



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD AGENDA
556 W MAPLE
Thursday, June 13, 2019
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**
- 3. Introduction of Guests**
- 4. Approval of the Minutes**
 - A. Minutes of May 2, 2019
- 5. New Business**
 - A. Hunter House Interpretive Plan
 - B. Museum Support/Donor Base
- 6. Unfinished Business**
 - A. Heritage Zone Fund Raising Plan-Update
- 7. Communication and Reports**
 - A. Director Report
 - B. Member comments
 - C. Public comments
- 8. Next Regular Meeting: July 11, 5:00 PM**
- 9. 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.

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**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 2, 2019
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Jay Cunningham, Russ Dixon, Judith Keefer, Tina Krizanic, Marty Logue, Caitlin Rosso

Members Absent: None

Student Members Present: Meredith Weddell

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: None

Ms. Krizanic called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

**Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of April 4, 2019**

MOTION: by Dixon seconded by Keefer:

To approve the minutes of April 4, 2019 as amended.

VOTE: Yeas, 6
Nays, 0

New Business

- A. Members were reminded about and indicated their attendance of planned Government Day breakfast on May 9. Following the Government Day breakfast, the Planning Department is scheduling a roundtable discussion group for those commissions and boards with a history focus in order to gather input for the city's current Master Plan process. The group will be held at 9:30 AM at City Hall following the breakfast.
- B. The board reviewed the dates provided in the annual meeting schedule for 2019 that was approved at the November meeting. The July 11 date alternative to July 4 was confirmed by members, and June 13 also was confirmed due to members' out of town plans. No other issues regarding our usual meeting schedule were noted.

Unfinished Business

- A. The final detail drawings for the Heritage Zone were shared with board members. The board expressed appreciation for the detail in the design, the sign design, symmetrical nature of the planned garden materials, lattice, and specified plant materials and sources. The final plan will be presented to the City Commission after

the finalization of the city's logo design, which is expected to take approximately another month or so.

Communication and Reports

Director Pielack shared two recent acquisitions of interest to the collection; 1) a book from Harry Allen's personal library with his signature in it, found by Coco Siewert, and 2) a donation of the desk, hutch, and chair that belonged to Birmingham pioneer Dr. Ziba Swan, who had the desk with him during the War of 1812 at the battlefield. Dr. Swan was a surgeon during the war and brought the desk with him to Birmingham afterward, and it has been in the Swan family ever since. It will be placed in the Hunter House and will help the museum interpret the War of 1812 more effectively. Director Pielack also shared some positive acknowledgement for the museum's Twitter page recently received from local state senators. Their interest in the museum's Twitter page has brought quite a number of new followers.

Mr. Dixon commented that he has been very pleased with the quality of the articles such as the recent one in the Birmingham Around Town eNewsletter written by Donna Casaceli on John O'Connell's Grocery Store.

The next Regular Meeting will be held on June 13, 2019 at 5:00 PM.

Ms. Krizanic adjourned the meeting at 5:51 PM

Hunter House Interpretive Planning Basics

This is a general orientation to what is involved in interpretive planning. The actual process can take several months, as it would effectively work through the basic components one at a time as a collaborative process. One way to approach it would be to develop it in segments until the plan is complete enough to launch.

Note: The museum is already interpreting our collection and site. Developing a plan would help formalize it and make it more effective as a tool in day to day operation of the museum as well as future planning.

What it is

An interpretative plan is a foundational document that helps institutions tell their stories, interpret their resources and achieve their overall mission. In our case, an interpretive plan would clarify our goals/objectives, identify key themes to be emphasized, and set priorities for programming.

What it isn't

By its nature it's a flexible document that changes as conditions change. It provides general guidance and direction for strategies and procedures to attain desired outcomes. It is not confining or overly specific to enable adaptation as conditions merit. It emphasizes the desired end results over the exact means to achieve them.

Connection to Museum's Strategic Plan

Our strategic plan calls for the museum to (Goal I, C):

Develop an interpretive plan for both buildings. Enhance utilization of the collection by engaging in impactful events, activities, programs and exhibits.

Therefore, our interpretive plan would be concerned with conceptual themes that help tell Birmingham's story to the public. Potential themes relate to the larger historical context of region/state/country. Not all possible themes can be interpreted; the plan would select those deemed of greatest importance or most desirable impact on the public, or that are best aligned with the mission. It is crucial to identify theme/s that can be demonstrated by the museum's collection, site, and available resources.

Components

Components of interpretive plans include identified audiences and general methodology in addition to identified themes and objectives

Possible Interpretive Objectives for the Hunter House

- Enhanced visitor experience
- Enhancement of collection and historical resources
- Civic engagement/partnerships
- ?

Possible Themes (Stories) (relate to larger historical context of region/state/country)

- Pioneer settlement of Oakland County-early families and local events
- Founding and building of Birmingham and the story of its commerce
- 19th -20th century culture; roles of men, women, and children and everyday life of local people as they relate to larger cultural context
- Greenwood Cemetery
- Foodways over time
- Preservation/conservation movement/relocation of Hunter House & loss of Allen children's play house; how a community or its needs change over time
- ?

Historic and Cultural Resources

- Building
- Grounds/garden/site
- Objects and archives
- Oral Histories
- Photos

Methodology and Implementation (Focused on themes and story-based)

- Interactive media and virtual content
 - Social media
 - Video/audio materials
 - Exhibits and online resources
 - Online collection
- Print (e.g., brochures, educational materials, booklets)
- Programs (on and off-site)
 - Educational-adult and children
 - activities and experiences-adult and children
- Guided tours (virtual and physical)

Evaluation

- Review data and adjust plan regularly

Conclusion

An effective interpretive plan for the Hunter House would help achieve the following:

- Identify or clarify some of our site's main stories
- Tell our stories more effectively
- Identify opportunities for programming
- Seek potential new audiences
- Help audiences form connections to the Hunter House and its stories
- Demonstrate preparedness and planning to potential funders

Developing Interpretive Plans

*From: Stephen G. Hague and Laura C. Keim, Small Museum Toolkit, 11/28/2012
<http://smallmuseumtoolkit.blogspot.com/2012/11/developing-interpretive-plans.html>*

Thoughtful planning is essential in the creation of effective interpretation.

A good interpretive plan offers key concepts and a structure that is designed to spin a web of connections for the visitor between what they are seeing in the museum and their own experiences and lives. Strong connections strongly will capture the visitor's imagination on a deep level. Although we cannot in every instance do this explicitly, the more connections that visitors can make to the story of your museum, the more often they will want to visit and become engaged.

Interpretive Planning is a process that takes time. First, all in the organization must be on board knowing that the plan will ultimately generate new ideas and approaches. It can be helpful to emphasize that the plan may only codify messages that are already part of the museum's current offerings.

It is helpful to think of the plan as one that will include existing messages or aspects of your interpretation you already do well.

All interpretation must rest on bedrock of good scholarship. Engage actively with scholarship, reading new material in your field regularly. When developing interpretive planning documents, staff and volunteers should conduct their own research and build their own knowledge foundations. At the same time, remember that you have an obligation to convey scholarship to a wide public.

This does not mean "dumbing down." Just the opposite. You want to challenge your audience, engaging fully with difficult topics and complex ideas. Complicated issues or problems can have great resonance for visitors. These topics are made more tangible and meaningful when you can rely on solid, up-to-date research in crafting your interpretation.

DATE: June 13, 2019
TO: Museum Board
FROM: Leslie Pielack, Museum Director
SUBJECT: Director Report

School Tours—Our school tour program this year saw a record number of 562 children and 142 adults from 38 second grade classrooms come through the Allen and Hunter Houses. We received many positive comments from parents and look forward to future visits from our young historians.

Adult Lecture Series—We have also seen a record number of attendees at our recent spring lecture series, which concluded in May, and hope to reach a new audience with our new summer series presented by museum staff, “Throwback Thursdays” in June, July, and August. Due to the Baldwin Library construction project, meeting space will be limited and we will have a reduced number of programs at the library, but are looking into the possibility of holding some programs at the Allen House.

Local Media/Author Event at Allen House—*The Birmingham Eagle* and *Oakland Eccentric* print and electronic versions continue to provide great exposure for our press releases and follow up interviews, most recently in regards to our ‘Experience Jacobson’s’ two part event. The ‘Fash Bash at Jake’s, 60s Style’ lecture tonight at the Baldwin Library, featuring fashion photography and world-renowned designers who were featured at the Birmingham store, is followed by a return of author Bruce Kopytek at a meet-and-greet book signing at the museum on June 15.

Tyler Firestone’s Exhibit—Our Seaholm senior project by Tyler Firestone is now complete, and although Tyler has graduated, he was able to visit the museum with his family. A press release is in process to promote the exhibit and student collaboration and research.

MHPN Conference—at the annual conference this year, we attended a special workshop on restoration of historic windows with a window expert that has worked with the Michigan Historic Preservation Network for several years as a consultant to teach people the benefit and approach to window restoration. This was exceptionally helpful in preparing to review and restore the Allen House and Hunter House windows. Working with a window restoration expert may make some grant funding available for the project.

Social Media Presentations—because of our successful social media approach, the museum has been asked to help other local history organizations with their social media approaches. Caitlin Donnelly and Director Leslie Pielack will be making plans to make local presentations. The Michigan Museums Association and Midwest Michigan Museum Association have also selected us to facilitate discussion at a special program in October at their joint conference.

City Logo—the city commission is working through the city’s final logo development and selection process with a consultant. A final outcome should be ready in approximately one to two months.

Pond Seepage—the Engineering and DPS departments are reviewing a seep that has developed below the pond to determine the best approach to address it to prevent further problems and in keeping with the objectives of the master landscape concept plan.

Treatment of Invasives—the Parks Dept invasive species management program will be working to eradicate *phragmites* from the museum pond as well as along the Rouge River corridor, and incorporated recommendations developed in our museum landscape master plan. This will help improve the appearance and access to the Rouge, which is a great support for our ongoing plans for the site.

Roof—in process for Allen and Hunter Houses, to be completed the week of 6/10.

Window Evaluation—A window restoration expert is working on evaluating the windows of the Hunter and Allen Houses to develop a scope of work that we can use to plan for restoration and repair of the windows on each house.

History Roundtable/Master Planning—the Museum Board, Historic District Commission, Historic District Study Committee and Cemetery Advisory Board were invited to a roundtable discussion as part of the city's master plan process. Planning for historic preservation and education of the public was the major focus of roundtable comments. In addition, special focus charettes were held throughout the community. The city's master plan process will take many months and involve ongoing public review before being finalized.

SHPO/National Register Listing of Allen House Update—No word yet from Lansing about the application status or next steps. The SHPO office indicated they may not have an answer for us for some time. This is normal.

New Donations—the Ziba Swan desk is now on display in the Hunter House. We have also received additional donations of documents and photos relating to the Blakeslee family of Birmingham, and are working toward additional documents relating to the Benedict family.

CREEM Documentary—initial plans are underway to explore the possibility of hosting a one-time showing of "Boy Howdy! The Story of CREEM Magazine" as a way of raising funds and donations to complete our CREEM magazine collection. More to come as details emerge.

experience

Jacobson's

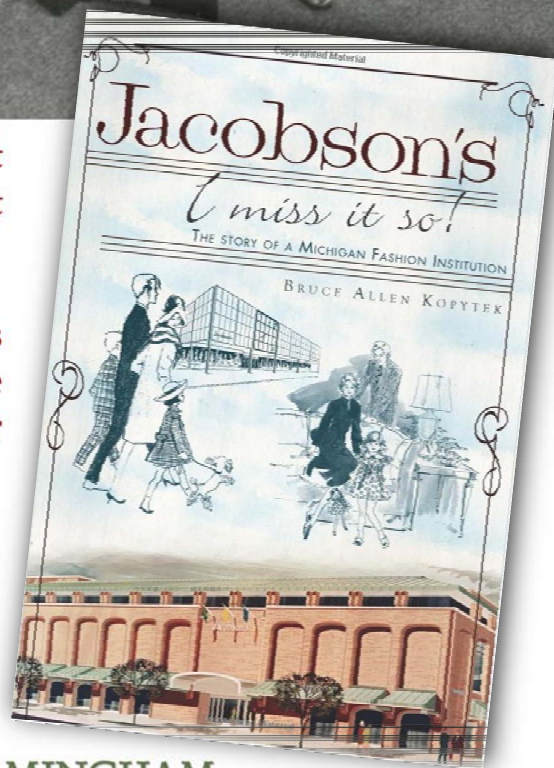


Come join us on **Saturday June 15th** from **1-2:30pm** at the **Birmingham Museum** to explore our Jacobson's exhibit and meet Bruce Kopytek, the author of *Jacobson's: I miss it so!*

Bruce will be signing copies of his book as well as reminiscing about Jacobson's! Come take a trip back in time and enjoy light refreshments and good company. Regular Museum prices will apply.

Museum admission is \$7 for adults; \$5 for students and seniors. Kids 5 and under and Friends of the Birmingham Museum members are free.

Two hours of free parking is available at the Chester Street Parking Deck; credit card required for entry and exit. For more information, call 248-530-1928 or visit www.bhamgov.org/museum.



BIRMINGHAM
The **MUSEUM**

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