

Texas Space Commission Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes of
Wednesday, May 22, 2024
3:00 PM

State Insurance Building Annex – 4th Floor Conference Room
221 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Board of Directors Members in Attendance In-Person:

Gwen Griffin Brad Morrison

Board of Directors Members in Attendance Virtually:

Nancy Currie-Gregg Sassie Duggleby Evan Loomis
Kathryn Lueders John Shannon Kirk Shireman
Heather Wilson

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Joseph Behnke Blake Calvert Joe Magruder
Cody Cruz Adriana Cruz (Virtually) Keith Graf (Virtually)
Terry Zrubek (Virtually)

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

Representative Greg Bonnen

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE VIA TELECONFERENCE:

Ashley Morgan Brad Shields
Marisa Huerta Norman Garza, Jr.

1) Call to Order

- a) Roll call of meeting attendees

At 3:02 PM Chair Gwen Griffin called the meeting to order and directed staff to read the roll. A quorum was confirmed to be present.

**2) Discussion and Possible Action on Approval of Minutes of May 8, 2024 meeting
(Action Item)**

Brad Morrison made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2024 meeting of the Texas Space Commission Board of Directors and was seconded by Kathy Lueders. The board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2024 meeting of the Texas Space Commission Board of Directors.

3) Welcome Remarks (Chair)

Chair Gwen Griffin welcomed the board members, staff, and members of the public for attending the meeting.

4) Legislator Comments

Chair Gwen Griffin welcome Representative Greg Bonnen, Chair of the Texas House Appropriations Committee to the meeting.

Representative Bonnen spoke about the Texas Space Commission:

[Chairman Bonnen's comments with light edits for clarity.]

I appreciate the opportunity to visit with you guys and to remind you something you already know about: The huge opportunity that exists for our state and for our country in the space industry, which was the reason that the Texas Space Commission was created.

A lot of the time we think about exciting things when it comes to space, and the people who are going to get to go up there and do all kinds of amazing work—things they will tell their grandchildren about someday.

But the huge opportunity is what we can do for in space for the people *here on Earth*, and the way that it's going to impact billions of lives.

There is a lot going on in the world, in our and in our country—some of it is positive and some of it is very negative and not necessarily humanity's best interests or our best interests. But we have an opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the future for all of us.

So, this is a matter of the economy, but it's also a matter of national security.

To my knowledge, there's not really been this level of focus or commitment by the State of Texas to do what we are doing when it comes to space exploration and development.

I believe we are in a golden era where the opportunity is exponentially greater because the cost of these activities is coming down. And as the cost comes down, there's so much more that can be done. That can be a good thing and it can be a not so good thing, but it's wide open. This is not business as usual, but rather thinking about what's about to happen just in the next few years—and then what does the world look like in 10 or 15 or 20 years based on the changing dynamics?

Texas has a rich legacy when it comes to space exploration, especially on the manned space flight side. But there's so much more that our state has to offer when you think about the diversity of the assets that that we possess, the activities that are already taking place, and the sheer size of our economy and the geographic size of our state.

You guys have some tall asks, if you will, that are more immediate and down to earth. You were just appointed recently, and the interim is rapidly moving away from us.

When the legislature does something we like to look when we come back at what's happened, and what was the delivery on the on the promise. What's the work product? What's the vision for the future which will then inform next steps?

Being on a two-year cycle informs and structures how we approach things and where we are today. We will start to pivot in the next you know 6-7 months for what's going to happen next session.

So having a staff up and running, having some type of a strategic plan which is going to obviously change as time goes by, that's important.

When we get to the September/October timeline and perhaps we revisit what's happened since the passage of this legislation, you guys will be prepared to say:

"Well, here we are. This is what has happened. These are the steps that we've taken. And for the next 24 months to three years, this is where we think we're going."

Because as we put together policy and in a budget for the subsequent biennium that'll be informed by what you guys tell us are the top priorities.

Certainly, you'll have a longer-term vision. You know, you can have a five-year plan, a ten-year plan. Those are extremely important.

But in terms of the legislative process, it will be critical to know what the next two to three years look like, and to be able to articulate that in terms of an exciting, you know, bold vision. But then some very specific, very specific asks are necessary.

This is great, but what can I do if I'm a legislator? What can I do to empower you and you know, to, you know, help in this exciting effort? In the past, we've not really had that. We've had a lot of exciting people come and take pictures and visit. But there was no, there was no vision. There was no specific plan or ask of the legislature. So then not much would happen.

I'll share with you one of my favorite comments, not just for this but for other things: The amount of funding will be directly proportional to the quality of your plan.

So, if you've got an exciting bold plan, you will do better in competing for resources.

And if you don't, then you will not fare as well when it comes to competing for resources.

We will start thinking about the introduced versions of the budget this fall, which is where the funding for this Commission occurred. The funding that you guys have to work with today—Senator Huffman and I agreed on in the fall of '22, and it was in both of our introduced versions of the budget.

That's ideal, but that means we need some idea of what we're looking for and why we're looking for it in order to be able to introduce it on the front end.

Otherwise, you get to go through the process which can be very exciting, and exciting is not always what you want. You like certainty and predictability.

I think the other suggestion I would give to you is:

Consider all the assets that we might have at our disposal, and some of the opportunities or the barriers that you might identify could be regulatory, they could be infrastructure, they could be things that don't specifically pertain to a state appropriation.

And, though it is tempting as it is to look at the finance piece of it, it's important to keep in mind that there are a lot of other possibilities *that don't directly involve money*.

Or at least maybe there are other sources of funding which segues into another component, which is to the one of the key elements of the state's appropriation—the taxpayer investment in this—is how the funds are leveraged and multiplied for private and in federal assets that we otherwise would not be able to receive.

So, you want to be open and thoughtful about that in your planning for what you're going to ask for. Because if you come back and you say, "Well, we put this amount in and we know that that's going to lead to a tripling based on a match that we leverage for,"—that's really, that's a good deal, right?

As opposed to, "We just have a project we want you to fund. And it's going to be completely on the legislature to do it." That's less exciting or appealing unless it's just a truly amazing project.

So those are just some thoughts for you guys to consider.

Additionally, I wouldn't underestimate just the value of your engagement and your leadership.

Because the other element of this is there's not ever been people who took stewardship of this domain and walked the halls of the building and talked to people and said, "Not only do I have standing, but I also have credibility, and I'm excited about this and let me tell you why."

And here's what you can do.

We've never really had advocates like you guys are capable of being advocates. And that's going to be an amazing thing that I'm going to guess no other state has probably ever really put together a group like this and empowered them to do the things that you guys are going to have the opportunity to do.

And then I think one of the final things I'll tell you is there's a consortium [TARSEC]. I've been asked about kind of a vision for the consortium and how that interfaces with the Commission.

The consortium has potentially a dual purpose. The first one is that it's a broader opportunity for people around the state with expertise to weigh in on what we're doing. The second element is there is an opportunity from a research standpoint to identify what opportunities probably exist for us in the state and what our greatest assets are there.

And an investment not only in economic development but perhaps a research element is also important and can be considered under the same framework that's already in place.

The final piece is that this is going to be a work in progress. You guys are really the tip of the spear on this. I would tell you most things that I've been a part of that are new and are big and exciting, we come back, and we make some adjustments based on the experience that we have acquired as we've rolled out the initiative. So, to the extent that you identify ways that things could be smoother or efficiently managed or better structured that might require a statutory change that's on the table.

The opportunity to do that would be next spring. And the sooner as we get into late fall that we have some idea of what those things look like, the easier it is to get to work on putting that together. It doesn't mean we have to make changes to the statute, but you should know that that is an option.

But sometimes they're just things you can't know until you start working. And there we're going to learn from that and there will be an opportunity to adjust if that's what makes the most sense.

But it's really an exciting time and my hope is that you really enjoy this, and you feel like you're being productive and that your engagement, which is a big investment on your part is paying dividends. And that you want to keep doing it because you're having fun and you're making a difference. And that's that.

That would really be ideal because that means we'll get even more out of you in the future. Thank you for being willing to serve and the opportunity to address you guys today.

Thank you. I'm always available by the way, so I'm extremely available. Anytime you want to visit or have questions, don't hesitate to reach out.

Chair Gwen Griffin thanked Representative Greg Bonnen for his vision and taking the time to attend the meeting.

5) Discussion and Potential Creation of Subcommittee (*Action Item*)

a) Discussion and potential creation of Strategic Plan Subcommittee
Chair Gwen

Chair Gwen Griffin lead a discussion on the need for a Strategic Plan Subcommittee. It was the consensus of the board for the need of a subcommittee. The board members outlined the tasks the subcommittee were to undertake. Identify priorities, market survey, legislative budget baseline, identify what the focus of the strategic plan will be, process for working with

other organization within the state, take a look at other strategic plans, frame the direction forward, establish priorities of what should be engaged, and identify key audiences that we want to serve and working with the consortium. At this time, no authority is needed for the subcommittee.

Heather Wilson made a motion to create the Strategic Planning Subcommittee and was seconded by Evan Loomis. The board unanimously voted to create the Strategic Planning Subcommittee.

b) Chair assignment of members to Strategic Plan Subcommittee

Chair Gwen Griffin requested that any member to email Joseph Behnke after the meeting if they are interested in serving on the subcommittee.

6) Update from Hiring Subcommittee

Chair of the Hiring Subcommittee, Brad Morrison, provided an update from the Hiring Subcommittee. The subcommittee reviewed the application received for the executive direction position. The subcommittee conducted interviews and have identified some candidates. The subcommittee wishes to bring these candidates before the full board. Brad Morrison asked the Chair to entertain a motion to schedule a Board of Directors meeting prior to the June 14, 2024 meeting to deliberate the appointment, employment, and duties of the executive director of the Texas Space Commission. Chair Gwen asked the board if it is okay to taking the agenda out of order and take up agenda item 10 before moving on. The board approved moving to item 10.

10) Establish Future Meeting Dates (*Action Item*)

The board unanimously agreed to meet on May 31, 2024 and 1:00 PM CT.

[Note: After the meeting, the Chair of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Hiring Subcommittee determined that, in order to have sufficient time to discuss candidates, the meeting would need to be a 12:00 PM CT on May 31, 2024, rather than 1:00 PM.]

7) Convene into a closed Executive Session pursuant to Section 551.074, Texas Government Code

a) Deliberations related to the evaluation and appointment of an Executive Director of the Texas Space Commission

Item tabled.

8) Reconvene into Open Meeting for Discussion and Possible Action on Appointment of an Executive Director of the Texas Space Commission (*Action Item*)

Item tabled.

9) Public Comment

Chair Gwen Griffin open the floor to public comments. No public comments.

[Item 10 taken out of order]

11) Chair Comments

Chair Gwen Griffin asked if there was anything else to discuss. Chair Gwen Griffin thanked the board members, staff, and the public for attending the meeting.

12) Adjournment

At 3:58 PM, Chair Gwen Griffin moved to adjourn the meeting. No objections. Meeting was adjourned.


Chair or Designee

June 14, 2024
Date