



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, November 21, 2019
5:30 PM**

Members Present: Russ Dixon, Dan Haugen, Pat Hughes, Judith Keefer (left at 6:45),
Tina Krizanic, Marty Logue

Members Absent: Caitlin Rosso

Student Members Present: None

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: Jay Shell of the Museum Friends Board (Friends Board Members
Leslie Mio and George Getschman arrived at 6:30 PM for the
scheduled discussion of New Business B)

Ms. Krizanic called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

**Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of October 10, 2019**

MOTION: by Dixon, seconded by Keefer:

To approve the minutes of September 4, 2019 as amended.

VOTE: Yeas, 6
Nays, 0

Unfinished Business

A. Board members reviewed the final draft of the Hunter House Interpretive Plan. Mr. Dixon suggested some additional information be added to the historical background. Ms. Keefer remarked that she liked the layout with bold headings to make the document easier to read. Ms. Krizanic noted that she appreciated the inclusion of historic images.

MOTION: by Haugen, seconded by Keefer:

To approve the Hunter House Interpretive Plan as submitted and amended.

VOTE: Yeas, 6
Nays, 0

- B. Board members considered Museum Director Pielack's proposal to reconsider moving forward on raising funds and pursuing the construction of the Heritage Zone plan with a modification of the new museum sign. The structure for the sign can be built but the specific logo and text would be temporary using the current design until the new museum logo can be mounted in its place. This will permit a renewed focus on the objective of making improvements that the public can use right away, and that fundraising efforts can target. The Board agreed by consensus with this direction and agreed to address this in more detail as part of ongoing meeting agendas.

New Business

- A. The Museum Board reviewed the proposed meeting schedule for 2020 and agreed the alternative July meeting date of July 9 rather than July 2 was preferable.

MOTION: by Dixon, seconded by Keefer:

To approve the 2020 Museum Board meeting schedule as proposed.

VOTE: Yeas, 6
Nays, 0

- B. The discussion of a joint event with the Museum Friends was deferred until the scheduled time of 6:30.

Communication and Reports

Director Pielack provided additional detail to the Director Report. The museum website has been modified to allow posting of the popular presentation videos and video shorts. In addition, the museum has a password protected open WiFi option for our visitors that will make utilization of tour apps more functional and effective. Mr. Haugen and Mr. Hughes reported on the opportunities and issues of developing a touring app for the Hunter House based on a recent discussion with museum staff. The need to approach this concept as a pilot project that would work with content the museum staff expect to develop anyway suggests a lower level of features initially (pending approval of funds by the Friends). There are various vendors who provide comparable apps, but the Encurate app has the easiest to apply features without a long-term contract if it doesn't work out. Director Pielack shared graphics and flyers relating to next year's exhibit and presentations, including a month-long special exhibit at the Hunter House, "**A Peek at Christmas Past: A Hunter House Look at the Holidays**" based on photos and materials in the collection relating to Christmas in Birmingham in the past. An incentive for Friends membership will include a complimentary set of reproduction vintage Christmas post cards in our collection. Based on visitor response, these could be sold in the future if there is a demand, as they are produced in house. The video series "**What Were They Thinking?**" is getting lots of positive attention. Members mentioned the possibility of future outreach that would involve cooking classes sponsored by area markets that may want to explore historic dishes and cooking methods. Director Pielack also shared additional information about completing the above-ground and below-

ground work at the Hunter House in the next construction season. Two separate RFPs will be developed and posted in December, with a timeline for bid review and contract proposal to the commission by mid to late March, with late April or May start of construction.

Ms. Logue reported on the positive experience of attending the Martha Baldwin induction ceremony, also attended by Mr. Haugen and several representatives from the city commission, library, and Baldwin Park boards. It was very well done and appreciated by all in attendance.

There were no public comments.

New Business, con't (Joint Meeting)

B. The Museum Board and Friends Board discussed ways of working together to support the Friends' fundraising efforts. The Heritage Zone objective was agreed upon as a concrete project that can be used to structure attempts at raising funds. Connecting with community resources was also discussed. In particular, Mr. Shell and the boards discussed working with his neighborhood association, of which he is President, to offer a complimentary 6-month membership in the Friends with their annual neighborhood association renewal in May. Association members could opt out, but otherwise would receive a special membership card to visit the museum and a copy of the Heritage newsletter. The Friends would be able to add their names to the regular renewal in December and potentially get renewing members. This pilot project would help the Friends in planning how to meet the needs of new members and possibly expanding this effort into other neighborhood associations. Mr. Gestschman suggested that having materials and handouts about historic resources would be helpful during cemetery tours. Further discussion included a strolling event that could be held to bring visitors and attention to the museum during the summer construction process along Maple Road. The event could consist of several merchant sites in downtown that can be tied in to our theme of celebrating women and Birmingham history, e.g., woman-owned businesses, buildings associated with historic women, and perhaps even wine or food developed by women business owners or chefs. Director Pielack has asked to be included on the agenda of the Birmingham Shopping District marketing committee in January to seek their support with this concept. Mr. Hughes recently participated in a similar event held in Detroit and will reach out to their planning team to get pointers or suggestions. An important component would be starting at the museum and handling all ticket revenue here. A final concept was mentioned regarding a separate event that could be held at the Big Rock in their Terrace Room, an affordable room in a historic building that could be an advantage for a fundraiser.

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 5 at the regular time of 5:00 PM.

Ms. Krizanic adjourned the meeting at 7:40 PM.