

# **Missouri Board on Geographic Names Meeting**

November 19, 2015 @ 2:30 p.m.

Conference Call

**Voting Members Present:** John Dougan (Chair), Chris Barnett (Vice Chair), Joseph Carter, John Fisher, Debra Greene, Gary Kremer, Amy Moorman, Lynn Morrow, Shelly Silch, Tony Spicci, Henry Sweets, Jay Turner and Jerry Vineyard

**Voting Members Absent:** Alan Foreman, Frank Nickell and Dwight Weaver

**Non-Voting Members and Staff Present:** Brian Rogers (Secretary)

## **Call to Order**

John Dougan called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. by welcoming everyone and asking if there were any changes to the agenda. Chris Barnett indicated that he would like to add a discussion of the board's presence at the 2016 Geographic Names Conference.

## **Minutes for November 2014 Meeting**

John Dougan asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the board's November 13, 2014 meeting. Henry Sweets moved to approve the minutes as written. Jay Turner seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed.

John Dougan turned the meeting over to Chris Barnett.

## **Board Member Replacements and Reappointments**

Chris Barnett indicated that the Office of Administration has someone in mind to replace Gary Claspill as their board representative. John Dougan stated he will pursue the name of said person prior to the next meeting.

Chris Barnett then said that the effort to add a position on the board from the Department of Agriculture was held up in committee, meaning Darrell Pratte will continue to serve on the board in an advisory role. In the meantime, Joe Gillman has joined the board as the new representative from the Department of Natural Resources.

Chris Barnett then reminded the board that there is also one citizen member position available because Gordon McCann resigned at the last meeting. He explained that to fill this position, the executive committee has reached out to several candidates from the underrepresented northwest part of the state, but there is still interest in hearing of other candidates. John Dougan then stated that there are several reappointments to be made as well, so current members may soon be asked to provide resumes.

John Dougan then introduced Brian Rogers, the Missouri State Archives' Principal Assistant for Boards and Commissions, as the board's new recorder. He went on to explain that, moving forward, Brian will be in charge of updating the board's website, including the upload of draft board minutes.

Jerry Vineyard then asked if there is a procedure to recognize the service of board members that step down. John Dougan replied that the Office of the Secretary of State will draft a thank you letter recognizing his years of service, but that the details included in the letter will likely need to come from other long serving board members. Jerry Vineyard and Lynn Morrow agreed to assist with the letter.

### **Potential Updates to Bylaws:**

#### **1) Use of Teleconferences**

Chris Barnett explained that the MOBGN bylaws do not specifically provide for the use of teleconferencing for official board business, but they do state the board will convene in a manner determined by the Office of the Missouri Secretary of State. John Dougan agreed with this interpretation, indicating that various boards appointed by the secretary of state use teleconferencing as a means of conducting business.

#### **2) Non-convened Voting**

John Dougan stated that he has asked the Office of the Missouri Secretary of State legal staff if the MOBGN can use non-convened voting to conduct official board business. If so, the board will, amongst other things, be able to approve minutes outside of official board meetings, thus enabling the USBGN to take action on MOBGN approved place-naming activities earlier than they would otherwise.

Debra Greene indicated that she uses non-convened voting all the time when conducting business for Lincoln University and that it works well in most instances, aside from the lack of debate.

Joe Carter asked if the non-convened approval of minutes could be differentiated from all other votes. Chris Barnett replied that all official votes should be considered of the same standing. This was affirmed by John Dougan.

Joe Carter then asked if the board's bylaws should be amended to specifically allow for the use of teleconferencing. Chris Barnett responded that he does not believe the bylaws need to be changed. This was again affirmed by John Dougan.

Tony Spicci indicated that he frequently uses the online WebEx interface when conducting meetings, and that it has a feature allowing participants to vote. Chris Barnett stated this is

something the board may want to look into, but that the technology requirements could make it difficult use given the partial citizen member makeup of the MOBGN.

Chris Barnett then stated that there is a difference between the use of technology in convened meetings and non-convened voting. He then asked John Dougan if he would continue to look into the use of non-convened voting and report the results back to the board prior to the next meeting.

### **3) Interim Committee Formation**

John Dougan recounted that at the last full meeting of the MOBGN, an interim committee was created to investigate naming proposals between regularly scheduled meetings. He then asked the board if they want to update the committee bylaws to include language specifically allowing the formation of such committees. If so, the new language must be made available to board members three months prior to the next full meeting. Chris Barnett indicated that the bylaws should be updated to include language on the formation of interim committees and that no vote is currently needed. John Dougan stated he and Brian Rogers will work with the executive committee to draft this language prior to the board's next meeting.

Chris Barnett asked if there were any more thoughts on the potential updates to the bylaws. John Dougan stated that the use of non-convened voting would in no way hamper in-person board meetings and that the board will still meet in person when there is a full agenda to discuss.

### **Discussion of Ways to Increase Proposal Submissions**

Chris Barnett stated that at their November 12, 2015 meeting, the executive committee discussed ways to increase the number of proposals submitted to the board. Amongst the brainstormed ideas were a letter campaign, wherein letters (or emails) describing the role of the board and the procedure for submitting proposals could be sent to county/state officials, as well as to the many historical and genealogical societies across the state. Somewhat similar would be a media campaign in which announcements concerning the board run in newspapers across the state. Another idea was an increased board presence at large, targeted events, such as the state fair. Chris Barnett then asked for feedback from the full board.

Joe Carter indicated that if the board decides to pursue a letter campaign, the members of the Missouri Association of Counties should also be included on the list of recipients.

Jerry Vineyard stated that he believes the board needs to be more proactive in promoting itself with specific groups, such as individuals with an interest in caves.

John Dougan interjected that there are really two issues that need to be addressed in terms of increasing proposal submissions: increasing the overall visibility of the board and contacting groups that may have a particular interest in naming a feature or features. He suggested first

creating a brochure, or at least drafting brochure language, that could be distributed to raise awareness about the board.

Lynn Morrow stated that the Missouri Geographic Alliance, an organization made up of Missouri high school teachers, typically support an annual statewide student project focused on geography, and that it may be worthwhile to approach them about a potential feature naming project at some point in the future.

Chris Barnett indicated the alliance is definitely a group the board will want to approach. He then asked Lynn Morrow and John Dougan if they knew the whereabouts of a tabletop display the board used in the past. John Dougan said it is stored in the archives, but that it will likely need to be revamped before it can be used again. He also pointed out that a board member would have to staff it if it were used.

Lynn Morrow stated that the easiest way to improve visibility is to update the board's website with information on how to submit proposals and the process through which they are either approved or denied. John Dougan agreed that this would be a logical first step. A media campaign could then be designed to send people to the website for additional information.

Chris Barnett then brought up the idea of online submissions, citing the Montana naming board and the USBGN as precedents. He explained that it would likely increase submissions, but that the quality may suffer. Brian Rogers then said that the Office of the Missouri Secretary of State website, on which the MOBGN page is hosted, is not currently setup to take such submissions, and that the board would be better off focusing its attention on improving its existing online resources. He then said that a fillable PDF submission form may be a possibility in the future.

Shelly Silch then cautioned that recently in Illinois, a university professor assigned his students a project requiring them to submit name proposals to the state naming board, and that it resulted in a high number of unworthy submissions that still had to be processed. John Dougan inquired if the proposals were submitted directly to the Illinois naming board, or if they instead came through the USBGN. Shelly Silch replied that they came from the USBGN, so relying on their submission form for quality proposals is not necessarily a good idea. Chris Barnett stated that any submission form on the MHRAB website would have to be accompanied by information explicitly stating what is required for a proposal to be considered and approved by the board.

Chris Barnett then stated that John Dougan and Brian Rogers will take the lead in updating the website, but asked if any members would be willing to help by drafting new website/brochure/letter language. No volunteers were forthcoming, but John Dougan indicated that the executive committee should pursue this goal. Chris Barnett agreed, stating that the full board would be kept up to date on any actions taken by the committee.

### **2015 COGNA Conference**

Chris Barnett thanked the board for sending him to Anchorage, Alaska, as their representative to the 2015 COGNA Conference. He stated that the domestic names committee was able to meet at the conference, noting that they have severely restricted public input. Other topics discussed at the conference were the controversies surrounding the official Mt. Denali name change and the proposed Samuel Clemens Cove on Lake Tahoe, as well as the future role of COGNA, in terms of public education and facilitating communication between state naming boards and the federal government.

### **2016 COGNA Conference**

Despite some concern at the 2015 COGNA Conference that there would not be a 2016 conference, Chris Barnett explained that it is looking like the state of Nevada has stepped forward and will host the event in Reno from May 3 to May 7. Given the funding issues surrounding his attending the 2015 conference, he asked the board if anyone else had an interest in attending the 2016 conference, or ideas on where to obtain funding.

Debra Greene and Jay Turner left the teleconference at 3:56 p.m. Chris Barnett thanked them for participating.

John Dougan asked if Jane Messenger could represent the board since she will already be attending the 2016 COGNA Conference in a professional capacity. Chris Barnett replied that neither she, nor Shelly Silch could officially represent the state of Missouri. Tony Spicci then moved that, if able, the board will send Chris Barnett or another representative to the conference. Joseph Carter seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed.

Chris Barnett then stated he will pursue the same funding avenues as he did for his attendance at the 2015 COGNA Conference.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

Lynn Morrow moved to adjourn the meeting. No second required. Meeting adjourned.