

Criteria Development Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

4:00pm

Committee Members in Attendance

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

Others in Attendance

- Victoria Grimes
- Daniela DeCaro-Heavey
- Samantha Mealey
- Nicholas Keim

Agenda:

- Call to Order
- Vote on Criteria Meeting Minutes from 6/13/2025
- Checklist for Round One Submissions
 - List of Exclusionary Items
- Refine Scoring Rubric for Round Two (Flag) Review
- Proposed Draft Rubric for Seal Review
- Proposed Draft Rubric for Motto Review
- Final Thoughts
- Adjourn

Discussion Summary

1. Call to Order

- Kate Fox called the meeting to order at 4:05PM

2. Meeting minutes

- Approval of Meeting minutes at 4:06pm
- Victoria Grimes introduced interns from the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, Samantha Mealey and Nicholas Keim

3. Checklist for Round One Submissions: List of Exclusionary Items

- Kate Fox noted that the Subcommittee is meeting to determine criteria for review of seal, flag and motto public submissions as well as to refine scoring rubrics with the goal of having something that can be moved forward to the full Commission
- Exclusionary Items noted at the previous meeting on 6/13/25 included: no humans, no religions, no violence, no genders, no one culture, no vulgar, offensive, or irrelevant to Massachusetts
- Kate Fox asked the group if first round criteria should also include the no violence, vulgar, offensive or irrelevant to Massachusetts
- Rhonda Anderson asked if accessibility should be included in submission criteria
- Kate Fox noted that accessibility is part of the rubric for the second round, and is also part of criteria to get to the final three selections
- Elizabeth Solomon stated that she has no objections to 'no violence' criteria, but wonders how far it's going to get the group with elimination factors, asking the group what the second cut is
- Kate Fox asked a follow up question to Elizabeth regarding eliminating vulgar or offensive content, if too much would be eliminated or not enough
- Elizabeth Solomon stated that she is concerned that the group will eliminate many fewer by only having those two criteria
- Kate Fox stated that human, religion, gender, and culture are second round criteria as it gets more into the preference of the criteria. She continued to note that the real work will be down the road when the Commission works to get it to 30 submissions, and then down to three submissions
- Elizabeth Solomon continued to note that she can't imagine that there will be a huge number of things that are vulgar, offensive or violent, and asked how the group is going to get from step 2 to step 3, as she doesn't think the process will easily go directly from 900 to 30

- Kate Fox asked Elizabeth Solomon if she recommends a step in between, such as a green, yellow, and red pile and the rubrics follow from there
- Elizabeth Solomon asked a question regarding the first step in elimination, and if everyone will look at all of the submissions
- Kate Fox stated that she believes it makes sense to say “we can get you through the first cut, but what’s the process for the second cut?”

4. Refine Scoring Rubric for Round Two (Flag) Review

- Rhonda Anderson noted that for the second round she believes that it needs to be put in front of the full Commission and narrowed down to what the intended message is
- Kate Fox suggested removing vulgar, offensive, or irrelevant submissions during the first pass, and that all submissions would be made available throughout the process. She continued to suggest that the subcommittee approve the rubrics as they are more objective, and that the intended message be on the Commission’s larger agenda
- Lilia Melikechi made a comment regarding adding ‘no religions’ to the first pass as well as accessibility criteria
- Kate Fox commented that perhaps no religions, no violence, no hate symbols be added to the first pass
- Victoria Grimes asked that group if it’s confirmed that for the first round, vulgar/offensive, irrelevant, violent and religious references be added to exclusionary criteria
- Kate Fox reiterated that humans, genders, cultures are not in the first round exclusionary criteria, and asked the group if there was any additional feedback on flag rubric
- Lilia Melikechi stated that she agrees that accessibility is not its own category, but woven throughout existing categories, and would caution against making it a no-go exclusionary statement
- Kate Fox noted that accessibility factors are contributors to successful graphic designs while Elizabeth Solomon echoed this sentiment
- Elizabeth Solomon asked what the group means by representation
- Kate Fox stated that the group needs to qualify what makes representation good, satisfactory, or needs improvement

- Victoria Grimes stated that she believes it means history of Massachusetts
- Lilia Melikechi inquired if it was representative of the intended message, and went on to state that she would say it would be poor representation if it left out major groups in Massachusetts who felt unrepresented
- Elizabeth Solomon inquired about inclusivity and went on to note that native representation doesn't just mean native as it is inclusive of multiple populations. She asked if there is something that can capture the inclusiveness in a way that multiple constituents feel represented
- Rhonda Anderson referenced Jacob's Pillow's tourist building as having elements that are representative of the indigenous community. She went on to reiterate that she would like to be sure there is inclusivity so that everyone can feel seen
- Kate Fox stated that she believes that's a great starting point for what excellent means in intended representation: That everyone can look at the flag and feel included, seen, and understand what it means
- Lilia Melikechi noted that she believes there are two parts to representation: do you feel represented and included and does this say Massachusetts to you, and went on to note that she thinks it's more of an inclusivity category in the form of a checkbox like is this inclusive or is it not or a scale from 1-5
- Elizabeth Solomon stated that she agrees and thinks that it should be made explicit that we are looking for everyone to feel seen and reflected
- Lilia Melikechi noted that questions for the public hearings could include criteria for representation
- Rhonda Anderson stated how she believes that symbolism and representation can be squashed together
- Kate Fox shared that she liked that idea as she feels that representation and symbolism are getting to the same goal
- Rhonda Anderson stated that she thinks it should be representation/inclusion so that symbolism is mentioned across each square

5. Proposed Draft Rubric for Seal Review; Proposed Draft Rubric for Motto Review

- Kate Fox presented the draft Seal rubric for review
- Rhonda Anderson highlighted that she believes the seal could be distinctive and different than the flag, legible and reproducible, but that it should be unique with cultural sensitivity and inclusivity
- Elizabeth Solomon suggested that reproducibility could be in the seal rubric, with the goal of being able to see the outline of the seal
- Lilia Melikechi reiterated her earlier point about adding criteria to eliminate private companies featured or any number of Massachusetts based company logos, and noted that she likes the Canadian flag as it is simple, clear, and people remember it
- Elizabeth Solomon noted that she believes the seal, flag and motto need to be congruent with each other and not each have different messages or themes
- Kate Fox stated that she doesn't believe all three have to be the same, but that they should complement each other, and asked the group if there is a consensus on the seal rubric as well as the motto rubric
- Rhonda Anderson and Elizabeth Solomon agreed, and Kate Fox stated that the group has a consensus on the three rubrics
- There was a group discussion regarding the elimination criteria to present to the full Commission along with the reiteration of the question regarding overall intended message
- Rhonda Anderson stated that she appreciates the subcommittee's work and Elizabeth Solomon concurred

6. Adjournment

- Kate Fox entertained a motion to adjourn, and the subcommittee meeting officially adjourned at 4:54PM