



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

Members Present: James Cunningham, Russ Dixon, Lori Eaton, Tina Krizanic, Marty Logue

Student Members Present: Hanna Sandler

Members Absent: Judith Keefer, Caitlin Rosso

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: Brian Devlin, Devlin Nagy Land Designs

**Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of September 7, 2017**

MOTION: by Cunningham, seconded by Eaton:

To approve the minutes of September 7, 2017.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

Minutes of September 21, 2017

MOTION: by Dixon, seconded by Logue:

To approve the minutes of September 21, 2017.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

Announcements

None.

Unfinished Business

A. Historical landscape architect, Brian Devlin, shared his revised concept plan for the landscape based on discussion from the last meeting. The revised plan involves the Heritage, Transition, and Riverine areas and incorporates components of the Rouge Corridor Master Plan. Mr. Devlin will be deferring the concept design for the area around the pond until he has received the results of the pond survey. At that time, he will bring the completed plan to the Museum Board for final approval.

In general, Mr. Devlin's conceptual plan was well received by the Museum Board. It includes a proposed plant list for trees, shrubs, and smaller plantings as well as examples of a crushed limestone path, fieldstone wall and wood frame cabled fencing treatment. In addition, the draft plan includes detail of proposed boulder retaining wall and wood hand rail. Stone walls and edging can be of varied levels of refinement as needed for the application and use.

In the riverine zone, Mr. Devlin included 1) a pathway extension along the west side of the lawn area adjacent to the Allen House, 2) an observation overlook deck at the river, 3) a boardwalk to the deck and 4) a wood chip path, all derived from the existing 2006 Rouge Corridor Master Plan. The Rouge plan's pathway would allow for boulder retaining walls and stabilization of the slope. Eradication of invasive plants and restoration program will also be needed.

His concept plan includes added features of large boulders near the river and an extension of the existing historic fieldstone wall along the west lawn boundary. The wall extension if proposed to be a dry stack wall to distinguish it from the existing historic stone wall, as required by the Secretary of the Interior Standards for historic sites. The Museum Board was in agreement that the overlook deck was desirable, but that the boardwalk should connect with the existing chip path along the river, and that a barrier-free access to the wood deck from Willits was a desirable feature. These changes will reflect ADA accessibility and compatibility with the overall museum landscape plan, and Mr. Devlin will incorporate these changes to enable the Museum Board to include these recommendations for execution of the Rouge plan.

In the heritage zone, Mr. Devlin extended the boxwood screening all the way to the picket fence and provided for grass panels/pathways in the garden interior. The gardens can be sized as needed, depending on planned programs and use, and the existing picket fencing to be replaced with same. Removal of box elder and grapevine is needed.

In the transition zone, Mr. Devlin included a leveled green lawn area at the base of the stone and concrete steps to allow for informal gatherings. He recommended the elm cultivar 'Valley Forge' as replacement for the American elms that were removed in 2016.

In the pond zone, the Rouge Corridor Master Plan includes an access path from the existing concrete steps at Willits, south across the lawn. The Museum Board would like to eliminate that path in the final concept plan. The overlook platform at the lower end of the landscape would be accessed by the original idea of a crushed limestone path leading from the pond to the light pole seating area and west to the edge of the lawn at the chip path to the river. In addition, Mr. Devlin presented two different railing options for visibility-one with cabling and a wood frame, and one with clear acrylic or plexiglas vertical slats. Maintenance and durability were concerns expressed by the Museum Board with the clear slats; they would like Mr. Devlin to use the wood frame and cable version in the final design.

The Museum Board agreed with Director Pielack that, following the Museum Board's final approval of the concept plan, input from city staff in engineering, building, and

planning would be helpful. Following that, a joint workshop/discussion with the Historic District Commission and the Parks Board would be beneficial, after which a public meeting can be held to gather public feedback before Historic District Commission review and the final recommendations for approval by the City Commission. It may not be possible to include the document with the Parks Master Plan, depending on the data still needed about the pond and other factors.

Communication and Reports

- A. Joint Bicentennial Book Committee Report-a public survey is collecting data and response has been very good. A broad range of ages and backgrounds is reflected in the survey responses. Tendencies show preferences for pictures of people and places and a coffee table book and self-guided tour materials, but there is interest in almost all the formats and subject areas.
- B. Museum Director Pielack provided updates to her report and will follow up on Mr. Devlin's suggestion of 'Valley Forge' as a replacement elm tree.
- C. Mr. Cunningham suggested a letter be sent to the Eagle Scout who coordinated the fence project on behalf of the museum.
- D. There were no public comments.

Depending on the pond survey report and Mr. Devlin's final concept plan, there may be another special meeting needed before the next scheduled Museum Board meeting on November 2. Director Pielack will contact board members if that is the case. All email communications to board members will now bear the reminder not to 'replay all' so as not to unintentionally violate the Open Meetings Act.

Ms. Krizanic adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.