

Arizona America250 Commission

In person and virtually via Zoom

Meeting Minutes of September 8, 2025

1. Call to order and roll call.

The meeting was called to order at 9:05am.

Commission Members Present:

Chairman Adrian Fontes

Paul Tighe

Marcus Carney

Representative Justin Wilmeth

Ashley Harder

Anna Needham

Neil Giuliano

Sarah Webber

Commission Members Absent:

Vice Chairman, Chairman Verlon Jose

Senator Vince Leach

Jay McCall

2. Discussion and possible action on meeting minutes for August 13, 2025.

MOTION: Adoption of minutes from August 13, 2025, as written. Paul Tighe moved, Ashley Harder seconded. Carried unanimously without discussion.

3. Report from Executive Director.

a. License plate. ED Terech recommended not pursuing an A250 AZ license plate due to cost and the number needed to be sold to break even over the next year. Chair Fontes raised the question of whether or not people could “reserve” a plate so there would be some idea that the \$32,000 funding would be covered. Discussion was had about the short time limit. The group agrees with ED Terech, who will follow up with ADOT to verify. No official action will be taken on this.

b. ASU Gammage *Suffs* event. This will be on 14 October. The sponsors are excited, and many have RSVP'd. 70 tickets were secured. There will be A250 signage in the lobby and box office. The VIP reception is limited on space due to weight restrictions. Chair Fontes said that the goal of the VIP event is for Commission members to talk to sponsors about the initiatives each subcommittee is building. Ashley Harder asked if our new marketing agent will be doing marketing for this event. They have onboarded and are in the process of getting up to speed on

upcoming A250 AZ initiatives, including Suff's. Chair Fontes asked that they help to promote *Suff's*.

c. State Forty-Eight merchandise design.

d. Passport250. This initiative is rolling along nicely. Another 75 sites will be added this month and the final 75 in October. The marketing firm is working on a media kit.

e. Traveling Museum. This is going out for bid today through the SPO. The Commission is hoping to find one firm to do the entire package – building, driving, etc. The award date is tentatively set for mid to late October. This will be a quick turnaround for the planned Statehood Day launch, which is a Saturday (as pointed out by Chair Fontes). He suggested schools get involved. Discussion was had about Statehood Day particulars and launching at the Sharlot Hall Museum. It is possible the Traveling Museum would launch later than February 14, 2026, in which case plans could be made for a preview on Statehood Day.

f. PR/Marketing firm. ED Terech states that Agital is on board, and they will be working with staff and commissioners. While the website is being built, Agital will work on building the social media footprint in addition to promoting Passport250. There will be weekly check-ins with them soon.

g. Arizona State Lottery A250 AZ lotto ticket. The Commission will not earn anything from this initiative, but it will promote awareness. The ticket is set to launch next summer.

4. Discussion and possible action on A250 AZ wine. ED Terech is working on getting in touch with the Arizona Wine Growers Association to share the opportunity with interested vintners.

5. Commissioner update and possible action on subcommittee work.

a. Arts, Museums & Cultural Institutions. Anna Needham reported that they are looking at fabricators to create big AZ pieces to be painted. They are talking with artists who do this kind of work.

b. Civic Engagement, Education & Community Service. Paul Tighe reports that they continue to meet monthly. Civics Education Day at Cardinal Stadium will be in January. ED Terech reported that the Higher Education Convening will be at Flinn Foundation tomorrow. The Commission is hosting a Student Town Hall on 21 October. ADE has developed a wonderful toolkit for students.

i. Development of an A250 AZ Scholarship with the Dougherty Foundation. More information coming soon about a possible A250 AZ scholarship for students.

c. Fundraising. They are continuing to reach out to potential major sponsors as well as building a small-donation grassroots campaign.

d. History, Heritage & Historic Preservation. Ashley Harder reports that they have been very busy this summer.

i. Interpretation documents for distribution. Copies were distributed prior to the meeting. They were put together with David Turpie. Discussions have been had with partners at the university level. Ashley reports that she has been out in the community, fielding questions from people about what the state will be doing to observe the Semiquincentennial. She proposes that the commission approve and adopt the document. Ashley Harder moved, Neil Giuliano seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

ii. Creation of an Arizona Heritage Preservation Youth Council as a 2026 legacy project. Over the summer, Ashley and several members of her subcommittee participated in a Town Hall in Flagstaff. It was part of a youth summit centered on historical preservation and civic engagement. Two of the students reached out to Ashley and are interested in continuing the work that began at the Town Hall. An Arizona Heritage Preservation Youth Council has been proposed, and some guests came to speak to the commission about this. Arianna Urban from the SHPO spoke about the exciting agenda for the Preserve America Youth Summit. Two students attended today's meeting. Arianna spoke about the Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan, a large part of which is youth engagement. The students presented a proposal for the youth council. Ashley spoke in favor of establishing the HPYC. There would be no financial commitment for the commission. Eric Vondy read a letter of support from Kathryn Leonard of the SHPO and the History, Heritage, and Historical Preservation subcommittee. Sarah Webber expressed hearty support for this. Chair Fontes expressed strong support for this. Ashley motioned to support the creation an Arizona Heritage Preservation Youth Council as an America250 Arizona 2026 legacy project. Paul Tighe seconded. There was no discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

e. Military & Veterans Affairs. Chair Fontes had no specific updates. He spoke about the Trail Hike and invited one and all to get with Arizona Trails to reserve a segment.

f. Municipal Outreach & Tribal Affairs. There was no update.

g. Travel & Tourism. Marcus Carney states that they had a wonderful meeting a few weeks ago. They had a guest from SAR, and they are looking to do a historical reenactment at different breweries.

6. Call to the public. No public comments received.

7. Adjournment. 10:04am.

The next meeting will take place on October 6, 2025, at 9am.

DRAFT