

## **Criteria Development Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

**Friday, June 13, 2025**

**10:00am**

### **Committee Members in Attendance**

- Kate Fox
- Rhonda Anderson
- Elizabeth Solomon
- Lilia Melikechi

### **Others in Attendance**

- Victoria Grimes
- Daniela DeCaro-Heavey
- Abigail Phillips

### **Agenda:**

- Welcome
- NAVA Recommendations
- Minnesota's Design Brief
- Massachusetts Recommendations
- Final Thoughts

### **Discussion Summary**

#### **1. Review of Minnesota Criteria and Possible Application to MA**

- Elizabeth appreciated seeing Minnesota's approach and emphasized the importance of **consistency** between the state **flag** and **seal**.
- Continuity in symbolic elements was noted as a key strength in MN's process.
- The need to include **representative elements of Indigenous communities** was emphasized given the origin of the initiative.
- While not formally listed as criteria, Indigenous representation should be strongly considered.

#### **2. Cultural Representation and Symbolism**

- **Rhonda** appreciated MN’s approach of using **positive, inclusive language** in their criteria (e.g., avoiding "no humans" or "no violence" wording directly, but implying those exclusions).
- Rhonda reiterated the importance of **avoiding depictions of humans, religion, violence, gender**, or any singular cultural reference, particularly with respect to Indigenous communities' diversity.
- **Elizabeth** highlighted the need to ask: “*Are there Native elements we are specifically looking for?*” and whether the design projects the intended message.
- A suggestion was made to **include a “connection to the state”** and **messaging** criteria.
- Discussion revealed **symbolism** is difficult to quantify and may need qualitative input beyond a standard rubric. Need to revisit “Symbolism” category of the rubric.

### 3. Rubric Considerations

- Kate presented the initial draft rubric (developed only for the flag so far).
- Subcommittee agreed that **two additional rubrics** are needed: one for the **seal** and one for the **motto**.
- Elizabeth and others agreed that clarity on **intended message and values** would help guide decisions about symbolism.
- Suggestions included adding rows for:
  - Representation of Native elements
  - Connection to state identity
  - Accessibility (possibly as a standalone category)
- Rhonda raised concerns about a rubric label saying “THE culture,” noting the need to reflect **many cultures**.

### 4. Accessibility and Design Standards

- **Lilia** emphasized prioritizing **accessibility**—e.g., avoiding small text, ensuring visual clarity for people with visual impairments, and providing alternative text or descriptions.
- Suggestions included:
  - Maintaining **continuity in colors**

- Avoiding overly complex designs
- Considering **symmetry** while allowing for **artistic expression**

## 5. Submission Review and First Cut Process

- Kate raised the question of how to reduce the number of designs for review.
- A **three-tier system (red/yellow/green)** was proposed.
- Rhonda and Elizabeth supported a **hard “no” criteria** for early elimination (e.g., inclusion of humans or religious symbols). However, Elizabeth was undecided about ruling out humans on the flag or seal all together.
- First review would be a **checklist**: if a submission meets basic, exclusionary standards, it moves to rubric scoring.
- Discussion ensued about the importance of having room in the process to capture **subjective connection** not easily scored through rubrics.

## 6. Intentional Messaging

- Subcommittee struggled to agree on what the **intended message** of the flag and seal should be.
- Elizabeth asked whether this messaging should guide selection or evolve from selected designs.
- Elizabeth and others agreed this question may be **beyond the subcommittee's scope**, but a **recommendation** to the full commission could be drafted.

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## Decisions Made

- Rubric criteria will be updated based on suggestions, especially in the areas of:
    - Representation
    - Accessibility
    - Connection to the state
  - Two additional rubrics (for **seal** and **motto**) will be developed.
  - A **first-cut review process** using exclusionary criteria will be recommended.
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### Action Items

Action	Responsible	Due Date
Update rubric with additional criteria	Kate/EED staff	Before next meeting
Develop seal and motto rubrics	Kate/EED staff	Before next meeting
Draft recommendations for first-cut criteria	Subcommittee	At next meeting
Prepare to report on submission themes on 6/23	Kate	6/23

### Next Meeting

**Date:** 6/18/2025

**Focus:**

1. Continue discussion on draft rubrics for flag, seal, and motto
2. Review first-cut criteria
3. Discuss recommendation to full commission on symbolism and messaging