

The Ohio Senate

Tom Niehaus, President
Eric Kearney, Minority Leader



*The Ohio House of
Representatives*

William G. Batchelder, Speaker
Armond Budish, Minority Leader

OHIO CONSTITUTIONAL MODERNIZATION COMMISSION

**MINUTES
February 16, 2012**

Speaker William Batchelder called the meeting of the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission meeting to order at 10:10AM.

Speaker Batchelder asked the members to review and approve the minutes from the December 28, 2012 meeting. Senator Skindell moved that the minutes be amended to reflect his attendance at the meeting; the amendment was accepted without objection. Seeing no objections, the minutes as amended were approved.

Co-Chair Sykes proceeded to report on the status of the public member application process. He stated that although the original deadline was set for January 31, 2012, there were concerns that the opportunity to apply for the 20 public member seats was not adequately publicized, and therefore the Co-Chairs had decided to extend the deadline to February 29, 2012. He noted as of that week, over 180 applications had been received by the Commission representing a diverse pool of lawyers, farmers, business entrepreneurs, academics, journalists, and teachers. He stated that the members or the public could obtain a list of the applicants upon request to either co-chair.

Co-Chair Sykes then discussed the colloquium to be held the morning of March 22, 2012 by the Ohio State Moritz College of Law. He invited Professor Nancy Rogers, a member of the Colloquium Planning Committee, to update Commission members on their work and to receive feedback on the structure and content of the upcoming Colloquium. After a brief report from Professor Rogers, Senator Skindell stated that he would like to see the Colloquium address the work of similar commissions in other states as well as the history of the previous Commission.

Co-Chair Sykes stated that he would like to make the event open to the general public and to have all of the applicants for the 20 public member seats. Senator Tavares expressed a concern that the non-attendance at the Colloquium by a public member applicant would be seen as prejudicial to that applicant in the selection process. Co-Chair Sykes said that staff could research whether the Ohio Channel could record the Colloquium presentation so it could be viewed later by those not able to attend.

On the topic of a possible location for the Colloquium, Speaker Batchelder suggested the auditorium in the Riffe Center. Senator Skindell noted that the Supreme Court building was another option. Senator Tavares stated that the venue should be centrally located, have ample

parking, and present no issues with access for the public. Rep. Clyde said that it would be helpful if the Colloquium Planning Committee could recommend any reading for the Commission members in advance of the colloquium, to which Professor Rogers stated that they could send advance copies of their research papers. Co-Chair Sykes asked the Commission members if they had any input on topics for the Colloquium. Senator Skindell said that he would like to see some information on the national or historical constitutional commission. Co-Chair Sykes stated that the public member applicants as well as the general public would be invited to the event.

Rep. Murray asked about timing with regards to selection of the public members. Co-Chair Sykes said that he hoped the members could be selected by the middle of March. Senator Obhof and Rep. Slaby stated that they thought the selection of the public members would not take place until after the Colloquium. Senator Tavares noted that the 1970s Commission took a full seven months to impanel the public members. Senator Jones reiterated her concerns that an applicant's absence from the Colloquium not be construed as prejudicial to the selection process, and said that the Commission should handle the selections with sensitivity. Sen. Skindell suggested that the Commission consider setting up a subcommittee with one member from each caucus to formally review the applications. Senator Obhof said he thought the Commission was going to give the legislative members time to review the public member applications, and then reconvene at a date set by the Co-Chairs to discuss the selection process. Co-Chair Sykes stated that upon the close of the application window on February 29th, the public member application materials would be made available to each of the legislative members to begin reviewing.

Co-Chair Sykes asked if there was any other business to come before the Commission. Seeing none, the Commission stood adjourned.

Speaker William Batchelder
Co-Chair

Rep. Vernon Sykes
Co-Chair