



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD AGENDA
556 W MAPLE
Thursday, July 1, 2021
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 June 3, 2021
- 4. New Business**
 - A. Museum Reopening
 - B. Recruitment of Museum Board members
 - C. Election of Chair (August 5)
- 5. Communication and Reports**
 - A. Director Report
 - B. Member comments
 - C. Public comments
- 6. Next Meeting: July 1, 2021 (Currently planned as a virtual meeting)**
- 7. Adjournment**

You are invited to attend the meeting in person or virtually through ZOOM:
Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/99524391376> Meeting ID: 995 2439 1376

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**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD
VIRTUAL MEETING
June 3, 2021
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Russ Dixon, Pat Hughes, Judith Keefer, Tina Krizanic, Marty Logue, Jacquie Patt

Members Absent: Caitlin Rosso

Student Members: Aidan Schoener

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: Bev Erickson, Elyse Germack, Alexandra Harris

Ms. Krizanic called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

**Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of May 6, 2021**

MOTION: by Dixon, seconded by Logue:

To approve the minutes of May 6, 2021.

VOTE: Yeas, 6
Nays, 0

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Members resumed discussion of a "pandemic project" to collect materials and memories from the public for preservation at the museum. The objective would be to solicit contributions of 'what the pandemic means to me' for the museum's collection, emphasizing the preservation of objects (e.g., hand-made signs, masks, personal letters, etc.), thoughts, reflections, statements, creative productions, and other representative items. Materials would be preserved in the museum's permanent collection as a form of documentation of Birmingham's experience. September was suggested as the best timing. The event would potentially include:

1. the complete reopening of the museum with a public reception
2. free admission to the reception and exhibit
3. two opportunities: Thursday evening Sept 2 and Saturday, Sept 4
4. collect mementos and material donations from visitors

5. The Thursday evening reception could include the September Museum Board meeting so that the public could participate and meet board members.
6. Additional suggestions for promotion were briefly discussed, which would include social media, press releases, newsletters, and more. Advance notice earlier in the summer would help prepare people to set aside items so they are not discarded.

Guests Bev Erickson, Elyse Germack, and Alexandra Harris were invited to comment on their interest in possibly serving on the board. There are three positions that will open after June 30: two regular board member positions and one alternate position. The alternate member would step in to vote, should a regular member be absent. Otherwise, the alternate member is an important functioning member of the board, and can participate on subcommittees.

Communication and Reports

Director Pielack reviewed the Director Report, emphasizing the just recently determined phased reopening of the museum, beginning June 15, with a return to full public schedule after Labor Day. Members were supportive of the plan and the phased approach. Director Pielack updated the board as to the status of the landscape project, the anticipated paint study and analysis, and a lighthearted competition for 'beet parrot' memorabilia that is current on social media as a commemoration of our 100th Twitter follower. Board members Hughes, Krizanic, Logue, and Patt commented on their participation in May's Friday Porch Pop Ups, which all felt were positive experiences for them as well as the public. The museum continues to conduct research and follow leads relating to Birmingham's Black history as well as other stories, with help from volunteers and local historians, including Board Member Patt. This is timely in regards to June's Pop Up theme, which is Birmingham's Black history.

Ms. Krizanic thanked the Museum Board for six and a half years of working with them and complimented them on their hard work and ability to work as a team to accomplish so much for the museum. She thanked Mr. Dixon for his long service to the city and the museum. Mr. Dixon pointed out that although his term is expiring, he believes the ordinance provides for a member continuing to serve until their position is filled, which he plans to do. Director Pielack reminded the Board that the July meeting is where they would choose a chair for the year, and briefly described the chair's role.

There were no public comments.

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 1 at 5:00 PM, currently planned as an in-person meeting at the museum.

Ms. Krizanic adjourned the meeting at 6:02 PM.

DATE: July 1, 2021
TO: Museum Board
FROM: Leslie Pielack, Museum Director
SUBJECT: Director Report

Paint Study of Hunter House Interior—A review of the Hunter House interior with Anthony Kartsonas of Historic Surfaces, LLC was interesting, in that he identified differences in the historic period of the various woodwork examples. He also pointed out that the interior of the rooms was plastered in the first phase of building (e.g., mid-19th century) and that it appears that layer of plaster was scraped away to install the 1890s-period metal lath and plaster (Henry Randall). Thus it may be difficult to get original samples of the paint from that oldest wall surface. However, the original trim/woodwork has many layers of paint, and a good chance of providing data we can use to guide the trim color. We also discussed a timeframe for collecting the samples, getting the analysis, and his final report, which would be some time in the fall. This will permit painting work to take place during the winter.

Porch Pop Up Exhibits-June: 'Birmingham's Black History'—More visitors found us as the weeks went by, and generally stayed a half hour or more to speak with staff. Some visitors came from elsewhere specifically to check out the exhibits, while others were just walking by. We will continue the Porch Pop Ups until September 30, and they will continue to be free to the public.

Pure Michigan—The museum has an updated and improved listing with **Pure Michigan** that includes photos and captioned content; see <https://www.michigan.org/property/birmingham-museum>

The Virtual Birmingham Museum—Museum staff held a competition for fun on Facebook and Twitter, and gave out 2 mugs and a mousepad featuring the mascot BeetParrot. The winners successfully guessed the weight of a bound edition of Eccentric Newspapers in our collection-nearly 38 lbs.!

New Research: More exciting research regarding Birmingham's role in abolition and the Underground Railroad. Donna Casaceli has verified through multiple primary sources that **Elijah Fish**, early settler and deacon, was actively involved in abolition activities throughout Southeast Michigan in the 1830s and 1840s. Separately, we also have verified that George Taylor's biography based on a published interview from 1894 (thanks to Jacquie Patt) syncs with an identified slaveholder and farm in Kentucky. We also have documentation to verify that his connection to Southfield was due to the Underground Railroad support of Reverend J.S.P. Milligan, a minister in Southfield at the time of George's flight to freedom (thanks to George Getschman!). Furthermore, we believe we have identified George's father, who was apparently a freeman who lived on a farm near where George was born and enslaved. We are investigating opportunities to seek additional designation for Greenwood Cemetery as a site associated with the Underground RR as well as abolition. Stay tuned!

Collection/Recent Donations—We recently received a number of items from the Ferguson family. Edna Ferguson was an early aviator and the sweetheart of fellow Birmingham pilot, the more famous Harry Brooks. She grew up on a nearby farm. Her descendants have donated numerous items from the farm that we look forward to displaying in the kitchen of the Hunter House. In addition, we have been promised other items relating to her aviation interest, and that of Harry Brooks. This is a great donation! We have also received a Walking (Spinning) Wheel that is directly related to Birmingham's history—related to the Hagerman family. It is now featured prominently on display in the Hunter House. Museum staff have started to tweak the Hunter House displays in accordance with our Interpretive Plan from early 2020.



Description

This is a wool spinning wheel - also known as a Great wheel or a Walking wheel. This spinning wheel was brought to Birmingham by Francis "Frank" Hagerman in the 1860's from Pennsylvania. The wheel was then passed down to his daughter, Alice Hagerman Thurber, and then to Jeanne Thurber Murray - grand daughter to Alice, g. granddaughter to Frank.

The spinning wheel stands at 59.5" high at the top of the wheel. It consists of the wheel at 43.4" in circ., and the base at 41.5" in length, along with the spindle arm. On the side of the base the name "D. Krunkel" is branded into the wood (possibly the name of the maker). The wheel has all parts with an extra spindle and two spindle holders, though the leather straps have rotted inside one, making it useless at this time. There are two on the arm that work. The entire wheel and base are a little over 60" total in length. The wheel is fully functional.