

# **INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, SMALL BUSINESS, AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

## **Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 2023 Interim**

**August 23, 2023**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The 3rd meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Tourism, Small Business, and Information Technology was held on Wednesday, August 23, 2023, at 1:00 PM, in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Kim King, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Max Wise, Co-Chair; Representatives Kim King, Co-Chair, and Phillip Pratt, Co-Chair; Senators Jason Howell, Robby Mills, Phillip Wheeler, and Mike Wilson; Representatives Chad Aull, Shane Baker, Ryan Dotson, Daniel Fister, Deanna Frazier Gordon, Chris Freeland, Chris Fugate, Daniel Grossberg, Richard Heath, Savannah Maddox, Candy Massaroni, Shawn McPherson, Michael Sarge Pollock, Brandon Reed, Rachel Roberts, Sarah Stalker, Nancy Tate, Killian Timoney, Bill Wesley, Richard White, Nick Wilson, and Susan Witten.

Guests: Ernie Price, Superintendent, Camp Nelson National Monument; Steve Phan, Chief of Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Services, Camp Nelson National Monument; Helen Dedman, Chair, 250<sup>th</sup> Harrodsburg Sestercentennial Commission; Nancy Hill, 250<sup>th</sup> Harrodsburg Sestercentennial Commission; and David Kirkpatrick, 250<sup>th</sup> Harrodsburg Sestercentennial Commission.

LRC Staff: Janine Coy, Helen McArthur, Crystal Thompson, and Sasche Allen.

### **Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 31, 2023, meeting was made by Representative McPherson, seconded by Representative Fister, and approved by voice vote.

### **Camp Nelson National Monument**

Historically, Camp Nelson was established as a fortified supply depot for the United States Military during the Civil War and was one of the nation's largest recruitment and training centers for Black American soldiers, known as United States Colored Troops.

Camp Nelson, originally created as a park in 1998 by Jessamine County, was added to the National Park Service (NPS) by Presidential Proclamation on October 26, 2018, becoming Camp Nelson National Monument. A three-year co-management agreement between the NPS and Jessamine County was in place until October 2021, when NPS staff resumed full operational control. The national landmark now employs nine permanent staff, seven part time staff, up to five interns, and is growing its volunteer program.

Base operating funds and project fund reports were displayed for fiscal years 2020 to 2024. In some fiscal years, project funds have been greater than base operating funds. Visitation to the park, after NPS assumed operational control, during the second full year of operation is up 67 percent, and June and July 2023 total number visitors is 15 percent higher than June and July 2022. Mr. Price discussed the economic impact of national park visitor spending to local communities, upcoming programs and events taking place at Camp Nelson, and priorities for the future.

In response to a question from Representative King, Mr. Price stated that the number of visitors to Camp Nelson may have increased due to additional marketing funds available after the site became a national monument, however, NPS is forbidden by law to use public dollars to market itself. Additionally, he gave an overview of future priorities including regional monument signage, regional civil war tourism, and promoting Kentucky's Magnificent 7 national monuments at the Louisville International Airport. Answering a follow up question, Mr. Price provided details about the NPS's mobile application and Camp Nelson's social media presence. Mr. Phan gave additional information about the monument's hours of operation and visitors center. Replying to another follow up, Mr. Price confirmed that economic impact statistics shown included all national monuments across the Commonwealth.

Addressing a question from Representative Stalker, Mr. Phan said the number of visitors to the park are tracked through the park's visitors center with traffic counter devices.

### **Harrodsburg Sestercentennial Commission**

Representatives of the Harrodsburg 250<sup>th</sup> Sestercentennial Commission gave a presentation on the Harrodsburg 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration. The history of Harrodsburg, which was founded in June 1774, was discussed along with cultural, political, and military contributions to the Commonwealth. The board members of the commission are made up of organization and community leaders as to have everyone in the city represented. Events planned for the celebration include themed walking tours, music programs, ghost walks, activities for children and youth, ceremonies honoring Revolutionary War veterans, book signings, and numerous others. The list of event partners continues to grow as local entities provide additional events and program spaces that carry historical significance.

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:23 p.m.