



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD AGENDA
556 W MAPLE
Thursday, January 4, 2018
5:30 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**
- 3. Introduction of Guests**
- 4. Approval of the Minutes**
 - A. Minutes of December 7, 2017
- 5. Announcements**
- 6. Unfinished Business**
 - A. Final Draft Master Landscape Concept Plan
 - B. Bicentennial planning
- 7. New Business**
 - A. Special Meeting for Joint Workshop
- 8. Communication and Reports**
 - A. Director Report
 - B. Member comments
 - C. Public comments
- 9. Next Regular Meeting: February 1, 2018**
- 10. 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).

draft



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, December 7, 2017
5:30 PM**

Members Present: Russ Dixon, Lori Eaton, Judith Keefer Tina Krizanic, Marty Logue

Student Members Present: None

Members Absent: James Cunningham, Caitlin Rosso

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: None

**Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of November 2, 2017**

MOTION: by Dixon, seconded by Logue:

To approve the minutes of November 2, 2017.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

Bicentennial Book Project Committee Minutes of October 30, 2017

MOTION: by Dixon, seconded by Eaton:

To approve the Bicentennial Book Project Committee Minutes of October 30, 2017.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

Announcements

None.

Unfinished Business

A. Additional information was gathered to help address questions relating to the development of the conceptual landscape master plan. A site visit was held by Mr. Devlin and representatives from Hubbell Roth and Clark to clarify the wetlands boundaries and issues. Museum Board member Caitlin Rosso represented the Museum Board. HRC clarified that the wetlands boundaries are relatively high because of wet seeps/springs that emerge from the slope near the pond. This will require MDEQ

permitting because the area is within 500 feet of the Rouge River. Museum Director Pielack has initiated a pre-application meeting request with MDEQ in order for the landscape architect, Mr. Devlin, to review planned work and future permitting issues. One or two Museum Board representatives agreed to participate when the meeting is scheduled, as available, in order of preference of Russ Dixon, Tina Krizanic, Judith Keefer, and Marty Logue.

An informal meeting took place with city staff and Mr. Devlin to discuss the project with and board members Caitlin Rosso and Tina Krizanic representing the Museum Board. Suggestions included path materials used in Birmingham parks, avoiding right of way conflicts at Willits, and drawing from the site's surroundings in planning stairs, rails, etc. The fence on the east boundary of the site between the Hunter House and the adjacent lot should be repaired/replaced with the same fencing due to the property's historic designation. The design should be finalized before taking it to the next step. The consensus was that a joint workshop that included the Museum Board, Parks Board, and Historic District Commission combined with a public meeting would create a good opportunity for all to weigh in on the final conceptual landscape master plan. Museum Director Pielack will check into arrangements for the joint workshop meeting.

The Museum Board discussed recommended path surfacing materials and recommended rail designs and finalized its design and material preferences for path, rail, stairs to the Rouge River trail and lawn stairs in the final conceptual landscape master plan for the museum site.

1) Rouge River Trail railing--

MOTION: by Logue, seconded by Keefer:

To use recommended wood and metal combination rail in image provided by historical landscape architect Brian Devlin of Nagy Devlin Land Design for hand rails along steps to Rouge River trail, using wood posts with metal top rail, with the substitution of metal cable for horizontal wood rails. Design should maximize visibility and stability and utilize earth tone colors to blend into surroundings. (*Appended to these minutes as Attachment A*)

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

2) Steps for lawn--

MOTION: by Dixon, seconded by Eaton:

To use rock walls along lawn steps as noted in draft concept plan with exposed aggregate concrete steps. Hand rails to be simple steel pipe rail on both sides with attachment to rock walls wherever possible to minimize metal posts.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

3) Rouge River Trail path steps—

MOTION: by Keefer, seconded by Logue:

To use slab stone for descending steps to Rouge River Trail in final conceptual landscape master plan.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

4) Paving material for paths—

MOTION: by Dixon, seconded by Eaton:

Paving material for paths to be of crushed natural material or natural-appearing material that is ADA-compliant with a minimum of loose surface material.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

New Business

Long range planning will be reviewed with the city commission on January 27. The Museum Board was in agreement that the focus for the next year will be in finalizing the landscape master plan for phased design and construction, with the priority being the pond zone and ADA access. The Birmingham bicentennial during 2018 is another possible important focus for the year pending further review. Budget priorities for 2018/2019 were discussed and the board agreed that 1) a professional marketing plan is needed to properly implement the strategic plan initiative, 2) a continued professional relationship with Brian Devlin for landscape design services is desirable following the completion of the concept plan, 3) the Allen and Hunter House complete replacement roofing project should be done in the next fiscal year as recommended by Jackie Hoist of H2 A Architects, 4) the picket fence on the east boundary should be repaired/repainted/replaced as necessary, and 5) that the question of replacement of historic operable shutters on the Allen House should be deferred to a future time.

Board members discussed the idea of the Museum Board's role in bicentennial activities and events, and agreed to defer further discussion to the January meeting. Ms. Keaton will represent the board at a meeting with Museum Director Pielack and city staff from the Birmingham Shopping District, Media and Communications, and Clerks office regarding possible bicentennial themed city events during 2018.

Communication and Reports

A. Joint Bicentennial Book Committee Report-the committee has completed its work and has been dissolved. Mr. Dixon recommended that in regards to the funding recommendation, an advance sale of a special edition, numbered and/or otherwise

specially stamped could be a viable way to raise funds. He also was enthusiastic about the recommendation to use thematic vignettes to convey complex issues and historic context. Ms. Eaton noted some concerns about the supplemental materials and walking tours as possibly needing more attention to ensure the use of available technology and meeting public needs comprehensively. The Museum Board agreed to review further at the January meeting with additional information on cost and process, before finalizing recommendations to the city.

B. Museum Director Pielack provided updates to her report. Two 'Valley Forge' hybrid elm trees have been planted in locations suggested by Mr. Devlin and the city's forester in the transition zone as previously agreed with the Museum Board, allowing for a safe distance from the diseased elms. This resulted in placement on either side of the Hill School Bell, which the Museum Board agreed was a good location. The visitor doors are being refinished off site and will be given a satin finish coat that will have superior UV resistance, which should ensure that the doors will need less maintenance in the future.

C. Ms. Krizanic noted that she was erroneously reported to have been at the Museum Governance presentation given by the American Alliance for Museums on November 3.

D. There were no public comments.

Ms. Krizanic adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m.



Attachment A, Recommended metal rail with wood posts

DATE: January 4, 2018
TO: Museum Board
FROM: Leslie Pielack, Museum Director
SUBJECT: Draft Conceptual Landscape Master Plan

On March 3, 2016, the Museum Board voted unanimously to incorporate the identification and protection of the museum's historic and natural resources in its planning for the grounds in accordance with the museum's mission and ongoing Strategic Plan implementation. Brian Devlin of Nagy Devlin Land Designs was contracted during the latter part of 2016 to survey the historic landscape, identify important historic and natural assets, and to guide the Museum Board through a conceptual landscape master plan design that would preserve and protect historic and natural resources while also providing enhanced public access.

Throughout 2017, the Museum Board worked with Mr. Devlin to review his findings and develop a conceptual landscape master plan that would meet the specified objectives. Four distinct zones emerged for specialized landscape planning: 1) a steep and natural riverine zone along the Rouge River with walking paths; 2) a heritage zone that includes the Allen and Hunter Houses and the public plaza with the Hill School Bell structure; 3) a steep transition zone between the upper level of the museum site and the lower level of the park to the north; and 4) a natural pond and historic pool area in the lower park near Willits Street. Additional study of the pond and pool became necessary for planning and was undertaken in the fall of 2017. In addition, city staff from Engineering, Building, Parks, and Planning departments provided suggestions about integrating design concepts into existing city requirements.

The resulting final draft master plan presents a conceptual master landscape plan that incorporates this information and can be shared with the public as well as the city's Parks and Recreation Board and Historic District Commission to gather further input before the plan is finalized.

Suggested Resolution:

To approve the proposed draft conceptual landscape master plan design prepared by Brian Devlin of Nagy Devlin Land Design for presentation to the public and to the city's Parks and Recreation Board and Historic District Commission.

Portion of Minutes of March 2, 2017 Regarding Museum Board suggestions for the bicentennial:

A. Initial discussion of some of the ideas for city-wide bicentennial celebration emphasized the fortunate co-incidence that the 2018 Winter Market will fall on November 30, December 1 and December 2. This makes it the ideal foundation event to connect the bicentennial celebration, as the first land by Willits and Hamilton was purchased on December 1, 1818, and John West Hunter on December 2, 1818. A scavenger hunt would be a good vehicle for bringing in local businesses and helping people enjoy the event by exploring some of the shops and other sites in the city. It is a family-friendly activity that can be easily incorporated into a city-wide promotion and further enhanced by social media. A time capsule or a time capsule 're-enactment' could be a fun event. A contest for children to draw or paint bicentennial themes would bring in the schools. A Village Players performance that relates to the overall theme could be of great interest. A specially designed logo on city-wide banners was also suggested. The Museum Board will consider additional ideas before making final recommendations to the commission.

Please also see attached original suggestion list for reference generated by the Museum Board for the March 2 discussion.

Museum Board Suggestions for Birmingham Bicentennial Celebration

_____ Enhance or combine with one of the current city events to include recognition of the Bicentennial.

For example: The City offers events such as the

- 1) Christmas Market
- 2) Day on the Town
- 3) Celebrate Birmingham Parade(usually near Memorial Day) Each of these events or one of the events could include a special ceremony to recognize the celebration.

_____ Contest for children to draw or paint pictures of Birmingham memories

_____ Ceremony to recognize long term residents of Birmingham

_____ Time Capsule

_____ Walking tours of the city

_____ Stories about Birmingham's history

_____ Scavenger hunt for kids

_____ Well known personalities

_____ Encourage the Village Players to stage a production that relates to Bhm and then take advantage of cooperative activities.

And not a chronology play, but something more abstract and universal. Three things have always attracted public notice; new development, school closings, and road changes. These could be dramatically explored in very universal settings, anywhere in the country, and would not focus on plot but the human motivations of the pros and cons. Say, instead of Jim Weiner proposing the Palladium, what if he proposed a wizarding school? A stateside branch of Hogwarts? Or, set in the distant future; a proposed cryonics revival facility on the Barnum School site? Would zombies be walking the streets of Bhm? Kind of William Burroughs meets SNL!

_____ A photo competition in cooperation with the BBAC. (A youth division could work the schools into it.)

Entrants would be asked to submit a photograph that depicted their vision of Bhm. It would have to be of suitable quality to be enlarged to about 24" for a major display of important entries in a show at the museum. They could be abstracted, altered, but primarily photography. The objective being an exhibit at the museum, with dozens of large photographs that would just be visually overwhelming to visitors.

- _____ A vintage style parade that would reflect the time that Birmingham was founded.
- _____ An old-fashioned fair or carnival reminiscent of the era that Birmingham was founded.
- _____ A unique logo to be placed on t-shirts, coffee mugs, stickers, i-phone covers, pens, pencils, etc.
- _____ Create and place a time-capsule to be opened in the future - or create and open a time capsule that may have been buried two hundred years ago. I can elaborate on that idea.
- _____ An historic scavenger hunt throughout Birmingham - this could be extensive and accomplished over a number of days / weeks with a great prize at the end (Somerset Gift Card?) or just one day.
- _____ Banners on light poles throughout town commemorating the bicentennial.

DATE: January 4, 2018
TO: Museum Board
FROM: Leslie Pielack, Museum Director
SUBJECT: Director Report

Holiday Update—Despite very frigid temperatures over the holidays, the museum received steady visitation, including foreign visitors, families, and young people from Birmingham. The train display and decorations in the Hunter House was well received.

2018 Exhibit Update, “The People of Birmingham: Celebrating 200 Years of Stories”—announcement of exhibition at December 11 commission meeting and in several local media articles has generated interest in the exhibit and also many submissions. Thus far we have received approximately 3 dozen submissions and are expecting to receive many more.

Exhibit Reception—a reception toward the end of January or early February would bring additional attention to the exhibition. Special invitations to exhibit panel submitters and an open house format with hot beverages and cookies is a simple and effective way to thank submitters and broaden our audience.

Upcoming Programs—A joint lecture series in the spring with the Baldwin Library will be tied in to the Bicentennial context. Entitled, “Looking Back at Birmingham—a Bicentennial Series,” the spring series, *Hidden Undercurrents*, will feature presentations that highlight local history aspects of largely forgotten but important national events in the 19th century.

March 8, 2018: *The Good Roads Movement in Michigan: How the late 19th c. Bicycling Craze Got Farmers out of the Mud* (7:00-8:30 at the Baldwin Library). Local author and historian **Jim Craft** will discuss how surprisingly, it was bicycling enthusiasts who launched the grass roots effort to improve our country's quagmire-like unimproved roads of the late industrial age. The Good Roads movement led to lasting changes in road funding that ultimately made major roadways such as Woodward Avenue the first ‘Super Highway’ in the 1920s.

April 12, 2017: *The American Chautauqua Movement and Birmingham's Ellsworth C. Plumstead* (7:00-8:30 at the Baldwin Library). Local historian and Library Friends President **Pam DeWeese** will present the important role played by the part-entertainment, part-education, part-religious traveling performances that left lasting effects on local culture, and how it changed the life of Birmingham's Ellsworth C. Plumstead.

May 10, 2017: *The Most Important Road: How the Saginaw Trail Became Woodward Avenue and Built Early Michigan* (7:00-8:30 at the Baldwin Library). Under our very feet, the Native American Saginaw Trail (now Woodward Avenue) was once the only route into the Oakland County wilderness. Author and Birmingham Museum Director **Leslie Pielack** will discuss how the trail brought Elijah Willits, John Hamilton, and John West Hunter together, and was central to the development of early Michigan and the transportation infrastructure that created the Motor City.

A fall lecture series will be planned with additional topics that will relate to Birmingham and the Bicentennial.

Special Joint Event with Baldwin Library-the Human Library, April

Also tying in to the Bicentennial, the Baldwin Library would like to explore a novel event idea that involves “checking out” a person or character rather than a book. During the event hours, patrons can “check out” a person for a period of time, e.g., 5 minutes, to have personal time with them to ask questions or discuss an issue of concern. Celebrities and politicians are often on hand, but the library is interested in providing an opportunity to check out historical characters from Birmingham. This would require knowledgeable volunteers who are willing to be in character for that purpose. Greenwood Cemetery volunteers are a potential resource, but others would be needed to make the event a memorable success.

Maintenance Items—Scheduled refinishing of the entry doors is now complete. Repairing/refinishing of rusted metal front porch railings is planned for this spring, as well as repair/replacement of picket fence at Hunter House boundary. The shutter that was blown off the Hunter House during a wind storm in 2017 will be replaced. Planned internal maintenance repair includes repair/repainting of areas of Allen House that have cracked plaster from ongoing settling, repair of basement windows and related foundation repair, and sealing and painting Hunter House basement floor.

Long Range Planning Meeting—The museum's 2018 long range focus will be presented to the city commission on Saturday, January 27, scheduled from 1:45 pm to 2:00 pm. Bicentennial planning, the historic master landscape plan, and museum utilization (visitation, social media contacts, and other community engagement) will be included.