

Arizona America250 Commission

In person and virtually via Zoom

Meeting Minutes of April 7, 2025

1. Call to order and roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:03am.

Commission Members Present:

Chair Adrian Fontes	Vice Chair Verlon Jose	Ashley Harder
Paul Tighe	Jay McCall	Anna Needham
Neil Giuliano	Sarah Webber	

Commission Members Absent:

Senator Vince Leach	Representative Justin Wilmeth	Marcus Carney
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2. Discussion and possible action on meeting minutes for April 7, 2025.

MOTION: Adoption of minutes from April 7, 2025 as written. Neil Giuliano motioned; Ashley Harder seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Discussion and possible action on next steps for fundraising, fundraising support, and planning for the Traveling Museum, Passport250, A250 AZ website, and the ASU Gammage sponsor event.

The ED shared a draft budget overview for A250 planning purposes, including structural elements such as a website, PR, media, and fundraising support. The Commission has received approximately \$800K so far. For the Traveling Museum, planning will likely include one vehicle rather than two, which will be more cost-effective. Staff are speaking with the Arizona Department of Transportation about whether they have an 18-wheeler or some other vehicle that could be retrofit to suit the purposes of the museum. Staff are also talking with the State Procurement Office to potentially move forward with an official

Request for Information regarding possible bids for the vehicle. The total estimated budget for the Traveling Museum is between \$1,200,000 and \$2,000,000. For the Passport250 app, the Office of Tourism will be partnering with us for a free version of what had originally been envisioned and estimated at \$50,000 - \$150,000. The AZ250 license plate has been approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. \$32,000 will be owed for design and production at the general effective date. Following that, the Commission will receive \$17 of every \$25 plate sold. Estimated budget for supplies for tabling at events is \$3,000 - \$5,000. Estimated budget for the ASU Gammage "Suffs" event is \$30,000 - \$40,000. Estimated budget for Saguaros250 is \$25,000 - \$50,000. Estimated budget for closing events in 2026 is \$10,000 - \$25,000. Total budget is approximately \$3,000,000. The most important budget for consideration currently is that for the Traveling Museum. The Chair stressed that this is an aspirational budget, as there are many factors in play and called for a discussion. Sarah Webber said she believes a lot of our potential partners are facing uncertainty due to a possible loss of federal funds. Ashley Harder expressed concerns about how the budget will be affected by finding vendors under state contract. While being willing to vote to approve the estimated budget, she would like to see a timeline for the budget soon. The Chair expressed confidence that we will be able to raise funds at least up to the full estimated budget and said the timeline will come together as planning continues to be finalized. Neil Giuliano said the estimated budget document will be very helpful when speaking to potential donors.

MOTION: Adoption of the estimated budget as present. Jay McCall motioned; Neil Giuliano seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Discussion and possible action on policy, materials, and scheduling for tabling events.

The ED recommended that we start small and go from there due to concerns regarding staffing availability for events. The Chair asked about a cap on funds spent without having to seek approval from the full Commission. Deputy General Counsel advised that the Commission could approve a number up to \$10,000 and recommended that the policy require the Executive Director to work in consultation with the Chief Procurement Officer to comply with state procurement procedures. No one required discussion regarding this matter.

MOTION: Adoption of a policy to allow the Executive Director, in consultation with the Chief Procurement Officer of the Arizona Department of State, has the authority to spend up to \$10,000 without Commission approval. Sarah Webber motioned; Jay McCall seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Discussion and possible action on handouts and framing the Declaration, Constitution and Bill of Rights for promotional purposes.

Jay McCall would like to have these documents framed for travel for tabling. He said \$75 plus tax would cover plastic covers/frame. The Chair stated that the motion approved in agenda item #4 would cover this. Staff will work on putting together tabling kits or “outreach in a box” with standardized A250 materials.

6. Discussion and possible action on an A250 AZ partnership with the Celebrating Arizona podcast.

Lisa Schnebly Heidinger, a Centennial Commissioner and one of the hosts of the “Celebrating Arizona” podcast, discussed the work she and her partner have been doing. They have a book that will be featured by the Library of Congress. She would like to be the official podcast for America250 Arizona. Their idea is to focus on one county each month. Ashley thanked her for being here and reported that she listened to the podcast this past weekend and loved it. She asked how the podcast producers handle the recording. Lisa reported that her husband works for Channel 3 and records it for the podcast. The Chair expressed his vision that, as the official podcast, we would drive interview and publicity traffic to them. General Counsel said that approving this is within the discretion of the commission. The producers will share the link for the podcast with the commissioners. The Chair asked the ED to include action on this item on the agenda for next month’s meeting.

7. Discussion and possible action on adopting subcommittee policy to include moving a member to non-voting status after missing two consecutive meetings. Non-voting members may regain voting status by notifying the subcommittee Chair and the Executive Director.

The ED stated this is an effort towards making sure each subcommittee can meet quorum every month. General Counsel states that the commission has discretion to adopt such a policy. The Chair asked that an official policy memo regarding this be sent to the commissioners and discussed at the next meeting.

8. Commissioner update and possible action on subcommittee work.

a. Arts, Museums & Cultural Institutions. Anna Needham reported that the subcommittee did not meet in April and will be meeting soon this month.

b. Civic Engagement, Education & Community Service. Paul Tighe had to leave the meeting earlier.

c. History, Heritage & Historic Preservation. Ashley Harder reports that they are continuing with their interpretation group. They are working with the Arizona Historical Society about doing a commemorative issue of their journal related to A250. She will have more information about this initiative in the future. The state historic preservation conference will be held this week in Phoenix. The Chair reported that he has toured the May Hicks House up in Flagstaff. It was moved to its new spot in the past few weeks. Ashley reported that they are working with the Arizona Memory Project to highlight the May Hicks House.

d. Military & Veterans Affairs. The ED reports that the subcommittee is focused on co-branding with other groups for upcoming events. The ED will confirm the launch of the Veterans Relay initiative but believes it will run summer 2025 to summer of 2026. The Chair reports that he has been visiting a lot of Veterans' charities throughout the state.

e. Municipal Outreach & Tribal Affairs. No report.

f. Travel & Tourism. Sarah Webber reported that the subcommittee did not meet in April and will be meeting this month. They are looking forward to helping to plan the Passport250 app. They are excited to engage birdwatchers with Birding250.

g. Fundraising. Four or five more big meetings are scheduled. Strong effort is being made for small gifts across a wide range. Legislation regarding a \$500,000 appropriation and an FTE for the A250 was passed but still needs to be included in the budget. The fundraising team is still working on some potential major donors. Neil stated that he is hopeful that by the fall, the Commission will have raised 2/3 of the goal. The Chair thanked Neil Giuliano for all the work he's done so far raising money for the Commission.

9. Report from Executive Director.

a. Two Lights for Tomorrow wrap-up. The ED reports that we came in under budget for the event. Payment for a few invoices still pending due to a billing error and a mismatched quote to invoice. Staff are working on getting the video and photos from the event together for sharing. The Chair was pleased with attendance by folks from all around the state. The sales of the State Forty Eight t-shirts is nearly even with the investment despite giveaways to volunteers and select dignitaries. Staff will work with State Forty Eight to develop another design with additional style and color options.

b. A250 National Convening in Washington, D.C., July 28, 2025, through July 30, 2025. Commissioners are welcome to attend.

10. Call to the public.

No public comments were received.

11. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:06am.

DRAFT