



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD MEETING
556 W. Maple
Thursday, July 6, 2023
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Caroline Ashleigh, Bev Erickson, Alexandra Harris, Marty Logue

Members Absent: Pat Hughes, Judith Keefer, Jay Shell

Student Members Present: Alexander Motea

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 June 1, 2023**

MOTION: by Ashleigh, seconded by Logue:

To approve the minutes of June 1, 2023.

VOTE: Yeas, 4
Nays, 0

New Business

Members reviewed interpretive planning issues relating to the museum site (with the exception of the Hunter House, which has its own Interpretive Plan) of the grounds/landscape, Allen House and former schoolhouse site, and actual physical and digital objects in the museum's permanent collection. For the first two steps in the process, museum staff proposed overall objectives and key interpretive themes that offer cohesiveness and consistency to our overall interpretive activities. After discussion and clarification, the following objectives were established by consensus:

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

The following interpretive themes were established by consensus:

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. Clizbe/Village
 - iii. Harry/Marion Allen
 - iv. Allen House, pool and polio
3. 19th to 21st century culture and everyday life
 - a. Adult and children roles
 - b. Migration
 - c. Foodways
 - d. Cultural change
4. Preservation/conservation movement; how a community's needs change over time

Communication and Reports

Director Pielack clarified that the museum's strategic plan would not need to be reviewed and updated until the end of 2023, rather than this year as she previously announced. The Hunter House Interpretive Plan, however, is due for review and updating at the end of this year.

Member Comments

Ms. Ashleigh inquired about the potential marker for the Elijah Fish burial site that would perhaps have a QR code and a small amount of text to explain the designation of the site and the repair/restoration of the grave marker. She was curious about whether there is a city-wide program of any kind to install signage at historic sites. The museum currently does not have such a program; the Historic District Commission has been looking at various designation opportunities and a number of years ago there was a program that installed signage on some of the commercial buildings downtown. Ms. Erickson inquired about whether there are multi-community programs that maintain the Rouge River; however at this time, each municipality handles this individually.

Public Comments

Ms. Barrett announced that she has applied for the Alternate Museum Board position and will be interviewed by the City Commission at their next meeting.

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 3, at 5:00 PM.

Ms. Logue adjourned the meeting at 5:53 PM.