



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD AGENDA
556 W MAPLE
Thursday, May 4, 2023
5:00 PM**

Mission Statement: *The Birmingham Museum will explore meaningful connections with our past, in order to enrich our community and enhance its character and sustainability. Our mission is to promote understanding of Birmingham's historical and cultural legacy through preservation and interpretation of its ongoing story.*

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call; Introduction of Student Representatives

3. Approval of the Minutes

Minutes of March 2, 2023

Minutes of the Collections Subcommittee Meeting of April 13, 2023

4. New Business

A. Collections Subcommittee Deaccession Recommendation (Yearbooks)

5. Communication and Reports

A. Director Report

B. Member comments

C. Public comments

6. Next Meeting: June 1, 2023

7. Adjournment

NOTICE: Individuals with disabilities requiring accommodations for effective participation in this meeting should contact the city clerk's office at (248) 530-1880 (voice), or (248) 644-5115 (TDD) at least one day in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance. *APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MUSEUM BOARD MEETINGS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AND ON THE CITY WEBSITE AT www.bhamgov.org.* City of Birmingham, 151 Martin, Birmingham, MI 48009; 248.530.1800. Persons with disabilities that may require assistance for effective participation in this public meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at the number (248) 530-1880, or (248) 644-5115 (for the hearing impaired) at least one day before the meeting to request help in mobility, visual, hearing, or other assistance.

Las personas con incapacidad que requieren algún tipo de ayuda para la participación en esta sesión pública deben ponerse en contacto con la oficina del escribano de la ciudad en el número (248) 530-1800 o al (248) 644-5115 (para las personas con incapacidad auditiva) por lo menos un día antes de la reunión para solicitar ayuda a la movilidad, visual, auditiva, o de otras asistencias. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD MEETING
556 W. Maple
Thursday, March 2, 2023
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Caroline Ashleigh (Alternate), Kristy Barrett, Bev Erickson, Alexandra Harris, Judith Keefer Marty Logue

Members Absent: Pat Hughes, Jay Shell

Student Members Present: Alexander Motea, Alexandra Schaufler

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: None.

Chairperson Logue called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. Student representatives and members introduced themselves.

**Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of February 2, 2023**

MOTION: by Erickson, seconded by Keefer:

To approve the minutes of February 2, 2023.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

New Business

Director Pielack provided an update to board members regarding the status of the Taylor monument project. The final marker was ordered and is expected in August or September. The Friends are considering options for restoring Elijah Fish's marker as well. Carter Cemetery Preservation, Inc. will provide an assessment and estimate of Fish's marker and some of the other at-risk markers later in the spring for the Friends board's review. Ms. Harris is working on a watercolor interpretation of a portrait of the Taylors based on a sketch that appeared in the Eccentric in 1898. She shared a study of a larger portrait she is planning that will be used by the museum to help tell the Taylors' story. Director Pielack also shared an update of the Michigan Humanities Council grant-funded Underground Railroad in Oakland County project. Progress is being made, and more potential freedom seekers have been identified for further research. The traveling exhibit is anticipated to be ready in December, and the interactive web site will also be live around that time.

Communication and Reports

Director Pielack shared that the 2nd grade school tour program is planned to take place again in May. Birmingham Public Schools Student Learning and Inclusion Coordinator, Bill

Pugh, has met with museum staff to discuss plans for updating the tours to include diversity issues in local history, and to reduce group size for the tour of the Hunter House to help assure that students receive the best possible experience. Mr. Pugh will also be working with the museum to develop ideas for additional curriculum resources that can be used by teachers in the second grade to reinforce some of the key experiences of student tours.

Ms. Keefer suggested that Next might be interested in scheduling day trips to the museum. Ms. Logue announced that the planned April 13, 2023 date for the Museum Board meeting is in conflict with observed holidays and the board will not be able to meet that night. Members agreed that rescheduling the April meeting until later in the month is problematic, and discussed skipping April's meeting altogether in favor of the regular May meeting.

MOTION: by Barrett, seconded by Keefer:

To cancel a Museum Board meeting in April altogether due to scheduling problems, and to hold the next Museum Board meeting as planned on Thursday, May 4.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 4, at 5:00 PM. Ms. Logue adjourned the meeting at 5:43 PM.



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD
COLLECTIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
556 W. Maple
Thursday, April 13, 2023
3:00 PM**

Subcommittee Members Present: Caroline Ashleigh, Jay Shell

Members Absent: Judith Keefer

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack, Museum Specialist Donna Casaceli

Guests: None

There being no chair, the meeting was called to order by consensus at 3:00 PM.

New Business

Museum Specialist Casaceli and Museum Director Pielack summarized the proposed deaccession of 87 damaged and redundant yearbooks that have been accepted into the Birmingham Museum's permanent collection over the past several decades. By removing damaged, mold/mildew- affected, or unnecessary duplicates, the museum can improve collections storage, focus on the best examples of the various yearbooks, and provide for a use collection and greater digital access for the public while managing collection resources more effectively.

MOTION: by Shell, seconded by Ashleigh:

To approve the recommended deaccession to enhance the yearbook collection at the Birmingham Museum.

VOTE: Yeas, 2
Nays, 0

The next meeting of the Collections Subcommittee of the Museum Board will be scheduled as needed. The meeting adjourned at 3:27 PM.

Object Deaccession Record



Object/Title: Birmingham Schools Yearbooks, 1919-1958 Object ID Number(s): See attached inventory

Justification for deaccessioning:

- Out of scope
- Poor condition/loss of integrity
- Redundant
- Storage, display, or conservation needed exceed resources
- Non-legal possession
- Fake, forgery, or reproduction
- Enhancement of remaining collection

Remarks: This deaccession will reduce the collection items to those of the best condition, which will help optimize storage resources and will eliminate duplicates, while facilitating digitization for public access.

Restrictions: None Donor or IRS n/a
Donna Casaceli and Justin Koch 4/5/2023
Signed: Museum Staff Date

Approved by Museum Director (date) 4/5/2023
Reviewed by Collections Subcommittee (date) 4/13/2023 Approved by Museum Board (date) _____
Approved by City Commission (date) _____

Method of Disposition

Transferred Recipient: _____
Address: _____
Shipped via: _____ Picked up: _____ Date: 4/5/2023

Sold Recipient: _____
Address: _____
Date sold: _____ Sale price: _____
Shipped via: _____ Picked up: _____ Date: _____

Destroyed Method: _____

Removal of object ID# (date) _____

PastPerfect, individual object, and deaccession records complete: (date) _____

Signed: (museum staff) _____ Signed: (Museum Director) _____



Director Report

DATE: May 4, 2023
TO: Museum Board
FROM: Leslie Pielack, Museum Director
SUBJECT: Director Report

RFP Status; Phase 1 and 2 of ADA Parking and Path—The required pre-bid walkthrough was held on April 19, with 3 potential contractors in attendance. City Finance Dept. staff **Kathryn Burrick**, who coordinates Community Development Block Grant projects within the department, and the project design engineer from our consultant Andersen Eckstein Westrick, were also in attendance to address the special requirements of this project. CDBG federal funds have a number of requirements, including wages, safety, equal opportunity for bidding, and required forms that the contractor must fill out and there are numerous construction-related technical engineering issues. Final bids are due on May 19th, and construction is expected to take place this season and be completed by fall.

Allen House Closure to the Public, May 1- June 15—Due to the need to prepare for the window project and the school tours during May, the Allen House will be closed to the public from May 1 through June 15 (tentative). The Hunter House will remain open for public tours, and staff will be on site to attend to visitor needs, research, and our other museum operations.

Allen House Windows, Phase II—The project is scheduled to begin May 15 with portions of the lower level blocked off for lead remediation. Window casing will be repaired and repainted, and the windows themselves will be completely restored and properly primed and repainted. New historically appropriate storm windows will be installed, as they were on the second floor last year.

Taylor Marker and Friends Board's Cemetery Preservation Focus—The Taylors' marker has been ordered and should be installed in August or September, depending on final fabrication of the stone marker and installation. The Friends' decision to move forward on the Fish marker restoration is detailed in the attached report as well as their authorization of funding to restore the Utter marker.

Podcast—"Birmingham, Uncovered" is in progress, now that the studio and equipment is ready. The first two episodes are "A Tale of Two Fish," episodes 1 (regarding the 1825 ax murder of the Utter women by Imri Fish) and 2 (the story of the altogether different brother of Imri-Elijah-who was at the heart of Birmingham's anti-slavery movement). Streaming schedule TBD.

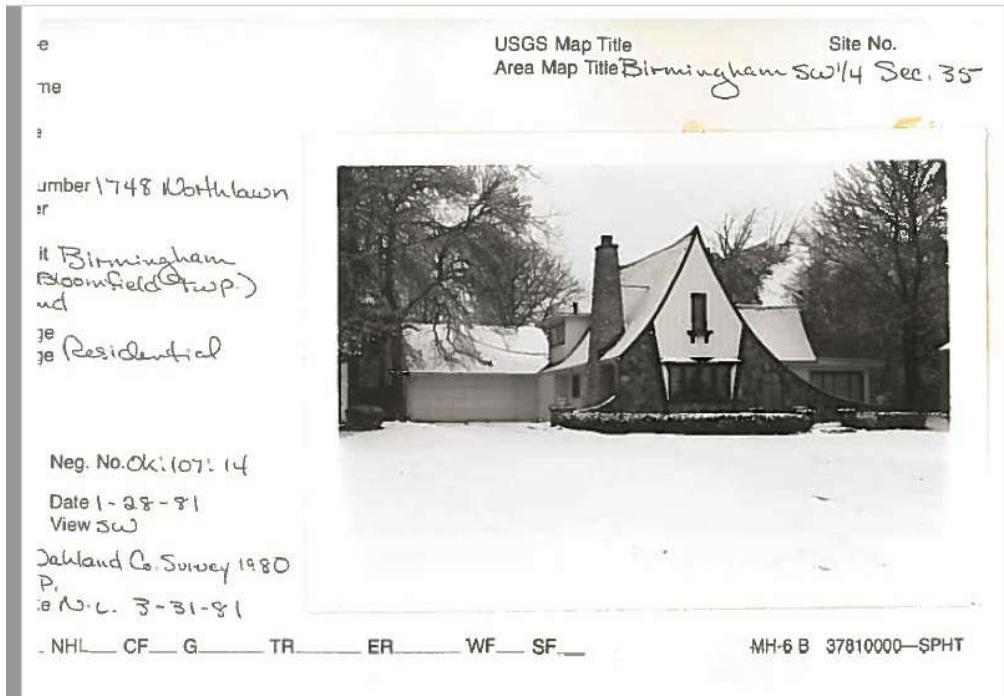
School Programs Back in the Hunter House for 2023—May will be busy! 27 second grade classes will visit the Hunter House for our new, improved experience that will help engage the students with our local history, including diversity and women in Birmingham's past.

Presentations and Community Outreach—from a banner sign this summer in City Hall to various talks in the community from all the museum staff, to tour groups coming to learn about our work in local diverse history, we have been inundated—but delighted—with many requests to find out more about local history and Birmingham's story.

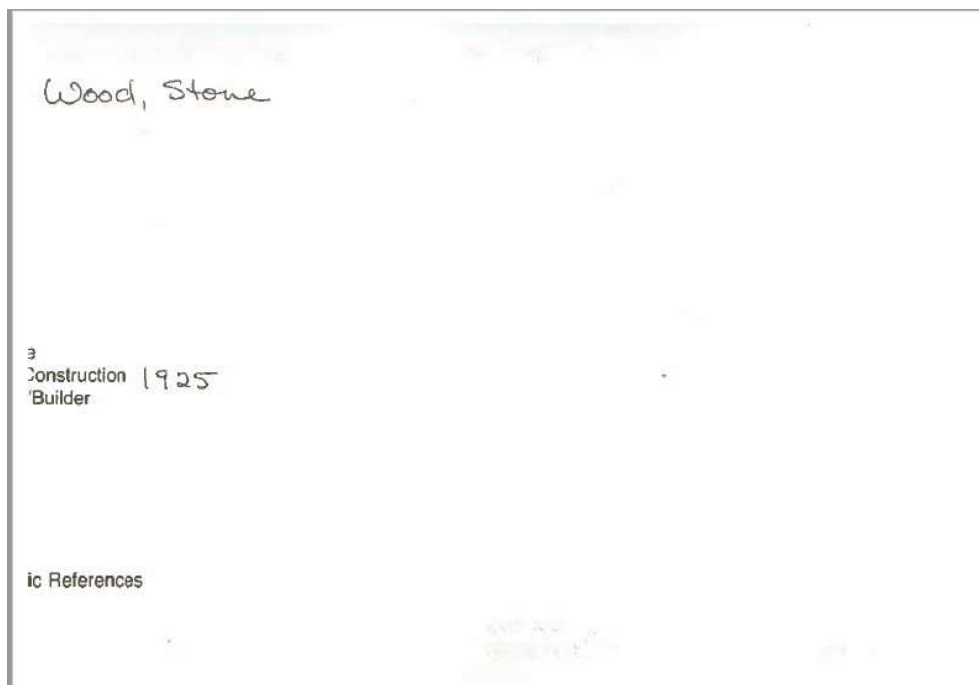
Exhibit, "A Tapestry of Birmingham," to be Extended—Due to the unprecedented interest in our exhibit and expected continued interest into the next full school year, the museum staff have decided to extend the current diversity exhibit into mid-2024.

New collection items: Engineering Department files have been transferred to the museum's archives. These include a photographic survey of all the houses, by street, in the City of Birmingham for the year 1980.

This collection is still in processing, but will result in a digitized database of what appears to be a complete list and photographic documentation of all homes in the city 40+ years ago, which will be a great advantage for research within the city and by our residents.



Cards like this were created for every house in Birmingham (front; back of card below).





MEMORANDUM

Museum

DATE: April 14, 2023

TO: Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board

FROM: Leslie Pielack, Museum Director

SUBJECT: Elijah Fish and Utter Marker Restoration/Preservation This Spring

INTRODUCTION:

The Friends of the Birmingham Museum have determined that extra funds that were raised for the installation of a marker for George and Eliza Taylor should be used to restore and/or preserve historic Greenwood Cemetery markers. Of particular concern has been abolitionist Elijah Fish's marker. To this end, Museum Director Leslie Pielack arranged for a cemetery preservation expert to visit Greenwood and meet with city staff, the cemetery manager, and a Friends board representative to assess conditions and make recommendations. A proposal for work on the Fish and Utter monuments has been submitted to the Friends, who have authorized the expenditure. The Fish family has also given its approval. The work is planned for this spring when the weather breaks, and will give city staff and all interested parties an opportunity to assess whether additional restoration/preservation work by this company would be beneficial in the future.

BACKGROUND:

Elijah Fish's burial site is now listed on the National Park Service's Underground Railroad Network to Freedom register for his important role in early anti-slavery efforts in Birmingham and Oakland County. However, his marker has fallen in recent years, accelerating its deterioration and making its inscription more difficult to read. Because of its importance, the Friends identified it as a high priority for assessment and intervention. In addition, many of Greenwood's oldest grave markers are leaning or damaged, and need cleaning to remove stains or moss that contribute to their deterioration.

The proper stabilization and preservation of historic cemetery markers is a specialty area, and experts are generally difficult to locate or costly to engage. Fortunately, Carter's Cemetery Preservation is a qualified firm that is located in southeast Michigan, and was available to make a site visit to assess the Fish marker and general conditions of the oldest

section of the cemetery-Section A. Carter's has worked with many municipal cemeteries in Michigan and has an excellent reputation as a careful and competent cemetery preservation professional service.

Owner Dave Carter met with City Clerk Alex Bingham and Deputy City Clerk Christina Woods; Museum Director Leslie Pielack and Museum archivist Donna Casaceli; Parks Manager Carrie Laird; Cemetery Manager Cheri Arcome; and Friends treasurer Marty Logue to view and discuss conditions at the cemetery. Mr. Carter indicated that the Fish marker needed attention as quickly as possible to be set upright and cleaned to slow its deterioration, and further, that the Utter monument, which is also of great historical significance in the cemetery, is also badly in need of leveling and cleaning. He also discussed his approach to cleaning and preserving markers and general maintenance issues with markers of various materials and ages.

Carter's Cemetery Preservation provided a proposal to the Friends that was reasonable, and could schedule the work for early this spring. The Fish family descendants have indicated their appreciation and support for the work. (There are no known descendants of the Utter family.) The Friends have reviewed and authorized the expenditure and engaged Carter's to do the work in the next few weeks.

SUMMARY:

Carter's Cemetery Preservation is available to provide needed expertise to level and clean the Elijah S. Fish and the John-Polly-and Cynthia Ann Utter markers. The Friends of the Birmingham Museum will cover the cost, and the work can be done this spring. This project will address immediate concerns of two of the most important markers in Greenwood Cemetery. It will also provide an opportunity for the City and other stakeholders to review options and consider best practices and planning for the cemetery in the future.