



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
MUSEUM BOARD AGENDA  
556 W MAPLE  
Thursday, September 7, 2023  
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 August 3, 2023

Minutes of the Collections Subcommittee Meeting of August 30, 2023

**4. Unfinished Business**

A. Museum Site Interpretive Plan, continued

**5. New Business**

A. Collections Subcommittee Deaccession Recommendation (Family items)

**6. Communication and Reports**

A. Director Report

B. Member comments

C. Public comments

**7. Next Meeting: October 5, 2023**

**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](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.

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**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
MUSEUM BOARD MEETING  
556 W. Maple  
Thursday, August 8, 2023  
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Caroline Ashleigh, Alexandra Harris, Judith Keefer, Marty Logue, Jay Shell  
Members Absent: Kristy Barrett (Alternate), Bev Erickson, Pat Hughes  
Student Members Present: Alexander Motea  
Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack  
Guests: None

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by temporary chair, Ms Logue.

**Election of Chair**

Nominations were made for Chair for FY 2023-2024. Ms. Logue was the sole nominee.

**MOTION:** by Keefer, seconded by Harris:

To approve Marty Logue as Chair for FY 2023-2024.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 5  
Nays, 0

**Approval of the Minutes  
Minutes of July 6, 2023**

**MOTION:** by Keefer, seconded by Harris:

To approve the minutes of July 6, 2023.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 5  
Nays, 0

**New Business**

Members reviewed interpretive plan recommendations from museum staff as to identified/listed historic and cultural resources for the final plan of the museum site (excluding the Hunter House). After discussion and clarification, the following historic and cultural resources were established by consensus:

1. Allen House (the Hunter House has a separate Interpretive Plan)
2. Grounds
  - a. Pool
    - i. Natural springs/environmental importance
    - ii. Allen swimming pool; Jim Allen's polio history
    - iii. Wildlife, native plantings
  - b. Gardens

- i. Heritage plants
    - ii. Water gardens for storm water management
    - iii. Pathways
  - c. Walls-19th century
  - d. Rouge River
- 3. Hill School Bell and structure
- 4. Main museum sign
- 5. Permanent collection
  - a. Audio/visual materials
  - b. Born digital/digital only objects
  - c. 2-D objects and archives
    - i. Documents, books, and ledgers
    - ii. Photos
    - iii. Creem Magazine archives
    - iv. Vertical files and information
  - d. 3-D objects
- 6. Use collection
- 7. Greenwood Cemetery and digital FindAGrave files
- 8. Traveling exhibit materials
- 9. Professional staff and trained volunteers

The atypical inclusion of the signage was explained by Director Pielack as a reference to the effect the sign and logo has had on conveying the site's components and importance to the community. Additional discussion focused on the valuable resources of our professional staff and trained volunteers, and that identifying them for the purpose of the interpretive plan helps to recognize how important they are to our interpretive process.

### **Communication and Reports**

Director Pielack provided updates to the Director's Report and shared traditionally crafted Anishnaabe baskets that were recently donated to the museum's collection to help interpret the local Indigenous People who occupied the area before Birmingham was settled. The items are not antique, but are traditionally made, making them historically valuable to the museum. The Collections Subcommittee will meet August 30, 2023 to review recommended deaccession for the Wong family of personal items that were originally donated from an estate sale. If approved by the Collections Subcommittee, the Museum Board agreed to include the item on the agenda for the September meeting.

### **Member Comments**

None.

### **Public Comments**

None.

**The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 7, at 5:00 PM.** Ms. Logue adjourned the meeting at 5:56 PM.



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
MUSEUM BOARD  
COLLECTIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING  
556 W. Maple  
Wednesday, August 30, 2023  
1:00 PM**

Subcommittee Members Present: Judith Keefer, Jay Shell

Members Absent: Caroline Ashleigh

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack, Museum Specialist Donna Casaceli

Guests: None

There being no chair, the meeting was called to order by consensus at 1:00 PM.

**New Business**

Museum Specialist Casaceli and Museum Director Pielack summarized the proposed deaccession of a portion of materials from a family collection. The family requested the return of the items after they learned that the items were unintentionally donated to the museum. The requested items include photos and childhood mementoes, and as they have been digitized by the museum, are considered redundant and appropriate for return as requested.

**MOTION:** by Keefer, seconded by Shell:

To approve the recommended deaccession to return a portion of original items to the family.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 2  
Nays, 0

**The next meeting of the Collections Subcommittee of the Museum Board will be scheduled as needed.** The meeting adjourned at 1:11 PM.

# Museum Site Interpretive Planning, Part III (September)

## Established Objectives:

1. *Enhancement of visitor experience*
  - a. *Engagement opportunities*
  - b. *Educational experiences*
2. *Enhancement of collection and historical resources*
  - a. *Artifacts*
  - b. *Information*
3. *Increased community support*
  - a. *Manpower/volunteer resources*
  - b. *Financial donations*
4. *Civic engagement/partnerships*

## Established Interpretive Themes:

1. *Glacial landscape, Rouge River, and Indigenous Peoples*
  - a. *Physical characteristics of site, landscape, and region*
  - b. *Importance of Native American occupation and relationships*
  - c. *Saginaw Trail, early settlement*
2. *Building of Birmingham; expansion from village to city*
  - a. *Agriculture*
  - b. *Manufacturing*
  - c. *Commerce*
  - d. *Shaping of Birmingham; role in Oakland County*
    - i. *Early schools*
    - ii. *W.D. Clizbe/Village*
    - iii. *Harry/Marion Allen*
    - iv. *Allen House, pool and polio*
3. *19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century culture and everyday life*
  - a. *Adult and children roles*
  - b. *Migration*
  - c. *Foodways*
  - d. *Cultural change*
4. *20<sup>th</sup> century preservation/conservation movement; how the community's needs changed over time*

## Established Historic and Cultural Resources

1. *Allen House (the Hunter House has a separate Interpretive Plan)*
2. *Grounds*
  - a. *Pool*
    - i. *Natural springs/environmental importance*
    - ii. *Allen swimming pool; Jim Allen's polio history*
    - iii. *Wildlife, native plantings*
  - b. *Gardens*
    - i. *Heritage plants*
    - ii. *Water gardens for storm water management*
    - iii. *Pathways*
  - c. *Walls-19<sup>th</sup> century*
  - d. *Rouge River*
3. *Hill School Bell and structure*
4. *Main museum sign*

1. *Permanent collection*
  - a. *Audio/visual materials*
  - b. *Born digital/digital only objects*
  - c. *2-D objects and archives*
    - i. *Documents, books, and ledgers*
    - ii. *Photos*
    - iii. *Creem Magazine archives*
    - iv. *Vertical files and information*
  - d. *3-D objects*
2. *Use collection*
3. *Greenwood Cemetery and digital FindAGrave files*
4. *Traveling exhibit materials*
5. *Professional staff and trained volunteers*

## Methodology and Implementation

- Physical features of site and Allen House
  - Preservation/restoration/reconstruction
  - Public access development/expansion
- Themes and story-based content
  - Interactive media and virtual content
    - Social media
    - Video/audio materials/podcast
    - Exhibits and online materials and resources (incl digital access)
  - Programs/lectures/tours-adult and children, on and off-site, virtual and physical
  - Print (e.g., brochures, educational materials, booklets)
  - Traveling exhibits and off-site displays
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Evaluation

- Review data and adjust plan regularly; every 3 to five years, as conditions change.

## Final Checklist

An effective interpretive plan for the Museum Site would help achieve the following:

- Identify physical improvements or budgetary needs
- 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 museum, Birmingham, and its stories
- Demonstrate preparedness and planning to potential funders

## Object Deaccession Record



Object/Title: Family archive collection (partial) Object ID Number(s): 2020.37.1

Justification for deaccessioning:

- ☐ Out of scope
- ☐ Poor condition/loss of integrity
- ☒ Redundant
- ☐ Storage, display, or conservation needed exceed resources
- ☐ Non-legal possession
- ☐ Fake, forgery, or reproduction
- ☐ Enhancement of remaining collection

Remarks: Family has requested the return of several items that have been digitized due to unintentional donation of the original items.

Restrictions: ☒ None

Donor or IRS

[Signature] 8-18-2023

Signed: Museum Staff

Date

Approved by Museum Director (date) 8/18/2023

Reviewed by Collections Subcommittee (date) 8/30/2023 Approved by Museum Board (date) \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by City Commission (date) \_\_\_\_\_

### Method of Disposition (if approved by City Commission)

☐ Transferred

Recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Shipped via: \_\_\_\_\_ Picked up: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Sold

Recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date sold: \_\_\_\_\_ Sale price: \_\_\_\_\_

Shipped via: \_\_\_\_\_ Picked up: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Destroyed

Method: \_\_\_\_\_

Removal of object ID# (date) \_\_\_\_\_

PastPerfect, individual object, and deaccession records complete: (date) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: (museum staff) \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: (Museum Director) \_\_\_\_\_



Date: 08/18/2023

**Proposed Deaccession for:** 2020.37.1 - partial deaccession

Reason for Deaccession:

The accession 2020.37 is a collection of personal items once belonging to a family who resided in Birmingham. Several items that were part of the accession were unintentionally released by the family. The family has asked for the return of several of these personal items. All the information contained within the items requested have been digitized, making the physical materials redundant. In light of this redundancy, museum staff recommend the return of the requested items.

Museum Staff: Donna Casaceli

Title: Museum Specialist / Archivist



**List of items to be deaccessioned:**

1. Three photographs
2. High School diploma
3. Baby book (record of 1<sup>st</sup> year) and contents
4. Four personal letters/correspondence
5. Postcard invitation
6. Commencement book for graduation
7. Commencement announcement/invitation and contents
8. National Honor Society Patch for a jacket
9. Huckleberry Hound children's book

All original items have been digitized and separated. Copies of the originals have been placed back into the collection for reference.



## Director Report

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**DATE:** September 7, 2023  
**TO:** Museum Board  
**FROM:** Leslie Pielack, Museum Director  
**SUBJECT:** Director Report

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Allen House Windows, Phase II—The windows are done and are awaiting their storm windows, which will be installed this fall. Museum exhibits have been put back into place with the exception of the Creem room.

Construction of Phase 1 and 2 of the ADA/Barrier Free parking and path has been delayed due to weather and will begin by mid-September. It will be a two-day project or so, weather depending.

Podcast—"Birmingham, Uncovered" has been building momentum with increasing numbers of downloads on both regular podcasting platforms as well as YouTube plays, which at this point are exceeding 400 for 9 episodes. According to Caitlin, the podcast is doing very well for the scope of our museum and its size, and our expected audience for Birmingham history. The City of Birmingham created a video of Caitlin in the studio and an interview with her that is a fun intro to our podcast and should raise even more interest. You can find the city's video on its YouTube channel/educational video series at ([www.youtube.com/birminghammi](http://www.youtube.com/birminghammi)) and at [www.bhamgov.org/watch](http://www.bhamgov.org/watch). It will also be included in the September Around Town e-Newsletter and posted on the City's Facebook and Instagram pages.

Oakland County's UGRR History-Phase 2 grant application—the museum is proposing an extension of the current project for another year. Phase 2 would include all of the county, and would enhance the outcomes to include 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade lesson plans in Michigan and U.S. History, as well as create a publication that would be distributed free to schools, libraries, and historical societies. The Friends are supporting the effort with additional funds, and partners in the project expansion include Oakland (Intermediate) Schools, which will provide teacher access to the lesson plans.

Exhibit Update—We will be creating a group of stories relating to Birmingham and Southfield Township's connections to each other and to UGRR activity in an extension of our ongoing exhibit. The joint materials will be used by each of our museum sites in our displays.

Special Visitor to Creem Exhibit—Rock critic Steve di Martino, who wrote for *Creem* after 1979, recently dropped by on a visit to town because he had heard good things about our exhibit. Di Martino, who lives in L.A., is considering donating some cool materials he has from his *Creem* days. Our fingers are crossed!

Collection Update—We have been the recipient of additional generous donations from a local Anishnaabe traditional basket collector and will be organizing a plan to feature the baskets and their indigenous history. Stay tuned!

## MARKER DESCRIPTION

Name/s	Utter Family Marker
Inscription	1-"Polly/wife of/John Utter/Died/in1825/Aged 44 years", 2-"Cyntha/dau of J&P Utter/ Died/in 1825/Aged 13 years" 3-"John Utter/Died/in 1827/Aged/46 Years'
Material	Marble (obelisk)
Location	Section A, Lot 47

## TREATMENT

Original condition	Marker leaning; soiled, and moss/lichen in places; John Utter inscription partially worn away but legible
Treatment used	all four surfaces cleaned and marker leveled
Service provider	Carter's Cemetery Preservation, Commerce Twp, ccpreservation.com/
Date completed:	6/19/2023
Individual/organization responsible for cost of services:	Museum Friends

## OTHER COMMENTS

Monument was singled out with Fish marker for preservation due to its importance and the threat of further leaning due to heaving if left unleveled.



Signed *Heidi* Date 8/31/2023

## MARKER DESCRIPTION

Name/s	Elijah S. Fish
Inscription	"Elijah S. Fish/Born/Feb 11, 1791/Died/Feb 28, 1861"
Material	Marble
Location	Section B, Lot 37, Grave 2

## TREATMENT

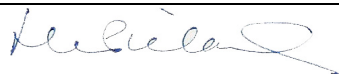
Original condition	Foundation slab buried; marker cracked and lying flat (face up); previous repairs evident, including outside metal bracket; bottom third of marble deteriorated; soiled
Treatment used	surface cleaned, metal strap removed, foundation located 2 feet down, reinstalled with pea gravel for drainage; marble cut to sound material to re-attach
Service provider	Carter's Cemetery Preservation, Commerce Twp, ccpreservation.com/
Date completed:	6/19/2023
Individual/organization responsible for cost of services:	Museum Friends/Fish family

## OTHER COMMENTS

Damaged section when removed also removed inscription "Died/Feb. 28, 1861." This piece has been put in storage at museum for possible transfer to Fish descendants.



Signed



Date 8/31/2023