



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD AGENDA
Thursday, June 1, 2023
5:00 PM**

**NOTE: JUNE MEETING IS AT
THE HUNTER HOUSE
550 W. MAPLE**

***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 May 4, 2023

4. New Business

- A. Update-Phase 1 and 2 ADA Parking and Path
- B. Update of Strategic and Interpretive Planning for Museum Site

5. Communication and Reports

- A. Director Report
- B. Member comments
- C. Public comments

6. Next Meeting: July 6, 2023

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.* 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, May 5, 2023
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Caroline Ashleigh (Alternate), Kristy Barrett, Bev Erickson, Alexandra Harris, Pat Hughes Marty Logue, Jay Shell

Members Absent: Judith Keefer

Student Members Present: Alexander Motea, Alexandra Schaufller

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: None.

Chairperson Logue called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

**Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of March 2, 2023**

MOTION: by Erickson, seconded by Shell:

To approve the minutes of March 2, 2023.

VOTE: Yeas, 7
Nays, 0

Minutes of April 13, 2023, Collections Subcommittee

MOTION: by Logue, seconded by Barrett:

To approve the minutes of the Collections Subcommittee for April 13, 2023.

VOTE: Yeas, 7
Nays, 0

New Business

The Museum Board reviewed the proposed school yearbook deaccession recommended by the Collections Subcommittee at their recent meeting. 85 yearbooks dating from 1919 to 1958 are being proposed to deaccession due to redundancy, poor condition, mold infestation, and storage issues. Removing these items from the permanent collection will permit efficient digitization for preservation and research purposes, provide copies for browsing, and reduce exposure of the remaining collection to mold deterioration. The remaining items are in the best condition, are the most appropriate to be maintained by the museum staff, and will benefit from improved storage, thus enhancing the collection.

MOTION: by Erickson, seconded by Logue:

To approve the yearbook deaccession recommended by the Museum Board Collection Subcommittee on April 13, 2023 and recommend final approval by the City Commission.

VOTE: Yeas, 7
Nays, 0

Communication and Reports

Several Museum Board members are up for renewal in July, and all intend to re-apply. Director Pielack updated members as to the status of the window restoration project and closure of the Allen House until June 15. She also provided an update regarding the Willits Street ADA Parking and Path project. Three contractors attended the pre-bid meeting and it is hoped that there will be two or three bids at the opening on May 19. The 2nd grade school tour program begins May 11 at the museum. It has been updated and other collaborations are planned with both public and private schools to provide content, resources, and presentations related to local history, especially diversity and area Underground Railroad heritage. Members discussed their interest in seeing the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board take up the matter of long term planning for cemetery marker preservation to prevent deterioration of the historic markers.

Member Comments

Ms. Harris shared her final watercolor portrait of George and Eliza Taylor, which is a rendering of a blurry sketch of the Taylors that was reproduced from an 1898 newspaper. The portrait is a fitting acknowledgement of their presence and importance to Birmingham history. Many thanks to Ms. Harris for her efforts, generosity, and expertise.

There were no public comments.

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 1, at 5:00 PM at the Hunter House. Ms. Logue adjourned the meeting at 5:47 PM.

DATE: June 1, 2023
TO: Museum Board
FROM: Leslie Pielack, Museum Director
SUBJECT: Director Report

Allen House Remains Closed to the Public until June 15—Since we closed the Allen House on May 1, we have had a good showing of visitors, even though only the Hunter House is open.

Allen House Windows, Phase II—The window casings have been stripped and repaired, and all the lead mitigation is complete. The next phase on site is repainting the casings in preparation for receiving the restored windows, which should take place toward the end of the summer. Finally, historically appropriate storm windows will be installed before winter.

Podcast—“Birmingham, Uncovered” has now launched two episodes and has been promoted through press releases and Facebook. It has also received a five star review so far! . The first two episodes are “A Tale of Two Fish,” episodes 1 (regarding the 1825 ax murder of the Utter women by Imri Fish) and 2 (the story of the altogether different brother of Imri-Elijah-who was at the heart of Birmingham’s anti-slavery movement).

Second Grade School Tour Program—This year’s new format of taking small groups (5-7) of children through the Hunter House with a museum staff person as guide has been a great success. Students are engaged, ask good questions, and teachers prepared their classes for the experience. In at least one case, teachers used our pandemic-era video tours of the Hunter House to orient the students to their site visit. The diversity theme has been effective as well.

Juneteenth Exhibit at City Hall—Our first portable exhibit will be on display during June to commemorate Juneteenth. The display features our local UGRR heritage and the stories of Elijah Fish and the Taylors, and features Alexandra Harris’ watercolor rendering of the Taylors. The banner will be available for use at other community sites in the future.

Greenwood Cemetery Preservation—The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board will be handling preservation questions about the cemetery and its historic areas as the board works through its strategic plan in the coming months. The final plan will detail/make specific recommendations to the City Commission, which would likely include cemetery-wide preservation as part of ongoing maintenance. Funding and city administration of activities at Greenwood (such as preservation and maintenance) would be determined in accordance with the plan, and may include private funding efforts-TBD.

FindAGrave digital access to Greenwood Burials--The museum’s role for Greenwood will continue to be maintaining historic information on burial information. We will be launching our FindAGrave policy for the digital memorials sometime in the fall. We have received transfers of approximately 25% of the 3000 memorial files as part of this project.

Yearbook Deaccession Approved by Commission—At their meeting on 5/22/2023, the city commission approved the deaccession of the yearbook materials by a unanimous vote.

New (Old!) Collection Items: In processing some older groups of materials found in our collection, we found clippings and photos that relate to the mounted era of the Birmingham Police Department during the 1990s.



Kali is featured in this 1996 photo with BPD Commander Richard Dimock.