legislation for this session, but that is beyond the 12/31 deadline; if we don’t succeed by 1/3/23, then we would have to advocate to revive the commission in the new session; at the moment there are two options: (1) extending the deadline through legislation in this session before 1/3/23 or (2) reviving the Commission in the new session with the present membership
- 11:52AM BOYLES summarized these options and would like to look at the draft recommendations and Next Steps to come to a consensus on their framing; also mentioned that conversations have occurred between the Executive Office of Administration & Finance (ANF) and the Secretary of State’s Office (SEC) to have the SEC act as a financial intermediary for the \$100,000 budget, but the Commission must be active and convened to distribute the funds
- 11:54AM CABRAL added that the funding, because it is federal ARPA money, is available to the Commission through June 2027
- 11:55AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS agreed with the word of “report of findings”
- 11:55AM CABRAL mentioned that an interim report or report of findings helps to make a case for the extension because a final report of recommendations is still forthcoming
- 11:56AM BOYLES returned to Next Steps and shifted conversation to the draft recommendation/findings so they can be approved for submission
- Shared slideshow and Cabral Staff made updates in real-time as the conversation progressed
- 11:58AM CABRAL STAFF offered a point of clarification that the Commission’s report must still be submitted by 12/31/22 and that it is the Legislature that has until 1/3/23 to act on any legislation to extend the reporting deadline.
- 11:58AM CURTIN highlighted places in the introduction where language should change to ‘initial findings’
- 12:00AM ANDREWS-MALTAIS suggested the second bullet point be modified to “histories and perspectives”

- 12:01PM CURTIN suggested that bullet point #4 be amended to be more broad to be more inclusive, suggested “educating the public about the history and culture, especially the Indigenous perspective,...
- 12:02PM SOLOMON stated that it was important to not dilute the emphasis on Indigenous history and culture as it is the reason that the Commission was put together in the first place
- 12:03PM BOYLES agreed that the intent was to recognize that Indigenous history is not well known and needed to be emphasized
- 12:04PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS agreed with Solomon that the reason we are here is because of the harm, the misrepresentation, and lack of education on the Indigenous experience; suggested that another bullet point could be included that is more inclusive
- 12:05PM CURTIN suggested as a clarification: In light of the history of harm within the Indigenous community, MA should dedicated more resources to educating...”; mentioned that MA, in general, should be better education on its history
- 12:07PM BOYLES stated that he does not want to lose the specificity of that recommendation because the work of the Commission is directly related to the need to include the Indigenous experience of harm around the usage of the image of the flag, seal, and motto
- 12:08PM CURTIN stated she wants to make sure that the general public understands that it is a question of emphasis
- 12:09PM SIMONS suggested the Commission add a clause to the statement to address general history
- 12:10PM BOYLES summarized comments as add a line/clause specific to Indigenous history and culture; Curtin and Kondratiuk approved the idea
- 12:11PM BOYLES focused on bullet point #3: the public should have the opportunity to provide input into the design of the new seal and motto; all in agreement
- 12:15PM BOYLES asked for a MOTION to accept the new findings as edited on the slide; Motion made by ANDREWS-MALTAIS; SECONDED by CURTIN & WALLEY
- 12:16PM SIMONS made the suggestion to pluralize cultures
- 12:17PM CURTIN asked if histories should also be pluralized



- 12:17PM SIMONS responded that histories should not be pluralized because it would beg the question of which is the ‘true’ history
- 12:17PM ROLL CALL to approve Motion; passed unanimously
- 12:18PM BOYLES asked if the Commission wanted to continue the discussion into Next Steps or leave it with the recommendations/findings
- 12:19PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS stated that it would be good to work through the Next Steps if we have the time
- 12:19PM BOYLES mentioned that a revived Commission would need to produce an RFP, go through the state procurement process, accept multiple bids, and create a selection process; this will take time; the question becomes what should the deadline for completing this process be?
- 12:21PM CURTIN suggested language could include that public input should be due “no later than XXX”
- 12:22PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS agreed with the “due no later than” language makes sense for a potential revived Commission
- 12:22PM WALLEY, referencing the educational program draft prepared by Solomon, said that the suggestion seemed very broad, should it be focused on K-12?
- 12:24PM SOLOMON mentioned that developing a syllabus would be dependent on the targeted age group; a K-12 syllabus would be very different from a syllabus aimed at adult learners, etc; would need to determine the target age range of the educational program
- 12:24PM BOYLES mentioned K-12 is where the Commission would find a plethora of consulting and research readily available
- 12:25PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS mentioned that given the lack of knowledge of this history across learner segments, from K-12 to adult learners, it is a good idea to keep the education component broader
- 12:27PM BOYLES stated that the Commission would need assistance writing that RFP to adequately target and define the goal of the education program; also mentioned that Whitson has a preliminary report/draft on engaging designers, but Commission would probably need to reshape this document to use it as a future RFP
- 12:28PM WALLEY suggested that the Commission be very specific about the difference between the seal and the flag, their uses, and what the goal is.

- 12:28PM SOLOMON suggested the report include a recommendation that the Commission investigate the link between the seal and flag design, the different usages and components for each that could inform potentially separate designs
- 12:32PM BOYLES asked for a MOTION to accept the Next Steps as edited on the slide; Motion made by WALLEY; SECONDED by KONDRATIUK
- 12:34PM ROLL CALL to approve Motion; approved unanimously
- 12:35PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS made a MOTION to ADJOURN: SECONDED by SOLOMON; approved on Voice Vote
- 12:36PM WALLEY mentioned that the Commission had not returned to tabled conversation on the symbols
- 12:37PM CURTIN made a MOTION to reopen the meeting; SECONDED by SOLOMON; approved on Voice Vote
- 12:37PM BOYLES returned to the question of “Does the list of symbols for a seal redesign reflect the history of the Indigenous peoples?”; Peters still having difficulty connecting his audio
- 12:40PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS mentioned that it is important that the conversation on including an Indigenous image with adjustments be included
- 12:41PM BOYLES asked if another meeting was necessary for the Commission to finalize the findings report or could it include a recommendation to continue conversation on the inclusion of an Indigenous figure as a necessary next step?
- 12:42PM ANDREWS-MALTAIS agreed that including that conversation as an Initial Finding in the report was a good compromise
- 12:42PM CABRAL asked for clarity on the suggestion
- 12:42PM BOYLES replied that the Commission will include the need for further conversation on an Indigenous figure in the Next Step portion of the report
- 12:43PM BOYLES asked for a MOTION to AMEND the Initial Findings Report of Next Steps to include a conversation on the inclusion of an Indigenous figure in the design; Motion made by CABRAL; SECONDED by ANDREWS-MALTAIS
- 12:44PM SOLOMON stated that while she is not opposed to the conversation on the Indigenous figure, does not want that conversation to slow or stop the other parts of this process from moving forward
- 12:44PM ROLL CALL to approve motion; approved unanimously

12:45PM CABRAL thank the Commission for the work they have done throughout this long process; thanked Brian Boyles for his leadership and his staff at the Joint Committee on State Administration & Regulatory Oversight for supplying the administrative work to keep the Commission moving

12:47PM ROLL CALL vote to adjourn; no opposition; meeting ADJOURNED at 12:47PM

Histories & Usage Subcommittee of  
Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
April 15, 2022, at 3:00PM  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MINUTES

Prepared by Julia Lee in Sec. Galvin's Office, Archives Division

Subcommittee Members Present:

- Brittney Walley (co-Chair) – Hassanamisco Nipmuc representative
- Michael Comeau (co-Chair) – MA Archives Executive Director
- Brid. Gen. Leonid Kondratiuk – MA National Guard Historical Services Director
- Brona Simon – MA State Archeologist
- Rep. David Vieira – MA General Court
- Cheryl Andrews-Maltais – Aquinnah Wampanoag Chairwoman
- Elizabeth Solomon – Ponkapoag Massachusetts Councilwoman

Absent / Excused:

- Brenton Simons – NE Historic Genealogical Society President & CEO

3:04PM                      Meeting Called to Order by COMEAU

AGENDA

**1. Review of the purpose and goals of the Subcommittee**

- COMEAU – Reads charge of Subcommittee: “To examine the features of the Seal, its current usage, and its historical context. Points of focus include historical analysis of the individual elements of the Seal, as well as the history of harm, the Indigenous experience of the imagery, and the movement to change it.”
- COMEAU – Some agenda items will likely get pushed to the next meeting due to limited time. Agenda is purposefully broad to give a guideline.
- WALLEY – Meeting notes will allow conversation to pick up where it left off.

**2. Breakdown of the component parts of the Seal**

- COMEAU – Shares a visual of the Seal's basic component parts labelled with the heraldic terms to give a common vocabulary when referring to Seal elements.
- COMEAU – With input from KONDRATIUK, the Seal as it's shown in the visual would technically be a coat of arms. The full Seal includes the circular Commonwealth of Massachusetts border. The coat of arms is what is really being discussed.

### 3. Intent vs. Perception:

#### a. Review of the Seal's development over time in context

#### b. Discussion of the harmful interpretation of the Seal and its imagery

- WALLEY – Points a. and b. are intertwined. Does not assume that conversation will follow one point and then the next.
- COMEAU – History of the Seal as documented by the Massachusetts Archives' records starts with the Seal of Massachusetts Bay in 1629. The next substantive change is by Paul Revere in 1775, and in 1780 Seal elements take the shape of what Subcommittee is discussing. Nathan Cushing created the 1780 design of the Seal, and the Seal's design was standardized in 1885. Edmund H. Garrett was commissioned in 1895 to design the standardized Seal. Garrett's design is the current one in use.
- KONDRATIUK – From a prepared written paper, the state flag is the most visible form of the State Seal. Motto originates with a 1659 Algernon Sidney quote that has two common translations from the Latin. Gov. Hancock ordered the flag be used as the regimental color of the MA militia in 1787. The crest on the flag and Seal showing an arm holding a sword was derived either from state motto or traditional heraldic symbolism. The flag was carried as the regimental color for all MA regiments including 54<sup>th</sup> MA during The Civil War, and the Seal was worn as a button by the National Guard and state police at various times. The crest specifically appears on MA National Guard uniforms as an insignia. The MA National Guard carried the flag in WWI, Iraq, and Afghanistan.
- VIEIRA – Asks for KONDRATIUK's paper to be emailed to the Subcommittee.
- WALLEY – There would not have been legislation to establish the commission if there was no harm associated with the current Seal. Unsure whether the hard conversations can really be had before the existence of that harm is confirmed and discussed by Subcommittee. Full commission is looking to Subcommittee to explore 4<sup>th</sup> point of agenda.
- ANDREWS-MALTAIS – It is necessary to admit, whether or not it was intended, that the imagery of the Seal has created harm and oppression particularly for Massachusetts' Indigenous communities in both its historical and current iterations. Understanding is needed both of the original intent of the Seal's element components and also of how those elements have negatively impacted Indigenous Peoples. For future consideration, how do we go forward with removing those elements that are and continue to be harmful, particularly as a reflection of historical Indigenous trauma?
- SOLOMON – Agreeing with ANDREWS-MALTAIS, regardless of intent, the actuality is that the Seal is creating some harm as a result of both its imagery and the motto on current flag and Seal. If any disagreement to this point exists, interrogate the intent behind motto and its meaning. The Seal elements put together lend themselves

to a particular interpretation, whether intentional or not. It is necessary to agree within the Subcommittee that there is some harm, if not other discussions need to be had.

- COMEAU – Commenting on the motto from a historical perspective, the Algernon Sidney quote used for the motto is both a partial quote of a secondary clause and a loose translation of that quote. From the Revere Seal, the intent of the sword-in-hand crest and motto was to provide a level of separation from British rule over the colony. There are problems with the motto being a quote taken out of context separate from the harm it inflicts.
- VIEIRA – Asks for Indigenous perspective of motto to compare to historical record.
- SOLOMON – An interpretation of the motto from the Indigenous perspective: the colonists got peace for themselves by killing Native people. Connection between the motto and the raised sword above the Native person on the Seal leads to perception that violence against Native people is accepted.
- WALLEY – Many Native people were essentially veterans, defending their lands, culture and ways of life, and were often beheaded for it. The sword gives peace and freedom, but to who? Not the Native people fighting for their own people. Connection to Declaration of Independence’s descriptions of three major groups of the period: the British king, the colonists, and the Indigenous Peoples.
- KONDRATIUK – Seal’s origin and origin of Native figure on it goes back to the 1629 Massachusetts Bay Colony Seal.
- COMEAU – Particularly as historians and for the Subcommittee, it is necessary to understand that the history of Massachusetts and the United States includes a very real history of injury to marginalized groups, especially Indigenous people, with a long lasting impact. Questions the absolute nature of perceiving a threat in the Seal, notes that historical record shows no indication that that meaning was intentional.
- VIEIRA – Asks about origin and intent of Native figure on the Seal.
- SOLOMON – There was never peace between the colonists and all the tribes in Massachusetts, pointing out particularly the massacre of Native warriors and leaders at Wessagusset by Miles Standish.
- COMEAU – Historical record shows connection between the Native figure on the Seal and the Christianization of Indigenous Peoples.
- SIMON – John Eliot’s promotion of his proselytizing and praying towns included a Native figure with a speech bubble saying “Come over and help us.” This led to the inclusion of a Native figure of the Seal. Its origin was as a piece of propaganda to convert Indigenous Peoples in the eastern part of Massachusetts to Christianity.

- WALLEY – There is no honor in Native people being used as a piece of propaganda or as a trophy.
- SOLOMON – Expresses the harm in misinterpretation and misunderstanding, particularly the problematic nature of myths about US history often being taken as fact.
- COMEAU – Clarifying question about the crux of the Seal’s issues from the Indigenous perspective: Is it the inclusion of the Native figure or is it the way that the figure is depicted in relation to the other elements of the Seal, or both, that is most problematic?
- WALLEY – Warning that there are only five minutes remaining in the meeting. The previous question bears more conversation at next meeting. The creation of the Native figure was not on the terms of Indigenous communities.
- COMEAU – Agrees with WALLEY that question should start discussion at next meeting.

#### **4. Review of the movement to change the Seal**

- Discussion tabled until next meeting.

#### **5. Other business**

- WALLEY – Suggests that the Subcommittee establish a time for a standing meeting over email or via poll.
- VIEIRA – Requests that a polling platform be used to determine the standing meeting.

3:58PM

Meeting Adjourned by COMEAU

Histories & Usages Subcommittee of  
Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
May 10, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MINUTES

Prepared by Julia Lee in Sec. Galvin's Office, Archives Division

Subcommittee Members Present:

- Michael Comeau (co-Chair) – MA Archives Executive Director
- Brenton Simons – NE Historic Genealogical Society President & CEO
- Brittney Walley (co-Chair) – Hassanamisco Nipmuc representative
- Brid. Gen. Leonid Kondratiuk – MA National Guard Historical Services Director
- Elizabeth Solomon – Ponkapoag Massachusetts Councilwoman
- Brona Simon – MA State Archeologist

Absent / Excused:

- Rep. David Vieira – MA General Court
- Cheryl Andrews-Maltais – Aquinnah Wampanoag Chairwoman

11:02 Meeting Called to Order by COMEAU

AGENDA

**6. Approve Meeting Minutes for 4-15-22**

- SIMONS – MOTION to approve 4-15-22 minutes.
- KONDRATIUK – Seconds MOTION
- Minutes approved unanimously by voice vote.

**7. Intent vs. Perception:**

- a. Review of the Seal's development over time in context**
- b. Discussion of the harmful interpretation of the Seal and its imagery**

- COMEAU – Reviews the discussion from the last meeting and re-poses its concluding question: Is it the inclusion of a Native figure on the Seal or the depiction of that figure that is most problematic to Indigenous people?
- SOLOMON – Believes both the inclusion of the Native figure and the depiction are problematic. A coat of arms is a very Eurocentric concept, and to put a Native person inside of that is disrespectful of Indigenous culture. Also, the sword over the body of a Native person in conversation with motto is provocative and evokes violence against Native Peoples. Additionally, the image is a composite of European views on Native Peoples. The Seal is imbued with multiple instances of disrespect, racism, and colonialism. In a sense it is an apt representation of colonization in the area, but hopes that is not what the state wants to put forward as its symbol at this time.



- WALLEY – Agrees with SOLOMON. The subcommittee members did some research to reach their level of understanding of history, intent, and implications. The average person may not have that deep thought, only sees a sword over a Native person. The lack of input from the Indigenous community also doesn't sit right.
- COMEAU – From the historical record, it is very obvious that there was no Native inclusion in the 1885 proceedings to design the Seal.
- KONDRATIUK – Re-iterates the two schools of thought on the inclusion of the sword on the Seal. That it is a heraldic symbol representing the “arm of God” or that it ties in with the motto's reference to a sword.
- COMEAU – Agrees that the historical record shows the intent of the sword's inclusion aligns what KONDRATIUK explained. Poses question: Is it possible to improve the representation of the Native communities on the Seal or is that a non-starter?
- SOLOMON – The enclosing of a Native figure in the heraldic elements of the Seal is like enclosing Indigenous Peoples within a system that attempted to kill them off. Even without the sword and the motto, that depiction is already incredibly disrespectful. Personally has no objection to something that has a relationship to the Native presence in Massachusetts (past and continuing). Does not think the Seal can stay the way it is.
- WALLEY – Subcommittee needs to consider is the Indigenous imagery being used as someone's identity, or being used to show a kind of relationship? Mascots being an example of non-Natives taking on the imagery to assume an identity. Taking that imagery for one's own identity is problematic. Personally think that Indigenous people may expect some kind of reflection of the relationship, as in Massachusetts would not be here without the Native communities. Important to a lot of Native people in the Commonwealth. Find some creative way to show respect for that history without misusing Native imagery or misrepresenting Indigenous Peoples.
- SOLOMON – If the commonwealth is interested in forging a different type of relationship with the Indigenous community that would feel better. New imagery around indigeneity in Massachusetts can't solely be around the history (of genocide). On the other hand, if it was done in a way that expresses the Commonwealth's commitment to moving forward in a collaborative way, that is different. It's not just about what's accurate. Personal way of looking at the commission, we have the history, but what is a representation of Massachusetts today? How do we want to represent ourselves to ourselves and the rest of the world? Hopes it would not be based on the history of colonization and genocide.
- COMEAU – Has a hard time understanding how the Seal celebrates the dark elements of Massachusetts' history. Historical record indicates a want to connect with

the Commonwealth's origins on this continent and separate from Europe though the Seal, as opposed to celebrating domination. Not to say that it can't be interpreted that way. Thinks discussing movement to change the Seal will give greater clarification. Current Seal is a flawed attempt to show attachment of state to the original inhabitants of the region and country.

- SIMONS – Response to COMEAU: It's fine to have two interpretations of something. They may be diametrically opposed, and they may both be legitimate. Thanks SOLOMON and WALLEY for their contributions. Heard guidelines for where the conversation may go with regards to whether and how a Native representation is included in the future.
- SOLOMON – Does not feel that the intent of the Seal when it was created was to celebrate Indigenous genocide (colonization, yes). However, also doesn't think it was about the idea that there was a community between colonists or the United States and Native Peoples. Historical record indicates that. One of the reasons for the American Revolution was because there was a desire to colonize further west and take over more Indigenous territory, and Britain wasn't allowing it. Doesn't think you can think about intent without a clear and nuanced understanding of the history.
- WALLEY – Wants to mention being mindful of different ways of knowing and of understanding. Asks that subcommittee consider other points in the Commonwealth's history and consider the different ways of understanding the same event. It is a dynamic, multi-faceted history. Urges everyone to continue considering how we got here and what that might mean for different people. The historical record might not say something, but it is observable.
- COMEAU – Agrees with SOLOMON that westward expansion often gets overlooked as a factor in the American Revolution. Brings up 1900 New England Magazine article by the Seal's designer Edmund H. Garrett. Garrett wanted to create an image that was as authentic as possible.
- WALLEY – Questions the usage of the word "authentic." Hearing it being used to describe a non-Native person trying to create an "authentic" image of Indigenous Peoples. If that's the case then it's a non-starter because who is a non-Native person to say what is "authentic" within the complex Indigenous identity. Wants to highlight, who has the power to call it "authentic" in the first place. Finds it troubling. Perhaps is a conversation for later on in the process.
- COMEAU – Agrees that the lack of Indigenous inclusion in the creation of the current Seal is concerning and that the term "authentic" is problematic.
- KONDRATIUK – Mentions that a major reason for the Seal's creation was to unify all the state departments under one seal.

- SOLOMON – Believes WALLEY’s point is key. The idea of authenticity put onto a people has elements of racism. For instance, what would an authentic white person look like? Doesn’t think anyone would think about what that would be. Believes concept of “authenticity” is key to relationship between Native Peoples and those who colonized.
- COMEAU – Clarifies that by “authentic” he means “not inaccurate” to the time.
- SIMON – Thinks reflection of discussion back to full committee is important. Mentions 1980s Unmarked Burial Law about ancestral Indigenous remains and that last week the Society for American Archaeology issued an apology for the decades where the archaeological community refused to give up Native skeletal remains.
- SIMONS – Reiterates that good starting guidelines have come up for the framework in which Native imagery could be included in an alternate design to Seal.
- WALLEY – Wants subcommittee not to lose sight of the aspirational aspect of the work being done. There is a history to represent, but there are other things happening in the Commonwealth, any aspirations we have as a state and community.

#### **8. Review of the movement to change the Seal**

- Discussion tabled until next meeting. Meeting will begin with this item.
- SOLOMON – Regarding next meeting, the movement to change the flag is not solely an indigenous issue. Doesn’t think others should rely solely on the Indigenous subcommittee members to give that history because there have been many people involved in it.

#### **9. Other business**

- Discussion tabled until next meeting.

12:00 Meeting Adjourned by WALLEY

Histories & Usages Subcommittee of  
Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
June 7, 2022, at 11:00AM  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MINUTES

Prepared by Julia Lee in Sec. Galvin's Office, Archives Division

Subcommittee Members Present:

- Michael Comeau (co-Chair) – MA Archives Executive Director
- Brittny Walley (co-Chair) – Hassanamisco Nipmuc representative
- Brenton Simons – NE Historic Genealogical Society President & CEO
- Brona Simon – MA State Archeologist
- Cheryl Andrews-Maltais – Aquinnah Wampanoag Chairwoman
- Elizabeth Solomon – Ponkapoag Massachusetts Councilwoman

Absent / Excused:

- Brid. Gen. Leonid Kondratiuk – MA National Guard Historical Services Director
- Rep. David Vieira – MA General Court

11:02 Meeting Called to Order by COMEAU

AGENDA

**1. Welcome & Debrief of Previous Commission Meeting**

- COMEAU – Debrieves last meeting of the commission chairs and vice chairs. It was discussed that the general charge of the subcommittee has changed due to the unanimous decision from the last full commission meeting to recommend a complete redesign of the seal and motto. Suggests a refocus to feedback on and interpretation of the values listed in the legislation that formed the commission.
- WALLEY – Acknowledges that the tasks of the subcommittee changed. Suggests before moving on to a new task the subcommittee puts together some documentation on what has been discussed for the record's sake. Refers to COMEAU's role at the Archives as a way to find a format that can be populated with the information the subcommittee comes up with. Presents an idea to summarize and extract main points of discussion and collect written submissions. Opens idea up to subcommittee for discussion and suggestions.
- COMEAU – The documentation created will become historical record stored at the Archives.
- WALLEY – Meeting notes reflect a lot of the discussion, but some points the subcommittee came to may have a broader body of work that went into them that can

- be submitted. Asks how the documents might be formatted other than being receivable by the Archives.
- COMEAU – Mentions that he and KONDRATIUK can put together a report on the historical information they presented. Asks for opinions of the subcommittee on how to document proceedings.
  - SIMONS – Agrees on the usefulness of such a document. Thinks a paper or report on the movement to change the seal and motto by an individual or group who can gather those stories should be included in the record. Proposes the effort be led by individuals on the subcommittee and anyone they choose to interview with more information on the subject.
  - ANDREWS-MALTAIS – Notes that the formalized submissions on the negative impacts to Indigenous Peoples in the Commonwealth would be accessible through the Massachusetts Archives as they were made to the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs and to legislators. Does not like to use the word “anecdotal” because it can diminish validity, but personal stories and feelings could be used to supplement the archival records. The movement has existed for more than fifty years. Unfortunately, many people who were instrumental to it are no longer with us.
  - SOLOMON – It is necessary to expand beyond the history of the flag. Its effects need to be included in addition to its history and usage. It affected different populations; for example, the Indigenous community and the dominant culture. The subcommittee needs to document it because otherwise there’s no context for decision to change the flag. Additional work is required beyond the meeting notes to create context.
  - SIMONS – Asks about creating an inventory of Archives materials related to the discussion.
  - COMEAU – Explains that if petitions came in they should be reflected in the legislative documents at the Archives either in passed or unpassed legislation. Documents contributing to legislation would be there, but it’s not always as comprehensive as one would expect. Unsure of how useful the information found would be, but considers it worth the effort. Agrees that this is the missing piece of the existing documentation of the subcommittee. Asks how and who can produce that missing piece.
  - ANDREWS-MALTAIS – Suggests that the reports of the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs might contain information. The Governor, legislature and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development were also reported to by people in the movement. Those records could contain documents as well. Also, if the documentation doesn’t exist it just goes to the point that voices, while solicited, are not often heard. That could also be a relevant point, if these records didn’t make the cut to be archived.

- SIMON – Mentions that agencies like the Commission on Indian Affairs may have kept more detailed records than the legislature, as that is the case with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Also, that Rep. Byron Rushing’s records might be helpful and if it’s possible, searching for him specifically in the Archives could lead to more information on petitions that were made.
- WALLEY – Adds that the Public Consultation Subcommittee was in contact with Rep. Rushing and was hopeful about having him as a guest at one of their meetings.
- COMEAU – Says that the Archives should be able to find pertinent information, whether by looking at reports or for material relative to Rep. Rushing held by the Archives. However, it is with the caveat that documents from the General Court come as they are. They are not scheduled series. Also mentions the tendency for legislative documents to be procedural in nature as opposed to showing legislative intent.
- SIMONS – Circles back to Rep. Rushing and John Peters as good sources of knowledge. Emphasizes taking the opportunity to get personal histories and recollections, as they can be very powerful.
- SOLOMON – Mentions push in the last few years at the city and town level to support work like the commission’s. There are rich sources of information there that just need to be tapped into.
- WALLEY – Looking at a multidiscipline subproject to collect all these records. This work links back to the educational piece of the full movement the subcommittee is participating in. Asks what other information is the subcommittee thinking of including and how do we interweave these different lines of evidence together?
- ANDREWS-MALTAIS – Makes a recommendation for the educational component of the full commission’s charge to go out into Indigenous communities and speak to elders about the impact of the flag and their part in the movement to change it. Emphasizes importance of a tangible product to deliver to the legislature at the end of the process.
- WALLEY and COMEAU – Summarize mentioned lines of evidence for subcommittee to explore and importance of including the perspective of the movement in the record.
- SIMONS – Suggests the possibility of external assistance in the process.

## 2. Discussion on the Interpretation of the Values listed in the establishing resolution

- WALLEY – Requests that the subcommittee look at the interpretations of values in resolve that created the commission. Those values being “peace, justice, liberty and

equality” and “spreading the opportunities and advantages of education.” Asks to consider the values rather than look for images representing them.

- COMEAU – Asks if there are other ideals or aspirations that need to be portrayed beyond those listed.
- ANDREWS-MALTAIS – Believes that beyond peace there’s the idea of brotherhood and sharing. Being in the Commonwealth is a shared experience but with individual roles like how the commission operates. Mentions the liberalness of Massachusetts, being at the forefront of innovation and change. The Commonwealth has come a long way since the start of its history. Looking for elements or components that capture that it’s a shared experience by everyone that has brought the Commonwealth to its current point.
- SOLOMON – Has a concern with peace, justice, liberty, as being standard buzzwords for the history of Massachusetts and the greater United States, and also because their usage has taken place concurrently with the exclusion of multiple groups including Indigenous Peoples. That language has the tendency to make people complacent and not really examine what they mean by it. Believes a lot is missing from these values. Wants this process to be not just a historical reflection, but an aspirational one.
- COMEAU – Reflects that the idea of a commonwealth is aspirational. The “common weal” - the common good - is in that word. Thinks this foundational commitment should be reflected in the commission’s approach.
- SIMONS – Adds that no design will captures every theme in an obvious way. Puts forth the idea of a statement accompanying the design to encompass the thoughts of the commission.
- WALLEY – Thinks that statement could factor into the educational piece coming out of the process. Asks SIMONS whether his proposed statement be would be for educational purposes or akin to the motto.
- SIMONS – Was considering that the statement would be published alongside the commission’s work on a new design and be approximately a paragraph in length to explain the aspirations of the commission.
- COMEAU – Adds that the statement would be the feature piece of the historical record, and is the whole commission’s opportunity to put a stamp on the work they have done. It would be a critical component of the commission’s final output.
- SIMON – Agrees with COMEAU on the importance of Massachusetts being a “commonwealth.” Questions why the word does not appear on the current seal, and notes that Massachusetts is instead called a republic.

- ANDREWS-MALTAIS – Everyone worked for the common good of each other, including colonists, Natives, and both groups together. Those are the foundational properties of the colonies. We can't help how it changed and morphed over the centuries, but we can refocus on those values, collaboration, and equality. Emphasizes selecting the words in the statement appropriately so that they can stand the test of time and bring people back when they deviate.
- COMEAU – Points out that the statement being discussed could also prevent misinterpretations of visual or design presented by the commission.

### 3. Next Steps

- WALLEY – Summarizes the discussion. Half being about the in depth project on recording the subcommittee's work that maybe could be brought to the full commission to discuss. The second half about the values is a discussion that could continue on in another subcommittee meeting.
- COMEAU – Agrees with WALLEY's assessment. Mentions that the discussion of values can help drive the design, and that the subcommittee could then make a recommendation to the larger commission. Charges the subcommittee to look at crafting a statement.
- SIMONS – Asks about whether a recording will be available of the Research and Design Subcommittee's meeting next week.
- WALLEY – Believes there will be a recording and plans to follow up on that.

11:58

Meeting Adjourned by WALLEY



Histories & Usage Subcommittee of  
Special Commission Relative to the Seal & Motto of the Commonwealth  
September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 12:00pm  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MINUTES

Prepared by Sofia Caruso in Sec. Galvin's Office, Archives Division

Subcommittee Members Present:

- Brittney Walley (co-chair) – Hassanamisco Nipmuc representative
- Michael Comeau – MA Archives Executive Director
- Brid. Gen. Leonid Kondratiuk – MA National Guard Historical Services Director
- Brona Simon – MA State Archaeologist
- Rep. David Vieira – MA General Court
- Cheryl Andrews-Maltais – Aquinnah Wampanoag Chairwoman
- Elizabeth Solomon – Ponkapoag Massachusetts Councilwoman

Absent/Excused:

- Brenton Simons – NE Historic Genealogical Society President & CEO

12:03 Meeting Called to Order by Michael Comeau AGENDA

**1. Michael Comeau to present on term “Commonwealth” as a potential key term for a new motto**

- COMEAU – Commonwealth as a term derives from John Adams, author of state constitution, who believed it was representative of people’s common responsibility in a democracy. It might be a good place to start on creating a new motto.
- SOLOMON – Commonwealth is a good starting point but it does not necessarily need to be in the motto.
- VIEIRA – Commonwealth embodies what the motto should represent but it does not need the actual word in the motto.
- COMEAU – Commonwealth derives from term “common good.” Motto can include essential theme.
- WALLEY – Commonwealth, as common well-being of the people, as a term harkens back to other terms in charge that Committee did not have time to discuss, “peace, justice, liberty, equity, and spreading the opportunities and advantages of education.” Similarly to these words, commonwealth itself does not necessarily need to be in motto.

- COMEAU – The resolve says, “Examine and study the seal and motto of the Commonwealth to ensure they faithfully reflect and embody the historic and contemporary commitments to the Commonwealth and here they are iterated: to peace, justice, liberty, equality, and to spreading the opportunities and advantages of education.” Perhaps the Committee can start creating a list of key terms. It might be necessary to add to the list of terms created in the resolve.
- WALLEY – The list should include the Committee’s impression of the terms.
- KONDRATIUK – Look to other states’ mottos. New Hampshire has “Live Free or Die,” and Rhode Island simply has “Hope.” New York has “Excelsior.” The motto should be in English, and preferably a phrase, not a single word.
- COMEAU – Something simple and straightforward would be preferred. Suggests, “For the common good.” “Service” could also be another term to add to the list.
- KONDRATIUK – Suggests that the Committee thinks of words or phrases before the next meeting.
- COMEAU – The full Commission would appreciate the list of resulting terms.
- SOLOMON – The Committee should discuss parameters of possible mottos or terms. Does the Committee believe that the words in the charge are appropriate? Some of the terms may no longer be relevant.
- VIEIRA – Agrees with SOLOMON. It is important to link the new motto to the current one to push it forward. Current motto is, “By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty.” An idea is, “Under liberty, we seek peace, justice, and equality for all.” As a nation, many are still seeking peace, justice, and equality, and the Commonwealth must seek out these ideals as well.
- SOLOMON – Likes the word “seek” as it refers to aspiration, instead of saying that this is where the Commonwealth is right now, and the Commonwealth must continue to have these aspirations.

## **2. Discuss ways to make the motto inclusive, including Indigenous terms and other influences**

- WALLEY – It is important in creating a motto to find the balance between representing the history of the Commonwealth and our aspirations. The Committee must keep in mind two points: indigenous activism brought the Committee together, and remembering accurate history, including indigenous hospitality that allowed for the colonies. It is also important to think about how many and what kind of people live within the Commonwealth, and how to balance all of these people and their histories with where the Commonwealth

aspires to go. “Opportunities and advantages of education” is a significant term in the charge. The state license plates say “The Spirit of America,” which should also be considered.

- COMEAU – Motto should be recognizable and transferable, and should not require explanation to the general public.
- ANDREWS-MALTAIS – The motto can provide a teachable element of history. Aspects may not need to be easily recognizable for everyone, so that they can learn the history. It is important to recognize all of the indigenous nations of the Commonwealth. There are also many important moments in the shared history of Massachusetts to keep in mind.
- SOLOMON – The Histories and Usage Committee should work with the Design Committee in order to ensure there is indigenous representation and references in the seal and/or the motto.
- COMEAU – A professor of sociology at Springfield College has given advice to the Commission and recommends, “The content should not reflect, represent, or be associated with a particular group based on race, ethnicity, or culture.” The Commonwealth is a large and diverse entity and the Committee should focus on commonalities.
- ANDREWS-MALTAIS – Focusing on commonalities does not mean that individual peoples and nations should be erased. Homogeneity can lead to these groups being erased or ignored.
- VIEIRA – Asks if there is a key term regarding indigenous representation that should be considered that some members of the Committee may be unaware of.
- SOLOMON – “Reciprocity,” which is not always considered in the dominant culture.
- WALLEY – Agrees with SOLOMON. Also suggests “kinship,” but it may not be applicable. Thinking about “kin” and “kinship” can be useful in considering connections to others, and finding commonalities or taking care of people.
- SOLOMON – Kinship is not only about other humans.
- SIMON – Asks if there are relevant words in indigenous languages that are worth talking about that are related to the concept of peace, reciprocity, and working toward the common good.
- WALLEY – Many words in English has indigenous origins that people do not know about, such as “moose” or town names with Massachusetts that people often regard as silly or difficult to pronounce.

- SOLOMON – Agrees. “Massachusetts” is an indigenous word, and a word of a tribal entity within the Commonwealth, and indigenous influence should be represented in the seal and motto. Agrees with WALLEY about incorporating indigenous culture and influence.
- WALLEY – Many tribes’ names mean “the people” or refer to features of where they are from.
- COMEAU – The word commonwealth implies that there is a responsibility of all people within the Commonwealth to contribute.
- VIEIRA – There is a difference between duty, relating to human rights, and obligation, relating to civil rights. Brings up the concept of land ethic, and people being one with the land, in relation to the earlier term “reciprocity.”
- COMEAU – Service could also be touched upon as a term.
- WALLEY – Brings up “The Bay State,” as it discusses the landscape of Massachusetts, despite possible negative connotations around “Massachusetts Bay” due to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The geographic landscape is a commonality between the citizens of the Commonwealth.
- COMEAU – It would be useful to Committee members to come up with more ideas that can be considered in the next meeting.

### **3. Discuss goals and needs for public input process**

- SOLOMON – It might be most helpful to frame call for public input around central ideas that the Committee has come up with.
- WALLEY – Public input is necessary because it goes back to the idea of the Commonwealth, and the contributions of all within it. The Committee’s ideas and thought process behind them should be explained to the public, along with open-ended suggestions for ideas. The people of the Commonwealth need a chance to be involved in the process.
- COMEAU – Agrees with WALLEY. The visual design of the seal will also have to be considered. The current motto is meant to reinforce ideas in the coat of arms. Asks if the new motto will have to be uniform with the new seal.
- KONDRATIUK – Does not think the motto needs to match the coat of arms.
- COMEAU – The Committee might be able to provide guidance to the Design Committee.

- SOLOMON – The motto and the seal do not need to match but they have to be congruent, and make sense together.
- WALLEY – The Committee needs synergy with the other committees. The Commission should discuss the timeline.
- COMEAU – Public input can give two perspectives: either affirmation or disagree, and ideas that the Committee may not have considered. The seal and the motto are intertwined.
- VIEIRA – Asks if the Public Consultation Subcommittee is gathering information for development or reviewing what the other subcommittees have done.
- COMEAU – Believes that it is probably both, but they are probably gathering public opinion.

#### **4. Vote to Recommend key terms to the full Commission**

- SIMON – Moves Subcommittee to vote on key terms, and brings up several terms previously discussed in the meeting.
- SOLOMON – Agrees with WALLEY’s idea about incorporating the land and going beyond a human perspective.
- VIEIRA – Suggests calling this “terms and concepts.”
- COMEAU – Would like to add “service,” in relation to military service, to key terms.
- WALLEY – These concepts are not conflicting, and a vote may erase concepts that could be expressed together with other concepts, if the Subcommittee has not thought of a word that could encompass both.
- COMEAU – The Subcommittee still needs to consider possible words for the full Commission meeting in a week.
- SIMON – The Subcommittee should bring up to the full Commission KONDRATIUK’s idea that the motto and the coat of arms do not need to match.
- SOLOMON – Reminds of Subcommittee of “access to education for all.” Perhaps this could be brought in by the concept of allowing people to fulfill and express their full potential.
- VIEIRA – Suggests that it could be phrased as “seeking to fulfill their full potential.”

- KONDRATIUK – Agrees with VIEIRA’s suggestion of “seek.”
- WALLEY – Agrees with VIEIRA as well, as it makes the perspective “about the journey.”

1:04

Meeting Adjourned by COMEAU

**Seal and Motto Sub-Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, April 12, 2022**

**In Attendance:** Brian Boyles; Kelly Bennett; John Peters; Jim Wallace

*Boyles* opened the meeting at 9:02 am.

*Boyles* noted that this is the first meeting of the subcommittee and an opportunity to discuss what kind of work they want to do together.

**Roll call:** All members present.

*Boyles:* At the last full Seal and Motto Commission meeting, it was discussed that the group would break into subcommittees and each subcommittee would be given a charge. The purpose and goals of these subcommittees is to ensure that the work they do is transparent and that they are communicating the work and intentions to the larger committee. The subcommittees can contribute to the larger conversation around releasing recommendations, building public awareness and consider educational programs and outreach that can help walk the public through this process. This is also a good opportunity for outreach to the public and a way to build into proposed recommendations to legislature. Brian Boyles and Brian Weeden will serve as the public spokes persons for the subcommittees. Kate Miller has been fielding inquiries.

*Boyles* shared some public feedback to the subcommittee noting that it is important to update Kate so she can respond. *Boyles* also spoke about an 8<sup>th</sup> grade US History/Civics teacher who wrote to the committee showing how students are interested in tackling the same charge around the possibility of making changes. *Boyles* noted that this is something to think about and could be a good educational opportunity for the entire Commonwealth.

*Bennett* feels it would be good to have a summary document available to the public, of the Seal and Motto history. *Wallace* recommended setting up outreach programs so more people can be made aware of the commission and the work that is being done around the Seal and Motto.

*Boyles* mentioned the possibility for this committee to look at other groups to inform the public at large. As an example, educators and library commissioners could serve as conveners for some of the conversations the commission would want to have.

A discussion took place on the various ways the commission could get the word out to the public regarding the seal and motto revision and, perhaps include them in the development. *Wallace* talked about a project for students (perhaps a competition) to design the seal. *Bennett* mentioned using Mass Cultural Council to serve as an organization to raise awareness using their contacts. *Peters* mentioned using their limited database for the Native population in order to make them aware of the project. *Wallace* asked if there might be an opportunity for outreach, at events or public venues such as the Museum of Science, to educate people as to what this committee is doing either

*Peters* stated that he has been waiting to hear from the commission on how far they will go with the revision of the seal and motto. Redoing the entire seal will take quite a bit of time and would prevent the committee from meeting a June or July deadline. The committee established at their last meeting that they would not meet that deadline and it would have to be extended. *Boyles* mentioned that the co-chairs discussed this deadline at their last meeting and noted that the consensus among legislative leadership was to request an extension. He also noted that they are hoping to reach recommendations by the end of the year.

*Wallace* made a motion to adjourn the meeting. A second was heard from *Bennett*. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:41am.



**Seal and Motto Sub-Committee/Public Input Meeting**  
**July 12, 2022**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Members in attendance: Brian Boyles, Kelly Bennett, John Peters, Jim Wallace  
Guest: Steve Koczela

Meeting began at 11:00 am

Boyles opened the meeting asking for feedback from committee members on the previous meeting and thoughts moving forward. Bennett commented that she felt Micah's presentation was exemplary and is leading the committee on a much clearer path.

Boyles introduced Steve Koczela, president of MA Polling Group, located on Beacon Hill in Boston. His organization does a number of polling services around business, politics, policy issues and much more.

Koczela spoke to the committee on the different ways to do polling and discussed how polling can help and work for an organization or business. He noted that there are several ways to poll depending on what an organization is trying to accomplish. He also pointed out the benefits of using the various types of polls. Costs for polls can range from the tens of thousands of dollars, depending on their scope. Mass Inc. has the capacity to do polls in different languages and via phone or online.

Koczela spoke about conventional polls that go out as well as polls that can be conformed to fit the needs of an organization. Following his presentation, several questions were asked of Koczela relating to the benefits of using one type of poll over another as well as meaningful questions that can be included in a poll.

Meeting adjourned at 11:44 am

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane Feltner  
Executive Assistant  
Mass Humanities

Seal and Motto Public Consultation Committee Meeting 9-13-22  
Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Kelly Bennett, Brian Boyles, Jim Peters, Jim Wallace

Boyles called the meeting to order at 11:00 am

The Seal and Motto committee met as a full commission and looked at a time line for sub-committee work and full committee work, based on a December 31 deadline. This timeline was set in case the extension request and the request for funding, which was made in the economic development bill, is resurrected. If this does not happen, the committee may have to work under this timeline.

*Boyles* asked the committee if they had anything to add to agenda. *Bennett* asked a question on requests and accommodations for in person meetings or, if there is a webinar.

*Boyles* shared an interview he had with David Detmold, the coordinator of [changethemassflag.com](http://changethemassflag.com). Detmold built and maintained this website when the topic, and a series of hearings and forums, came about around the name of the Turners Falls high school football team and mascot. The team was known as the Indians and the school was named after Captain Turner, who led the massacre of indigenous people on the site during King Phillip's War. Detmold stated that people from the area were upset about this team name and brought it to the attention of the school district. The video talks about the hearings the school committee called, in which they invited several tribal members to attend, in order to change the mascot and team name. There was staunch resistance from many members of the community, but eventually, the mascot and team name were changed. At one of the hearings, an angry person stood up and asked, "If we have to change our team name and mascot, why doesn't the state have to change its flag?" This is when Detmold created his website and put changing the MA state flag into motion.

*Boyles* asked the committee for their thoughts on the video. *Peters* said it's going to be a lot of work trying to do things that Detmold spoke about, and the committee probably won't go in that direction. Both *Bennett* and *Peters* are concerned about the timeline. *Bennet* spoke about the possibility of having public meetings around the flag seal and motto at local libraries. *Wallace* does not think this project is doable because of the timeline. *Peters* mentioned that after speaking to indigenous groups, they would be satisfied with changing the sword and motto on the flag. *Boyles* mentioned that the Research and Design committee took this suggestion up at their last meeting and will take it to the full committee at the next meeting.

*Boyles* spoke about the question of polling and mentioned that UMASS Poll offered to include several questions, around the work the committee is doing, in their October poll. *Boyles* feels it is an opportunity to do a smaller poll of roughly 1000 people and get some feedback. *Boyles* asked the committee what three questions they would like to see in the poll should they move forward with it.

The committee came up with the following three questions:

- Are you in favor of having a new motto for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts?

- Are you in favor of the redesign of the elements of the Seal and Flag of the Commonwealth?
- What are your preferences in any new Seal and Motto design?

*Wallace* noted that once the decision is made to change the flag, the next step would be to determine what the new flag should look like and this is the difficult piece in the process.

*Boyles* commented on *Wallace's* suggestion to think about some categories, or preferences, to identify around representation, which can be finalized at the next meeting.

*Boyles* asked for a motion to make a recommendation to the full commission to add the three questions the committee came up with, to the UMASS poll in October. *Bennet* made a motion; a second was heard from *Peters*, all in favor.

*Boyles* asked the committee what they feel is doable in November and what might be a recommendation for a longer engagement. If they proceed in November, who might be the convening partners to help make that happen and what will the committee want to be asking at an event held either on line or in person. *Bennett* recommended the Boston Public Library or the State House to hold the public meeting. *Wallace* suggested the Gardner Auditorium.

*Wallace* recommended narrowing down the imageries categories, for the seal, in order to make it easier to present to the full commission at its next meeting.

*Boyles* asked the committee members for their thoughts of holding the public forum online. *Bennet* spoke on the positive benefits of holding it online. *Peters* stated that it would be possible to notify indigenous communities prior to the online event. *Wallace* suggested the possibility of reserving a table at fairs and public shows throughout the Commonwealth.

*Boyles* asked for a motion to recommend two in person and two on line public input sessions to the full commission. So moved from *Wallace*, all were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 am.

State Seal Commission  
Research & Design Sub-Committee Meeting  
Thursday July 14, 2022

Call to Order

Co-Chairman Brian Weeden called to order the Research and Design Sub-Committee Meeting on Thursday July 14, 2022 at 11:02 a.m.

Members in Attendance:

Brian Weeden, Melissa Ferretti, Donna Curtin, Micah Whitson, Tony Cabral

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Donna Curtin 2<sup>nd</sup> by Melissa Ferretti to accept and approve the Research and Design Sub-Committee meeting agenda of 7/14/22.

All in Favor: Unanimous by all present

Motion passed.

Appointments

Motion made by Micah Whitson 2<sup>nd</sup> by Donna Curtin to appoint Melissa Ferretti as the recording Secretary of the Research and Design Sub-Committee.

All in Favor: Unanimous by all present

Motion passed.

Presentation/Discussion

Adjournment

Motion made by Tony Cabral 2<sup>nd</sup> by Donna Curtin to adjourn the meeting at 12:02 p.m.

All in Favor: Unanimous by all present

Motion passed.