



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD AGENDA
556 W MAPLE
Thursday, April 7 2022
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**
Minutes of March 3, 2022
- 4. Unfinished Business**
 - A. Heritage Plant Exchange
 - B. Underground Railroad Commemorative Event
- 5. New Business**
 - A. Window Restoration Project-RFP Update
- 6. Communication and Reports**
 - A. Director Report
 - B. Member comments
 - C. Public comments
- 7. Next Meeting: May 5, 2022**
- 8. 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
556 W. Maple
Thursday, March 3, 2022
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Alexandra Harris, Pat Hughes, Marty Logue, Caitlin Rosso

Members Absent: Bev Erickson, Judith Keefer, Jay Shell

Student Members: Jordan Snyder-Phillipoff

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: Kristy Barrett

Chairperson Logue called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM.

**Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of February 10, 2022**

MOTION: by Rosso, seconded by Logue:

To approve the minutes of February 10, 2022.

VOTE: Yeas, 4
Nays, 0

Unfinished Business

The event permit has been approved by the commission. There will be charges for the permit and installation of the two tents and three trash barrels, totaling \$330. These are handled internally by the City through the museum's existing budget. There is a distinct advantage to having DPS set up the tents and take them down. The layout was reviewed and should be adequate for the planned event. Museum neighbors have received their notices about the upcoming event. Next month, the board will continue with planning for volunteers and the activities of the day.

New Business

Members considered the current public health situation regarding COVID and holding hybrid Museum Board meetings that permit the option for the public to attend Museum Board meetings via Zoom instead of in person. The board has been required to attend in person since December 31, 2021. A drawback to the hybrid Zoom/in-person format is that if the meeting has been posted as a hybrid meeting, and if there is a technology problem and the Zoom is not functional at the time of a scheduled meeting for any reason, the

meeting would have to be canceled and rescheduled. This could potentially delay important business and create a hardship for board members. In light of the lack of public attendance via Zoom in the past several months and the diminishing public health risk, the board discussed suspending the hybrid format at this time. If a public health risk re-emerges, the hybrid meeting format can be reconsidered.

MOTION: by Hughes, seconded by Harris:

To suspend the hybrid meeting format in favor of in-person attendance for future meetings of the Museum Board, beginning with the April, 2022 Museum Board meeting, currently scheduled for April 7, 2022.

VOTE: Yeas, 4
Nays, 0

Members discussed the role the board might play in any upcoming commemorative event for the expected designation of the Taylor and Fish burial sites to the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom listing. The museum has led the process thus far, and there are no other city entities as natural a fit to coordinate a public event as the Museum Board. Any such event is likely to be well attended by local officials, educators, and the general public and will bring additional recognition to the museum for its efforts to explore this important American story. Student representative J. Snyder-Phillipoff indicated that involvement among her peers at Seaholm would be significant and help create a greater positive experience for all. The timing is not certain, but approved designation is expected this month and planning for a Museum Board-led event would need to begin fairly soon thereafter.

MOTION: by Hughes, seconded by Logue:

That the Museum Board accept the responsibility to coordinate planning for a public event to celebrate the expected upcoming designation of the Taylor and Fish burial sites at Greenwood Cemetery, in collaboration with the city and other partner organizations, as appropriate.

VOTE: Yeas, 4
Nays, 0

Communication and Reports

Director Pielack provided updates to the Director Report. The commission approved the next step of final design services for the Parks' Rouge River trail improvements in association with park bond funding. These trail improvements will include, in addition to other trail improvements, the pathways and Rouge improvements as conceptualized in the museum's Master Landscape Plan along the museum's west border and adjacent

Rouge shoreline. Specialized trailheads will also be designed, and one is planned for the trail access just west of the museum's driveway. This project is for design only; construction would be expected at a later time. The Allen House window project has been posted for bidding, and potential bidders are expected for review at the next Museum Board meeting in April. If a Contractor is identified, the work is expected to take place this summer. The Greenwood Cemetery Board is taking up the formal evaluation and refining of the cemetery's rules, including a process whereby non-deed holders could apply to install a marker for historical reasons. When all the revised rules and regulations are ready, they will go to the commission for final approval. The museum is adding directional signage to guide visitors more effectively to the visitor door from the front porch, and to direct them to park in the Chester Street parking deck.

Chairperson Logue announced that the Friends' Heritage newsletter will be mailed out presently and includes a memorial article about Hartland Smith, who was instrumental in establishing the museum in 2001. Mr. Smith is responsible for a great number of significant items in the museum's collection.

There were no public comments.

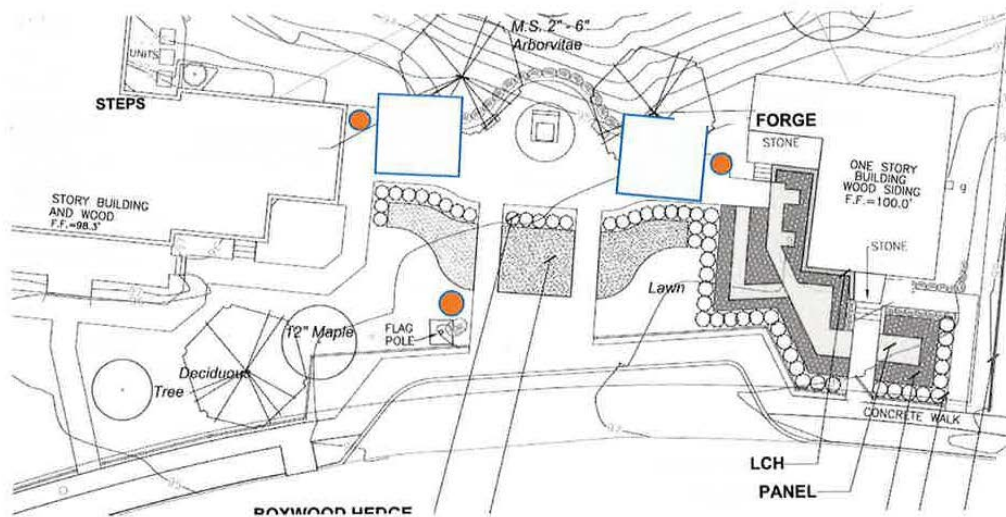
The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 7, at 5:00 PM.

Ms. Logue adjourned the meeting at 5:56 PM.

HERITAGE PLANT EXCHANGE June 4

Before Event:

- Postcard mailing
- Flyers at library-City Hall-Farmer's Market
- Promo on FB, Twitter, Website
- Press Release



Volunteers and Staff:

- 3-4 staff in Allen House and to provide tours of Hunter House
- 1-2 people at Shade Perennials tent
- 1-2 people at Sun Perennials tent
- 1 person at garden bed assisting with plant placement
- 1 person at table/station with plant labels, flyers, etc.: donations
- Jay at same table with hat/vest/Tshirt? "Master Gardener"

Set Up:

- Labeled stakes for donor plants in garden bed
- Sandwich board out early; other signage
- Table:
 - Sign in sheet
 - Plant labels, popsicle sticks, stapler, pencils/pens
 - Mounted board with Landscape Master Plan

Other:

- Photography (snapshots) of event
- Name badges/identifiers

About being listed in the National Park Service, National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program (NTF)

Established in 1998, the NTF coordinates commemoration, preservation, and education efforts surrounding the history of the Underground Railroad (UGRR), which it defines as “the resistance to enslavement through escape and flight.”

As part of its mission, the NTF is charged with developing a listing of sites, facilities, and programs with verifiable associations with the UGRR, referred to as the “Network to Freedom” or the “Network”. This is a separate designation from National Register listing. To be included in the Network, sites, facilities, and programs must be nominated through an application process. Applications are accepted twice a year on January 15th and July 15th.

Nominations are also required to have the consent of the owner, manager or director for inclusion in the Network. Therefore, a letter of consent must accompany the application. In order to further protect their interests, the owner can also specify that their information be kept confidential.

Network listing imposes no obligations and/or restrictions on property owners. However, those receiving grant assistance or federal tax credits for rehabilitation projects must adhere to certain standards.

Listing in the Network does:

- Provide prestigious national recognition.
- Verify that there is a documented association with the UGRR.
- Add to a national database of UGRR history.
- Encourage and support local preservation efforts.
- Provide opportunities for networking.
- Provide eligibility for NTF Grants.
- Provide access to technical assistance.
- Help promote tourism and economic development.
- Provide eligibility for National Park Service Passport Program.

Listing in the Network does not:

- Restrict use, alteration, treatment, transfer, sale, or disposition of private property.
- Require that properties be maintained, repaired or restored.
- Require public access to private property.

For more information (including the application and instructions), please visit:

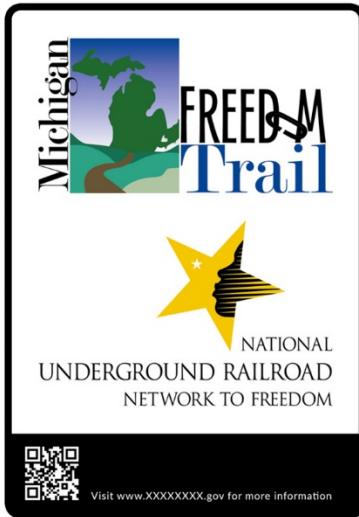
<http://www.nps.gov/ugrr/>

For questions/concerns, please contact:

Diane Miller
National Program Manager
4068 Golden Hill Road
Church Creek, Maryland 21622
410-221-2290, ext 1111
Diane_miller@nps.gov



NATIONAL
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
NETWORK TO FREEDOM



PROPOSED UNDERGROUND RAILROAD COMMEMORATION TO BE HOSTED BY MUSEUM BOARD

Focus—Emphasis on national significance and commemoration of struggle for freedom that involved our community from its beginnings

Scheduling

- 90 day miniSpecial Event Application which requires detailed plan
- Weekend, Sat or Sunday, 11 AM or 1 PM?
- Proposed location: Quarton Lake Park (one block west of cemetery)
- Police approved
- Large open space
- Sufficient parking

Speakers—Representative of Museum Board (Emcee)

- George Getschman, Jacquie Patt and/or Donna Casaceli (primary researchers)
- City Commission (Mayor)
- Michigan Freedom Trail Commissioner (TBD)
- Student representative from Black Student Union (Seaholm)
- ?Oakland County NAACP representative?

Program

- Approx ½ hr. program
- Walk to cemetery following program
 - Cemetery entry blocked to vehicles for event; volunteers/police directing pedestrians
 - Volunteers stationed at entrance of cemetery with handouts/brochures, at Taylors' location, at Fish's location
 - Museum staff, docents and/or students at gravesites interpreting site and answering questions
- Mobility challenged attendees permitted to enter cemetery for vehicle drive-through one-way at west entrance and guided through cemetery past both sites to exit



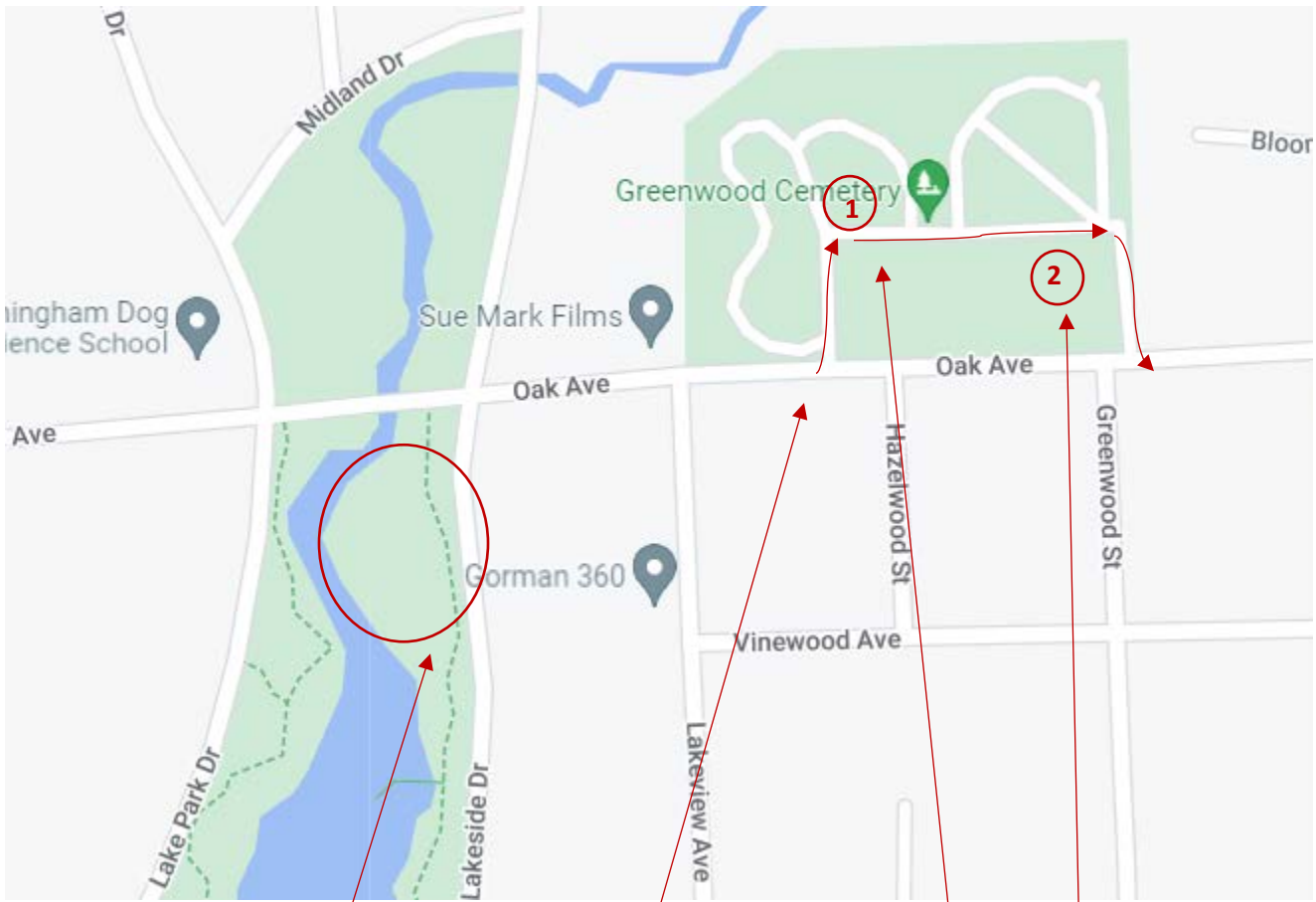
Audience

- General public
- Invited: descendants and family members
- Invited: local officials (City boards and administrative staff)
- Invited: local historical organizations/museums/academic professionals
- Invited: state, federal, and county officials
- Invited: media/press

Special Features

- ?Unveiling of sign at west cemetery entrance (by Museum Board rep or Mayor)?
- ? Grave markers installed at Taylor site?
- Launching of new mobile tour app featuring Taylors' and Fish's UGRR bios

Proposed Event Location/Plan



Proposed location of ceremony (DPS can install risers). Will accommodate several hundred if needed. Some benches available. Nice park setting with some shade. Ample parking along Lakeside for many vehicles.

One-way vehicle entry for mobility challenged visitors (police or volunteers at gates to direct)

Locations of
(1) George Taylor gravesite
(2) Elijah Fish gravesite

DATE: April 7, 2022
TO: Museum Board
FROM: Leslie Pielack, Museum Director
SUBJECT: Director Report

Taylor Marker Update—the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board is finalizing the process for application to install markers on historic gravesites by non-deed holders. The process will involve review at the Museum Director level, Clerk level, Museum Board, and GCAB before final approval. The rules will be approved by the commission hopefully sometime in May.

Hunter House—awaiting final estimates on painting the interior of the Hunter House. To bring the interior in line with our recent historical paint analysis and Interpretive Plan, the wallpaper is planned for removal, since it was installed in the 1970s and there is no evidence of wallpaper in those rooms, but ample evidence of painted finishes on the trims and doors. The goal will be to use a neutral wall color that will be compatible with the other rooms but to use trim colors that reflect the house's past.

Pond Zone Funding—To qualify for federal CDBG funding for the ADA-related in the Pond Zone, we are awaiting a final report for the Section 106 review required for this funding. We expect to get it sometime in April so we can be considered for 2023 funding.

Social Media Updates—We now have over 1200 Twitter followers, 1400+ Facebook followers, and over 1000 on Instagram, almost 3000 individuals who check in with us on a regular basis (these groups do not overlap much) and comprise a significant audience who are engaged with Birmingham's story.

Presentations/Interviews—

- Michigan Museums Association—Caitlin and Donna will be doing a presentation for the MMA discussing how the pandemic created opportunities for research that led to greater understanding of our local Black history; and ultimately, to our recognition of Birmingham's place in the history of the Underground Railroad
- Remaining presentations at the Baldwin Library for this year:
 - April –Birmingham-Shetland Pony Capital (Caitlin Donnelly)
 - May—Birmingham's Stories of War and Service (Donna Casaceli)
 - June—Juneteenth and Birmingham's Connection to the Underground Railroad

Encurate Virtual Tour App—in final development of two different themed tours that will provide content to support the 2nd grade curriculum on local history—one in the Hunter House and one for the Allen House (see examples in attachment). We are planning a special "**Saturdays in May**" program of free admission for adults who bring a student, use the new app and take a survey about it.

Heritage Zone Project: Trash Enclosure—the trash enclosure has been installed and is awaiting the installation of several species Clematis to provide a screen.

Collections Update—A relative has donated a small throw crocheted by Marion Allen, and we received Claire Benedict's childhood dresser from Bill Pickering. It has been put on display in the Hunter House front bedroom and will be interpreted in keeping with our Interpretation Plan.



Clara Benedict Chest of Drawers (1875-1885)

A popular style in the Victorian period, this small child's chest of drawers with maple and walnut detailing and drop pulls, usually described as Renaissance Revival. Clara Benedict was the daughter of John Eri and Ellen Benedict. The Benedicts lived in the Elijah S. Fish house on Woodward Avenue. Clara was a music teacher.

The Pickering Farm house in Franklin recently sold to developers, and the Pickering family was related to the Benedicts.

Its scale is child-sized, and as such it is a great addition to the children's bedroom in the Hunter House.

Encurate Virtual Tour App: Will be launched May 1. Free app that visitors can download and use to explore the Hunter House with various themed tours. This is the Student Tour.

The app can be adapted to the grounds, to Greenwood Cemetery, and to other sites if desired.

