

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM**  
**MUSEUM BOARD**  
**NOTICE OF VIRTUAL MEETING**

**NOTICE DATE:** August 27, 2020  
**MEETING DATE/TIME:** September 3, 2020 5:00 p.m.  
**MEETING PLACE:** Virtual Meeting

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that the regularly scheduled Museum Board meeting for the City of Birmingham will be conducted online using a virtual meeting format. Meetings will be conducted virtually in light of health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor of Michigan's Executive Orders that emphasize safety and limiting large gatherings.

**Museum Board Zoom Meeting Invitation**

Topic: Regular Museum Board Meeting

Time: August 6, 2020 05:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

**Potential Future Virtual Meetings:**

Sept 3, 2020 05:00 PM

Oct 1, 2020 05:00 PM

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://zoom.us/j/99524391376>

**Meeting ID: 995 2439 1376**

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**Meeting ID: 995 2439 1376**

The agenda, agenda packet, and detailed instructions for viewing and participating in the meeting will be posted on the City of Birmingham's website as follows:

[www.bhamgov.org/government/boards/mb\\_agendas.php](http://www.bhamgov.org/government/boards/mb_agendas.php)

Public comment will be handled by the virtual "raise hand" method as controlled by the participant. See instructions as posted on the City of Birmingham website: [www.bhamgov.org/participate](http://www.bhamgov.org/participate).

The meeting will be captioned; if participating in the meeting through the Zoom platform the user must select "view subtitles" in order to see the captions.

NOTICE: Individuals requiring accommodations, such as mobility, visual, hearing, interpreter or other assistance, 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.

*Las personas que requieren alojamiento, tales como servicios de interpretación, la participación efectiva en esta reunión deben ponerse en contacto con la Oficina del Secretario Municipal al [\(248\) 530-1880](tel:2485301880) por lo menos el día antes de la reunión pública. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).*



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
MUSEUM BOARD AGENDA**

**VIRTUAL MEETING**

**556 W MAPLE**

**Thursday, September 3, 2020**

**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. Approval of the Minutes**
  - A. Minutes of August 6, 2020
- 4. Unfinished Business**
  - A. Strategic Plan; final document approval and recommendation for presentation to the city commission
  - B. George and Eliza Taylor monument funding campaign-update
- 5. Communication and Reports**
  - A. Director Report
  - B. Member comments
  - C. Public comments
- 6. Next Meeting: October 1, 2020 (Currently planned as a virtual meeting)**
- 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](http://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).

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**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
MUSEUM BOARD  
VIRTUAL MEETING  
July 9, 2020  
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Russ Dixon, Judith Keefer, Dan Haugen, Pat Hughes (left the meeting at 5:45 PM), Tina Krizanic, Marty Logue, Caitlin Rosso

Members Absent: None

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: None

Ms. Krizanic called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. Clarifications regarding the virtual meeting were briefly reviewed. The meeting will be captioned and a roll call will be used to identify member votes and other comments.

**Approval of the Minutes  
Minutes of July 9, 2020**

**MOTION:** by Dixon, seconded by Logue:

To approve the minutes of July 9, 2020.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 7  
Nays, 0

**Unfinished Business**

A. Members reviewed the proposed task level details of the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan for each goal with summary report by Museum Director Pielack.

**MOTION:** by Keefer, seconded by Dixon:

To approve the 2021-2024 Birmingham Museum Strategic Plan as proposed.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 7  
Nays, 0

B. Mr. Dixon reviewed his research on fundraising by non-profits during the COVID-19 crisis and highlighted several points, especially as regards to maintaining relationships to donors and members; maintaining transparency and safety for the public when we do open again; and continuing to provide alternate digital programming. He particularly emphasized the importance of being selective with donors and focusing on our core group. Mr. Dixon shared his perspective that the

pandemic's impact on the museum may be much longer term than initially thought, and that, since a parks bond issue is now a likely possibility in the spring, it may be best to wait until the outcome of that effort before launching a major fundraising campaign. Board members were in agreement that pursuing smaller, defined projects and maintaining positive relationships with members and donors during the pandemic is the best approach. A mailing (e.g., postcard) to update Friends members and donors was mentioned as a good way to connect with people in a more concrete way. Board members agreed that a regular item in the Directors report regarding fundraising would be appropriate. Director Pielack will explore the past relationship with the Seligman Foundation, which helped fund the endowment when the museum was opened in 2001.

### **New Business**

- A. The Friends of the Birmingham Museum and the Piety Hill Chapter of the D.A.R. have initiated a project to raise \$5000 to install a monument for George and Eliza Taylor, former slaves who were the first African American property owners in Birmingham. The Taylors, who died in 1901 and 1902, are buried in Greenwood Cemetery but had no marker. Their story was recently discovered by George Getschman of the Friends Board. The museum will be facilitating the project by coordinating the promotion and fundraising functions, using an online contribution page that has been set up through the City of Birmingham. A project launch will take place in the next few weeks as final details come together. Approximately \$2,000 has been pledged to the project thus far by the two sponsoring groups, and it is anticipated that there will be active public interest in the project to raise the remaining \$3,000. Board members were enthusiastic about the positive nature of the project and its goals.

### **Communication and Reports**

Director Pielack reviewed the Director Report and provided additional information about the park bond issue goals as they relate to public interest in improving the Rouge River corridor. A considerable amount of proposed funding would be directed to improvements identified and cost estimates from the museum's Landscape Master Plan of 2018.

There were no board comments

There were no public comments.

**The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 3 at the regular time of 5:00 PM, currently planned as a virtual meeting subject to the Governor's ongoing executive orders.**

Ms. Krizanic adjourned the meeting at 5:54 PM.

DRAFT



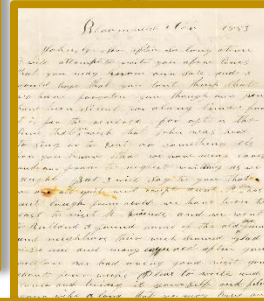
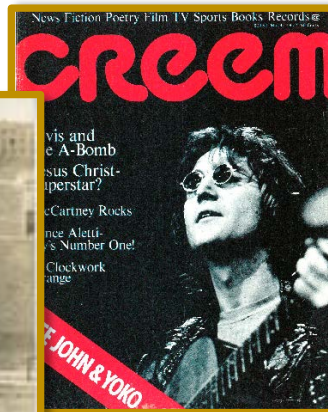
City of Birmingham

# BIRMINGHAM *The* MUSEUM

2021-2024 Strategic Plan



DRAFT



## 2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

### APPROVALS

Museum Board: August 6, 2020

City Commission:

### CONTRIBUTORS

Museum Director: Leslie Pielack

Museum Board Members: Russell Dixon, Dan Haugen, Pat Hughes, Judith Keefer, Tina Krizanac, Marty Logue, Caitlin Rosso

*This plan represents an update and revision of the 2017-2020 Birmingham Museum Strategic Plan*



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## INTRODUCTION

**BACKGROUND AND PROCESS:** In 2012, the Birmingham Museum (formerly Birmingham Historical Museum & Park) adopted a strategic plan for the period of 2013-2016. It was created with input from city staff and officials; the public; local churches, schools, and other cultural organizations; and major stakeholders such as the Friends of the Birmingham Museum. The resulting **2013-2016 Strategic Plan** also incorporated the findings of a **2012 Museum Assessment Program** report, a grant-funded audit and review of the museum's collection provided by the American Alliance of Museums/Institute of Museum & Library Services. The final strategic plan represented a broad effort to respond to community expectations, professional museum standards, and the museum's needs in a changing cultural environment. It emphasized changes in the museum field toward community engagement and the human stories that relate to the physical objects in the collection. Also emphasized was the expansion of public access to the collection, educational goals, and continued acquisition and care for the objects that tell Birmingham's story (including contemporary materials). The plan included objectives relating to the landscape, site improvements, and interpretation of the historic buildings. Re-branding the museum and broadening its visibility were also significant objectives.

The **2017-2020 Birmingham Museum Strategic Plan** revised and modified the goals and objectives based on changing technology and audience needs as objectives from the first plan were met or obsolete. The museum has made considerable progress towards the initial goals set by its first strategic plan and revision. As a result, additional review and updating of the plan by the Museum Board has been undertaken for 2021-2024.

The newly revised goals and objectives that follow in the **2021-2024 Birmingham Museum Strategic Plan** represent a careful consideration of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on current and future activities, especially virtual content and technological means of enhancing audience virtual experience. The Museum Board expects these adaptations to continue for some time, and they are reflected in the revised plan for 2021-2024. However, the ultimate goals and mission of the Birmingham Museum remain largely unchanged, while the methods of accomplishing established objectives continue to be flexible.

**MISSION AND VALUE:** The museum's mission statement reflects an inclusive and contemporary approach to integrating Birmingham's history in meaningful ways for its audiences, strengthening its value to the community and its long term sustainability.

**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.**

## OVERVIEW

The **2021-2024 Birmingham Museum Strategic Plan** builds on the preceding plan, which continues to provide relevant overall direction.

Goals and their objectives form two different groups; 1) those related to the public service functions of the museum, and 2) those related to strengthening capacity and resources to carry out its mission.

Following the summarized description of goals and objectives, the updated 2021-2024 plan is presented in table format as a quick reference guide. As with previous versions, the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan is a living document whose purpose is to provide direction and guidance. Ongoing modification is expected as changing needs dictate. The Museum Board has the role and responsibility of reviewing and making recommendations for plan modification.

**DEFINITIONS:** The following definitions are used in this document.

*Goals: Goals in this plan state where the organization will focus its energies over a defined time frame. They can be short or long term in nature. Goals are not necessarily directly measurable but provide a broad overview or concept of the priorities established by the organization. Goals establish general direction.*

*Objectives: Objectives in this plan are shorter-term milestones that support individual goals. Each goal has several tangible objectives that will move the museum toward reaching that goal. Objectives are concrete, measurable and focused on results.*

*Tasks/Strategies: Strategies or tasks in this plan are specific actions or steps that lead to the accomplishment of the objectives. They are action-oriented, short-term, and include the specific “what, by when and by whom,” components.*

## GOALS and OBJECTIVES

### 1) Service and Mission-Related Goals

Goal I: Enhance community engagement through improved access and appeal, resulting in increased utilization of the Birmingham Museum and broader appreciation of its cultural contribution.

Objectives for Goal I:

- A. Develop and implement programs that strategically engage and connect with the community to make history and heritage more relevant.
- B. Establish the museum and park as a valued resource and place to encourage community connectivity.
- C. Enhance utilization of the collection by developing an interpretive plan for the site to engage visitors in impactful events, activities, programs and exhibits.
- D. Continue to create content to promote the museum through social media and marketing.

Goal II: Provide stewardship and management of the museum's collection of artifacts, archives, and buildings, in accordance with established professional museum practice.

Objectives for Goal II:

- A. Improve museum collection's storage organization and environmental controls to protect and preserve the collection.
- B. Improve efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of collection object records and documentation.
- C. Develop and implement collections-related policies and procedures for collections management; future acquisitions; de-accessioning; disaster preparedness; the museum's hands-on/use collection; building maintenance; and other collections-related policies and procedures in accordance with accepted museum standards.
- D. Provide increased digital access through exploring online or other virtual exhibit/access options.

## 2) **Capacity-Building and Support-Related Goals**

Goal III: Increase the capacity of the Birmingham Museum to serve its mission through fundraising, board development, building relationships, and volunteer resources.

### Objectives for Goal III:

- A. Develop a comprehensive fundraising plan for the Birmingham Museum that increases contributions to both operations and the endowment fund as a collaborative effort of the Museum board and Museum Friends.
- B. Continue to support board development.
- C. Increase the personnel capacity of the Birmingham Museum by increasing professional staffing, engaging volunteers, and utilizing partner organizations.
- D. Enhance funding through grant-writing efforts.

Goal IV: Continue to develop the museum's brand to increase awareness, interest, and attendance through a consistent message and marketing plan.

### Objectives for Goal IV:

- A. Continue to maximize low cost marketing resources.
- B. Strengthen our ties to the community by identifying our new/existing audiences and enhancing the museum's image.
- C. Explore best practices in marketing the new face of the museum.

## DETAIL OF OBJECTIVES, TASKS, AND TIMELINES

**GOAL I:** Enhance community engagement through improved access and appeal, resulting in increased utilization of the Birmingham Museum and broader appreciation of its cultural contribution.

### Objectives for Goal I

#### **A. Develop and implement programs that strategically engage and connect with the community to make history and heritage more relevant.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Public programming; schools, organizations, individuals & families	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; materials/operational funds	1. Ongoing
2. Private programs & tours	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel; materials/operational funds	2. Ongoing
3. Research services	3. Museum staff	3. Personnel; materials/operational funds	3. Ongoing

#### **B. Establish the museum and park as a valued resource and place to encourage community connectivity.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Continue and enhance social media audience interaction	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; operational funds/virtual resources	1. Ongoing
2. Online events promotion	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel; operational funds/virtual resources	2. Ongoing
3. Phased landscape construction	3. City/museum staff	3. Personnel, consultants, funding (city/private)	3. 2021-2024

#### **C. Enhance utilization of the collection by developing an interpretive plan for the site to engage visitors in impactful events, activities, programs and exhibits.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Implement Hunter House interpretive plan	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel	1. Ongoing
2. Develop Allen House interpretive plan	2. Museum staff/Board	2. Personnel	2. 2021-22
3. On site, off site, and virtual exhibits	3. Museum staff	3. Personnel, operational funds/virtual resources	3. Ongoing

#### **D. Continue to create content to promote the museum through social media and marketing.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Continue and enhance existing social media content and development of the museum's brand	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel, virtual resources	1. Ongoing

**GOAL II:** Provide stewardship and management of the museum's collection of artifacts, archives, and buildings, in accordance with established professional museum practice.

Objectives for Goal II

**A. Improve museum collection's storage organization and environmental controls to protect and preserve the collection.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Re-organize storage in keeping with permanent and use collection goals	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; materials/operational funds	1. Ongoing
2. Improve environmental controls	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel; materials/operational funds	2. Ongoing
3. Develop artifact assessment & intervention plan	3. Museum staff	3. Personnel; materials/operational funds	3. 2021

**B. Improve efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of collection object records and documentation.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Continue digitization, improvement of digital records and expansion of electronic storage	1. Museum staff; interns/volunteer professionals	1. Personnel; operational funds/virtual resources	1. Ongoing

**C. Develop and implement collections-related policies and procedures for collections management; future acquisitions; de-accessioning; disaster preparedness; the museum's hands-on/use collection; building maintenance; and other collections-related policies and procedures in accordance with accepted museum standards.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Finalize/implement disaster preparedness plan	1. Museum staff/city staff	1. Personnel	1. 2021-ongoing
2. Develop a building and grounds maintenance schedule	2. Museum staff/city staff	2. Personnel, operational funds	2. 2021-ongoing
3. Develop/finalize collections policy	3. Museum staff/Board	3. Personnel	3. 2021-2022

**D. Provide increased digital access through exploring online or other virtual exhibit/access options.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Expansion of digital collections/digital content management for public access	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel, virtual resources	1. Ongoing



**Goal III:** Increase the capacity of the Birmingham Museum to serve its mission through fundraising, board development, building relationships, and volunteer resources.

***Objectives for Goal III***

**A. Develop a comprehensive fundraising plan for the Birmingham Museum that increases contributions to both operations and the endowment fund as a collaborative effort of the Museum board and Museum Friends.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Develop a fundraising plan for seeking and managing contributions from public and private sources	1. Museum staff/city staff/partner organizations	1. Personnel; materials/operational funds	1. Ongoing

**B. Continue to support board development.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Explore/provide opportunities for continuing education	1. Museum Board; Friends Board	1. Personnel; operational funds/virtual resources	1. Ongoing

**C. Increase the personnel capacity of the Birmingham Museum by increasing professional staffing, engaging volunteers, and utilizing partner organizations.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Maintain appropriate staffing levels and effective use of personnel resources	1. Museum staff/professional volunteers/interns	1. Personnel; partner organizations	1. 2021-ongoing

**D. Enhance fundraising through grant-writing efforts.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Identify/explore grant opportunities for supporting museum initiatives	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; partner organizations	1. Ongoing

Goal IV: Continue to develop the museum's brand to increase awareness, interest, and attendance through a consistent message and marketing plan.

Objectives for Goal VI

**A. Continue to maximize low cost marketing resources.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Explore/develop low cost marketing opportunities to complement social media marketing	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; materials/operational funds	1. Ongoing

**B. Strengthen our ties to the community by identifying our new/existing audiences and enhancing the museum's image.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Explore/enhance relationships with local and virtual organizations	1. Museum staff/ Museum Board	1. Personnel; partner organizations	1. Ongoing

**C. Explore best practices in marketing the new face of the museum.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Maintain and explore continuing education in museum marketing and branding	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel	1. Ongoing

**DATE:** September 3, 2020  
**TO:** Museum Board  
**FROM:** Leslie Pielack, Museum Director  
**SUBJECT:** Director Report

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Preservation and Repair Projects-Hunter House—Construction has begun on the drainage work at the Hunter House. The other exterior repairs will follow, with anticipated completion of all components by season's end.

Museum Board Alternate Position—Posted on August 24, with application deadline on September 16 and planned interviews at the commission meeting on September 28.

Online payment options—Researchers and donors have used the online payment options (WuFoo) with ease, which has helped maintain revenues for the museum. Checks are still preferred by some patrons.

Research Services—the museum continues to receive requests on a regular basis, including out of state requests and commercial requests (e.g., for historic photos). The façade improvement plan for the Parks Bldg (formerly Panera Bread) is now public, and passers-by can see the prominent display of historical image credits to the museum. Our digitization efforts continue to expand and improve access to historical images, which remain of great interest to the community. Not all our desirable images have been digitized and/or stored in an easy access manner. This is an ongoing task for museum staff.

Fundraising—The Taylor monument project launch occurred on September 1 with the press release and associated promotional materials. The City of Birmingham will continue to include content about the project in its ongoing communications. Several organizational meetings and general contact with project partners has resulted in pre-launch donations totaling \$350 (total target funds-\$2700). We anticipate active public interest in this project, which is coordinated through the Friends as a 501c3 non-profit. Excess funds will be maintained by the Friends in a special preservation account for Greenwood Cemetery.

The Virtual Birmingham Museum—additional content development for the virtual museum:

- Tyler Firestone's research on Groves-Seaholm sports, TBD
- A new middle school student, Zizi Newhard, is doing a project relating to young women of the 1890s from Birmingham and what happened in their later lives
- A 'video journey' through the life and ancestry of Alex Bingham, the new City Clerk, who has some surprising relationships to founding families of Birmingham and many other surprising ancestors in American history (to be launched around Thanksgiving)

Inside-Out-reach—the museum was selected to receive a special display that is part of the National Archives suffrage exhibit called *Rightfully Hers*. We incorporated it with our concept of an outdoor pop-up exhibit, and have scheduled that to take place every Friday in September from 1 to 4. This will be a staffed exhibit and free to the public. Instead of on the porch, it will be in the plaza under a tent. We will have selected artifacts available for the public to view and our active slideshow on a screen for them to see. This will be a good test of the new pedestrian access and the comfort level with an outside display. Safety measures will be required, including social distancing and masks, for all visitors who want to see the artifacts and speak with the staff. We have also begun developing a women's history walking tour for the Junior League to take place in October, which will generate revenue. New amplification devices will be used by museum staff to enhance the experience while social distancing measures are followed.

Acquisitions—we continue to get regular donations of materials specific to Birmingham history. The most recent is a set of 1947 township maps drawn by Stewart Smith for the McAlpine Map Company of Birmingham.

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:**

Leslie Pielack  
(248) 530-1682

**Birmingham Museum to feature National Archives display  
in women's history pop-up outdoor exhibit in September, Fridays from 1 to 4 p.m.**

*Historical artifacts of Birmingham women will be integrated within the larger context of  
the American suffrage movement in staffed outdoor display*

**BIRMINGHAM, MI**, August 24, 2020—During the month of September, the public is invited to view materials from the Birmingham Museum's collection that tell the story of some pretty amazing local women and how their experiences relate to the national struggle for women's voting rights. On Fridays from 1 to 4 p.m., visitors can stop by the plaza outside the museum at 556 West Maple to learn about the fascinating evolution of the suffrage movement through the ***Rightfully Hers*** pop-up exhibition, developed by the National Archives in celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment giving women the right to vote. Museum staff will be on hand to talk about how local women have expressed their own struggle for independence and empowerment, sharing materials and artifacts from the Birmingham Museum's currently inaccessible exhibition, ***Beyond Suffrage: Empowering Birmingham's Women***. The outdoor pop-up exhibit is free of charge.

Despite the obligatory closure of the Birmingham Museum to the public due to the pandemic, stories and photos from its 2020 exhibit have been made available virtually with video vignettes on Facebook, the museum's YouTube channel, and its other social media formats. Museum staff are excited to take exhibit materials out to the public for the pop-ups in September, where visitors, pedestrians, and bicyclists can stop by to check out the combined National Archives and Birmingham Museum display. Masks and social distancing will be required for close examination of the artifacts and conversation with museum staff.

"Birmingham was uniquely progressive in comparison with other communities nearby," said Birmingham Museum Director Leslie Pielack. "But even so, the women of Birmingham had to work determinedly toward greater political and economic independence for decades before the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was finally passed." They made inroads in some areas but found resistance in others. When national women's suffrage was ultimately victorious in 1920, it was not the end of the struggle; in many ways it was just the beginning. The National Archives' ***Rightfully Hers*** co-curator Jennifer N. Johnson has described it this way: "The ratification of the 19th Amendment was a landmark moment in American history that dramatically changed the electorate, and although it enshrined in the U.S. Constitution fuller citizenship for women, many remained unable to vote."

How the women of Birmingham empowered themselves before and following suffrage is the theme of the ***Beyond Suffrage*** exhibit at the museum, which opened earlier this year just as the COVID-19 pandemic shut down public access. In addition to the national story, the September pop-up will feature women who played significant political roles in the Birmingham community from the 1870s to the 1960s. "Efforts to expand women's rights began seriously with our own powerhouse Martha Baldwin, who actively contributed to local and national suffrage as well as economically supporting the education of talented

young women in town,” said Pielack. “She was joined by other like-minded citizens who followed in her footsteps to create a women’s legacy in Birmingham that is still strong.” These included local women Ruth Shain, Hope Ferguson, Mary Utter, Bess Levin, Jane Briggs Hart, and Twink Willett, whose collective achievements include founder of The Community House and local chapter of the American Association of University Women, first elected woman commissioner in Birmingham, social justice activist and political matriarch, first woman astronaut, first woman mayor in Michigan and more.

“We want our pop-up visitors to get a sense of the long history of the fight for women’s rights and how it fits in with what is going on today,” added Pielack. “And we want them to gain a better understanding of just how much has been accomplished by the determined women of Birmingham.”

*The **Rightfully Hers** pop-up exhibit is provided to local museums and libraries as part of a nationwide initiative of the National Archives and Records Administration in celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. It is associated with the major **Rightfully Hers** exhibition of the National Archives, which explores the generations-long fight for universal woman suffrage. The exhibition is presented in part by the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission and the National Archives Foundation through the generous support of Unilever, Pivotal Ventures, Carl M. Freeman Foundation in honor of Virginia Allen Freeman, AARP, and Denise Gwyn Ferguson. More information on the National Archives and its **Rightfully Hers** exhibition can be found at <https://museum.archives.gov/rightfully-hers>*

*The Birmingham Museum is currently closed to the public, but providing content and educational materials online about Birmingham’s story. We also feature regular social media programs on Facebook*

*(<https://www.facebook.com/TheBirminghamMuseum/>) and Twitter ([https://twitter.com/bham\\_museum](https://twitter.com/bham_museum)).*

*Video content on our current exhibit, lectures on historic Birmingham, and educational video shorts for adults and children can be found on our YouTube channel at*

*[https://www.bhamgov.org/history/museum/lecture\\_presentation\\_videos.php](https://www.bhamgov.org/history/museum/lecture_presentation_videos.php) Want to know more about us? Check us out at [www.bhamgov.org/museum](http://www.bhamgov.org/museum).*

*City of Birmingham – A Walkable Community. Visit the city’s web site at [www.bhamgov.org](http://www.bhamgov.org).*

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The ***Rightfully Hers*** exhibit from the National Archives will be combined with selected artifacts from the Birmingham Museum's current exhibit, ***Beyond Suffrage: Empowering Birmingham's Women*** that focus on the political 'firsts' of women of the area.



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:**

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(248) 530-1682

**(Draft-not for distribution) Community-wide Appeal to Raise Funds for Grave Marker for Former Slaves Buried in Birmingham's Greenwood Cemetery**

*Birmingham Museum coordinating effort with DAR and Friends of the Birmingham Museum to erect monument for George and Eliza Taylor*

They escaped slavery in Kentucky, following the perilous underground railroad route to gain access to Michigan in the 1850s, settling as farmers in the area before eventually buying a home on Bates Street in Birmingham in 1893. They were active in the United Presbyterian Church and highly regarded by their neighbors. They were also proud to be the first African-American property owners in Birmingham. When **George and Eliza Taylor** died six months apart in 1901 and 1902, their loss was mourned by the community and they were buried in Greenwood Cemetery. But their graves were not marked, and their story was eventually lost to the passing of time.

That is, until **local historian George Getschman**, Greenwood cemetery tour coordinator and board member of the Friends of the Birmingham Museum, discovered the Taylors' obituary this past January—over a century later. “I was shocked,” he said. “It was astonishing that these two people, who had been a part of such an important story of our nation's history, turned out to be part of Birmingham's story as well. They joined our small farming community and lived their lives here, but then were totally forgotten for three or four generations.” Getschman worked with **Birmingham Museum staff Donna Casaceli** to dig deeper into the Taylors' history, learning that the couple's home had been on Bates Street and that they had an adopted daughter who moved out of the area shortly after their deaths.

“It was immediately apparent that we needed to do something about the missing marker,” said Getschman. The idea to install a marker quickly sparked interest and brought together **Piety Hill Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)** and the **Friends of the Birmingham Museum** in a joint effort to raise the needed funds. The Birmingham Museum will be coordinating the newly launched fundraising campaign, and there will be opportunities for young and old to donate to the cause in any dollar amount. The DAR and Friends have already committed \$2,000 to the project, leaving \$3,000 to raise from private donations from the community for the \$5,000 total project cost. When sufficient funds are available, a large marker will be installed in a style similar to the older graves in the cemetery, with biographical information about the Taylors and the notation, “*born in slavery; died free in Birmingham.*”

**Lisa Milton, President of the Piety Hill Chapter**, said, “Piety Hill’s mission is historic preservation, education and patriotism. Our chapter is actively involved in preserving the history of Greenwood Cemetery. When we became aware of George and Eliza Taylor’s story our members were committed to getting involved in procuring a marker for their resting place. The Taylors are an important part of history of the Birmingham community and we are very proud to support the establishment of a permanent and meaningful grave marker for them. We look forward to a future community celebration of their lives.”

Getschman agrees. “The Taylors’ story and their final resting place should be acknowledged for the benefit of the public and so they can take their place in Birmingham history.”

Contributions to the Taylor Monument Fund can be made online in any amount through a secure payment service with the Birmingham Museum/City of Birmingham at <https://bit.ly/bhammuseumsupport>. If preferred, checks can be made payable to “Friends of the Birmingham Museum-Taylor Monument Project” and mailed to: Birmingham Museum, 556 W. Maple Road, Birmingham, MI 48009. The Friends of the Birmingham Museum is a 501c3 non-profit organization. Any excess funds raised will be placed in a special Friends account for the preservation of Greenwood Cemetery. For more information on the Friends, check out <https://www.bhamgov.org/history/friends.php>, or contact the Birmingham Museum to learn more about the Taylor monument project at **248-530-1682**.

The DAR is a non-profit, non-political women’s service organization dedicated to preserving the memory and spirit of the men and women who achieved American independence. The Piety Hill Chapter draws its membership from Birmingham and surrounding areas, and is involved in patriotic and historic events throughout the year. For more information visit [www.PietyHillDAR.org](http://www.PietyHillDAR.org).

*The Birmingham Museum is currently closed to the public, but providing content and educational materials online about Birmingham’s story. We also feature regular social media programs and pop-up exhibits. Check us out at [www.bhamgov.org/museum](http://www.bhamgov.org/museum).*

*City of Birmingham – A Walkable Community. Visit the city’s web site at [www.bhamgov.org](http://www.bhamgov.org).*

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Leslie Pielack &lt;lpielack@bhamgov.org&gt;

## Birmingham Museum to Host Outdoor Pop-Up Exhibit on Women's History Fridays in September

1 message

**Birmingham Farms** <bhamfarms@gmail.com>  
Cc: LPielack@bhamgov.org

Wed, Aug 26, 2020 at 3:24 PM

Hi all,

We are passing along the below information regarding an outdoor pop-up exhibit at the Birmingham Museum. This is free to the public.

Please see the attached handout for additional information. Please also feel free to share with others in the area as this is a free event.

Thank you!

**Birmingham Farms Neighborhood Association**  
<http://birminghamfarms.webs.com/>





**Press Release-Pop Up Exhibit on Womens History (1).doc**  
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