

## Flag, Seal, and Motto Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 29, 2025; 3:00PM

### Commission Members in Attendance via Zoom:

- **Patrick Tutwiler, Secretary, Executive Office of Education, Co-Chair**
- **Kate Fox, Executive Director, Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, Co-Chair**
- **Jim Peters, Executive Director, Commission on Indian Affairs**
- **Lilia Melikechi, Communications and Training Manager, Massachusetts Office on Disability**
- **Summer Confuorto, Traditional Arts Programs Officer, Massachusetts Cultural Council**
- **Brian Boyles, Executive Director, Mass Humanities**
- **Elizabeth Solomon, Member chosen by the Executive Director of the Commission on Indian Affairs**
- **Rhonda Anderson, Member chosen by the Governor**
- **Dr. John D. Warner, Jr., State Archivist, Secretary of State or Designee**
- **Ben Haley, National Register Director at the Massachusetts Historical Commission**

### Opening Remarks:

- Co-Chair **Ms. Kate Fox** opened the meeting at 3:10 PM
- Co-Chair **Mr. Patrick Tutwiler** told the group that he is thrilled to kick off the engagement process and looks forward to colleagues working in partnership to reach a broad audience stating the charge of the Commission. Mr. Tutwiler went on to discuss that the Commission's focus is on re-envisioning the symbols that represent the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, reflecting its history, values, and aspirations, and the task is critical and requires a thoughtful and thorough review to ensure that the state's emblems inspire pride and are in line with contemporary identity
- **Ms. Fox** called for a review of the meeting minutes and entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting which occurred on March 20, 2025
- Motion passed and meeting minutes approved at 3:14 PM
- **Ms. Fox** then opened the meeting for public comment

## Public Comments:

- **Dr. John Warner** shared that he believes the Commission has a commitment to Massachusetts as a place that we all share together. Dr. Warner noted the guidance that was given by Mr. Jim Peters at the last Commission meeting and suggested new language for the state motto: “Land, sea, and sky. Our Commonwealth.”
- **Ms. Rhonda Anderson** noted a survey done by the previous Advisory Commission
- **Ms. Elizabeth Solomon** emphasized that this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to update the Massachusetts Seal, Flag, and Motto, and that there is a need for public input to result in a more robust and collaborative process. She also noted that she is not sure of the role and the work of the Commissioners on the Advisory Commission
- **Ms. Lilia Melikechi** suggested having the motto be in indigenous language
- **Mr. Jim Peters** stated that he believes that it’s the state’s responsibility to represent multiple generations as Massachusetts is named after an indigenous people

## Call for Public Submissions:

- **Ms. Fox** asked the Commission about their thoughts on the length of the public submission process
- **Ms. Summer Confuorto** asked what the typical maximum amount of time that call for submissions is public for
- **Ms. Fox** suggested a four-to-six-week typical timeframe and went on to note that the program will be to release a call for submissions and to plan public hearings around the state. Ms. Fox continued to note that the Commission will need to issue an RFP for graphic designers and artists that will then take the public submissions that are selected and turn them into a final product
- **Ms. Anderson** highlighted the importance of ensuring that the call for public submissions goes out before the end of this school year, so that students can be engaged
- **Ms. Melikechi** emphasized that these public meetings be hybrid and accessible
- **Ms. Solomon** proposed that an additional public hearing location be added outside of Boston and Western, MA. She went on to inquire about the process once the ideas come in as she would like to ensure that the Commission is having a robust discussion
- **Ms. Fox** stated that staff are working to share a draft Formstack link for public submissions
- **Mr. Tutwiler** emphasized that time is of the essence to capture the school audience, and seconded Ms. Solomon’s comments about adding an additional public hearing location
- **Ms. Melikechi** asked about the email system for public comments and Ms. Fox noted that the general public will be able to submit public comments as well as submissions through Formstack
- **Ms. Fox** stated that a press release and a Formstack link would be circulated for the Commission’s feedback, and to send any comments and edits directly to her for changes to be incorporated
- **Ms. Fox** also noted that all items will be shareable and live on the [mass.gov/sealflagmotto](https://mass.gov/sealflagmotto) page, to be statewide, engaging and transparent as possible
- **Ms. Anderson** asked the group about extending the advisory commission and about criteria for seal, flag, and motto

- **Ms. Fox** noted that the release will include some guidelines, but the creative process would be open. She went on to note that the Commission would want to respectfully request an extension from the state Legislature

#### **Discussion: Designer Procurement:**

- **Ms. Fox** stated that RFP and press release will be shared with the group
- **Ms. Melikechi** asked the group if the former Advisory Commission's report be shared as part of the RFP
- **Ms. Solomon** asked Mr. Tutwiler about the educational component of the Seal, Flag, and Motto Advisory Commission, and noted that she was the one who wrote for the original Advisory Commission that it is critical that there are indigenous folks involved in developing whatever is developed. She went on to emphasize that it is crucial that if indigenous elements are removed from the flag, that it's critical that there is an educational component that talks about this
- **Mr. Tutwiler** addressed Ms. Solomon's questions and stated that we are committed to having that voice elevated in this process
- **Mr. Steve Colvins**, a public attendee, commented to the group that he is an eight-year resident of Cambridge, appreciates that there is a public process for the seal, flag, and motto redesign, and runs a Redditt Community on flag design

#### **Adjournment:**

- A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 3:47 PM. A roll call was taken, the motion was seconded and passed unanimously
- The meeting was adjourned

#### **Action Items and Next Steps:**

- Ms. Fox will follow up with an email including the attachments discussed during today's Commission meeting. These include:
  1. Formstack submission form
  2. Call for Submission Press Release Draft
  3. Creative Services RFQ Draft