



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
MUSEUM BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, September 7, 2017  
5:30 PM**

Members Present: Lori Eaton, Judith Keefer, Tina Krizanic, Marty Logue, Caitlin Rosso

Student Members Present: Hannah Sandler

Members Absent: James Cunningham, Russ Dixon

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: Brian Devlin, Devlin Nagy Land Designs

Guest and Board Members introduced themselves.

**Approval of the Minutes  
Minutes of August 3, 2017**

**MOTION:** by Rosso, seconded by Keefer:

To approve the minutes of August 3, 2017.

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

**Announcements**

None.

**Unfinished Business**

A. Historical landscape architect, Brian Devlin, shared his concept plan for the landscape based on existing conditions and members' priorities for the four landscape zones. His recommendations include the following:

Heritage Zone:

- Replace inappropriate specimen trees, such as Norway maple, with hybrid elms
- Provide space on the front and side of the Hunter House for a parlor garden with low screening hedge
- Utilize garden space for educational gardens, possibly with vegetables and historically appropriate flowers
- Potential for crowd-sourced perennials and community engagement

Transition Zone:

- Plant new hybrid elms to reconstruct landscape elements from Allen period and earlier
- Repair historic stone wall as needed

- Retain mature spruce until/unless it begins to die
- Replace existing wood steps with wider concrete steps and rock walls; provide landings for rest areas with possible seating

Pond Zone:

- Provide at least 2 parallel parking spots along Willits (handicapped)
- Barrier free access with crushed limestone path on east side of pond and along south side
- Path to widen into seating area at existing light pole
- Path to extend across lawn to west edge of property for Rouge overlook with rock retaining walls
- At pond, reconstruct or reveal concrete edges of original pool. Add wood boardwalk along eastern edge across area for viewing pool and create garden on east side
  - A bog garden can support plants for birds, bees, butterflies and bats and provide unique natural environment
  - A rain garden of water tolerant natural plants could also be effective in that space
  - Actual requirements of railing along the boardwalk, if any, will depend on the final boardwalk location, nature of shoreline, etc.
- On south side of pond, path would meet a paved area at edge of former pool, requiring a railing. The railing would extend across historic pool edge and would optimize viewing, e.g., Plexiglas or cabled, etc. for high visibility
- Pathway will require grading and retaining rock walls to meet ADA slope requirements
- At old stairs to Willits, replacing or repairing existing stairs would be preferable to installing accessible path at that point due to steep grade.
- Remainder of existing lawn to remain lawn, with additional specimen hybrid elms.

Riverine Zone:

- Repair historic stone wall along west side of drive and below Allen House; add scatter boulders below west wall to help retain soil and protect repaired wall from future erosion
- Invasive species eradication program
- Add some new plantings

Access to river is part of the Rouge master plan, so any recommendations in that regard need to be made in the Parks master planning process.

Museum Board members discussed the opportunities for developing funding initiatives, e.g., buying a tree, bench, etc.; ADA construction may be grant-compatible or improve eligibility for other funding, and agreed that the pond zone has the greatest promise for getting community interest and grant funding.

## **Communication and Reports**

A. Joint Bicentennial Book Committee Report-a public survey has been created that will be launched around September 15 electronically and on paper in four city locations to get public feedback about the form and content of a bicentennial publication. An article will appear in the Eagle on September 13, and the survey is now live.

- B. Museum Director Pielack provided updates to her report. The Allen House siding project is underway and may take about a month, depending on weather.
- C. Ms. Rosso will be checking on possible engineering contacts for finding out more about the pond survey, and Ms. Eaton offered to investigate how hydrotherapy may have been undertaken at the time of the pool as part of potential planning.
- D. There were no public comments.

Board members discussed the need for a Special Meeting before the next scheduled meeting. This would allow additional needed discussion to finalize the Museum master landscape plan within the expected time frame of the Parks master plan, to better coordinate joint planning. A Special Meeting will be scheduled for September 21, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. to review Mr. Devlin's recommendations.

Ms. Krizanic adjourned the meeting at 7:11 p.m.