



Approved Minutes
Quarterly Board of Trustees Meeting
Executive Conference Room
2500 West Broad Street

October 17th, 2019
3:00 pm

Present: Dr. Richard Groover, Amy Laufer, Molly Joseph Ward, David Mills, Elsa Falls, Glenn Davidson, Lauren Mathena (Teleconference)

Staff: Richard Conti, Ada Sue Siler, Courtney Moyer, Elizabeth Voelkel, Reggie Wilson, Kinsey Peeler

Other Attendees: Cynthia Norwood, Virginia State Attorney General's Office

Mr. Davidson called the meeting to order at 3:14pm.

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Davidson welcomed the Board members in attendance and noted that a quorum was not present. This meeting will serve as an educational session.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Davidson asked the Board to review the June 13th, 2019 meeting minutes, but noted that they would be unable to approve them due to the absence of quorum.

Ms. Norwood mentioned that it is very important that all Trustees are present at the Board meetings in order to reach a quorum. Without a quorum, motions and resolutions cannot be passed, therefore delaying progress of Museum operations. Mr. Davidson and Dr. Groover echoed these concerns.

Green Space Overview

Mr. Conti highlighted the following:

- The Museum has \$110M of capital projects ongoing
- Strategic planning could be an avenue to get people reconnected to the Museum.

- The Museum is going to accept a bid on the Parking Deck within the next few weeks.
 - Stephen Blashfield and Glave and Holmes have done a great job of creating a plan for this schematic design
 - The Foundation is taking the lead to fundraise for this project
- The deck is funded by the state, it's about a \$14M project, including enough money to remove the asphalt.

Mr. Blashfield outlined the following details for the schematic design of the Green Space project:

- The Master Site Plan was updated in 2018.
- The plan includes 6 acres of green space
- The parking deck has been authorized by the State through the legislative process, it is currently in the process of going through the final review so that it can go out to bid.
- The Green Space is intended to be a place for people to informally engage with the Museum.
- This space is going to be something special for all of Richmond as well as the Museum.
- The space will maintain the Museum as its core, and will respect the history of the building as both a museum and train station.
- The front paving will be replaced, and make the Earth and Moon kugels more central and visible features.
- There is a bid out to create a million-dollar piece of art, the deadline is in the next couple of days for submissions
- The garden will have a relaxed environment with rolling hills and open spaces that people can relax in
- The space will be bookended the with larger trees as a buffer between the space and the McDonald's and the DMV parking lots
- Each of the corners are going to have an entrance, and will likely have another piece of art at each of the main corners to invite people in
- All of the landscape will be Virginia native species, this is part of the Museum's values and will also help keep landscaping low-maintenance, and colorful year-round
- The design is inspired by Bryant Park; it will be a well-lit space with low-profile seating
- The space will be less of a big open lawn and more intimate, engaging, and dynamic
- There will be permeable pavement for the walkways to help with waste water management
- There will be hidden trails

Ms. Falls asked for the time frame for completion. Mr. Blashfield responded that the parking deck construction will take about a year. The Green Space construction will take place after this is completed. In total there will be

approximately 15 months before the construction of the Green Space begins, it will probably happen in phases. Dr. Groover asked where the charging stations will be located after construction. Mr. Blashfield responded that they will be relocated to the deck. Mr. Groover expressed his for the use of Virginia native species for the landscaping. Mr. Davidson asked whether the plans allowed for another access to the Children's Museum. Mr. Blashfield responded that the deck parking will allow patrons access to the Children's Museum similar to that of the Science Museum.

Dr. Groover asked about the dog park design. Mr. Blashfield responded that the dog park was part of the original vision but it is not part of the current plan. Part of the original plan also included having a walking path that went under Arthur Ashe Boulevard and extend into Scott's Addition so that there was a walking/biking trail. Mr. Conti added that this part of the plan has been finalized, and the tracks have been filled with gravel to create a path. There are also plans to plant 50 trees along the path within the next few weeks.

Ms. Falls asked if the Redskins field will still be part of the design. Dr. Groover confirmed that it was. Ms. Falls asked if that was where the Alzheimer's walk will be held. Ms. Voelkel confirmed that it will be held there in November. Mr. Conti added that there will be a discussion on where the organization is going next for strategic planning. The Museum owns the 15 acres that the training camp site is on, and there is one year left on the Redskin contract.

Mr. Groover mentioned that the \$1M being spent on the art piece in the Green Space is from private donations, not public funds. Mr. Conti added that the entire project is privately-funded except for the Parking Deck itself.

Ms. Falls asked if people could apply to submit works of art. Mr. Conti confirmed that people can do this until the October 18th at 5:00, and about 30 submissions have already been received. In about three weeks the Museum staff will meet in the Barbara Thalhimer Theater to look at the art and provide input. Ultimately the field will be narrowed to three artists, and of those three the Museum will make the final selection.

Director's Report

Mr. Conti provided the following updates:

- Attendance continues to trend upward.
- Last year's attendance was 523,000 guests; historic attendance has been closer to 300,000.
- The Museum has had three consecutive record years; each year has exceeded the previous one by double digit percentages.
- This success comes from a great strategic planning process which began in 2008.
- Admission revenue is up 17%, enterprise is up 15%, membership is up 25%

- Household membership has doubled from 4,000 to about 8,000.
- Profit from membership has increased to over \$700,000
- Expenses are down 1% for the year
- Working capital increased by \$364K as a result of last year's performance.
- Minds of All Kinds, Science for the Young at Heart, and Museums for All accounted for 11,725 visits this past year.
- Total ticket sales for Pompeii were 51,000, compared to 26,000 for DaVinci Alive!, and Body Worlds: Animal Inside Out at nearly 40,000.
- Science on Tap 21+ events are a chance for the Museum to get creative, and they are producing revenue.
- The VA STEM commission is a direct result from Mr. English's efforts, they'll be meeting next summer to make recommendations for the Governor's budget.
- Summer camps sold out again this year.
- Dr. Hoffman's urban heat island study is getting national attention.
- Science After Dark events continue to be well-attended
- The VCU School of Education most likely to take over the Worker's Comp building the summer of 2021
- The architect, project manager, and exhibit design build team have been hired, for the Northern Virginia Science Center project, and funding has been approved by the General Assembly.
- The State will be constructing the building
- Roto will be carrying out exhibit design work.
- Proposed governing structure is two members from the Science Museum Trustees, two members from the Loudon County board, and two members from the NOVA Science Center Foundation board.

Mr. Conti the asked the Board to review Resolution #001-2020, Statement of Support for the Advancement of the Northern Virginia Science Center Project. Ms. Norwood added that the Board has already given authority to Mr. Conti to sign agreements concerning the NOVA project, and though a formal vote is not required, it would be best to have everyone on board for a project of this magnitude. She added that the Board could take a straw vote to express support for the resolution.

Mr. Davidson then asked the Trustees present for a straw vote which was unanimously approved

Ms. Falls mentioned that the Virginia Outstanding STEM awards was excellent. She loved seeing the young recipients. Ms. Laufer added that it was interesting seeing the teachers, students, and scientists at the same awards ceremony. It is a real spectrum of professions and skillsets. Mr. Conti added that the Museum has to try to increase the diversity of the awardees.

Mr. Davidson asked if there is any interest in having a meeting at the NOVA site in order to see the project. Dr. Groover responded that there is probably going to

be a field trip coming up to Danville first. Mr. Conti added that Danville will likely be complete by next October, so a visit will probably happen around that time. Mr. Conti said that there will likely be a huge kickoff there as early as November.

Science Museum of Virginia Foundation

Ms. Peeler reviewed the following highlights:

- The Foundation is off to a great start for the first quarter
- \$75K received from premier partner Bon Secours
- Two new corporate sponsors: Holiday Barn Pet Resorts is a sponsor of Super Power Dogs and Strange's Florist will sponsor Giant Insects
- \$250K IMLS Grant for Citizens Science to study local air quality
- \$250K bequest from a donor in cash
- Illumination Gala is April 18th 2020
 - Beauty of the Sea themed
 - Saves the dates are going out, corporate partners are receiving a different version
- On track to give \$2.8M to the Museum this fiscal year, this doesn't include money that is being raised for the Green Space project
- \$16M is in endowment right now, which spins off a little more than half a million a year that's allocated to specific projects

Finance Report

Dr. Groover reviewed points from the Finance committee:

- Revenue is strong, up 2%, total revenue up 7%
- Expenses are down 11%
- Currently the Museum is using the additional income to pay in advance for upcoming exhibits.
- Resolution #002-2020 – Approval to Allocate Funds for Website Design, will have to wait until January for a vote by a quorum.

Mr. Conti added that the Museum has built up restricted funds, working capital, and the discretionary fund as safety nets. He added that he thinks it likely that the Museum will exceed its appropriation for the year.

Dr. Groover asked if there was any advanced work that can be done on the website without a vote. Mr. Conti answered that Museum staff is going to see what can be done prior to a vote on Resolution #002-2020 in January.

Education Report

Ms. Purdum reviewed the following points from the Education Report:

- The summer was very busy, with lots of programming for summer camps, Pompeii, and other projects.
- The Education Department is continuing to add programming for the Forge and the Mix
- This is an exciting time to be an educator at the Science Museum of Virginia

Brand Strategy

Ms. Moyer reviewed the following points regarding brand strategy:

- Pompeii had over 51K visitors
- Senior attendance has been trending upward.
- The Danville Science Center's branding has been re-imagined to be more welcoming. The new tagline will be "Yours to Discover"
- The STEM awards did receive attention, though it was less than in past years.

Ms. Peeler added that next week there is a member lunch in which members who come to the Museum frequently can do a focus group on what they love or don't love about the Museum.

Dr. Groover complimented Ms. Moyer for Science on Tap's ability to attract millennials. Ms. Moyer says that Science on Tap is the best indicator of how successful the Museum has been with marketing to millennials.

Mr. Mills asked how the Museum knows that senior attendance is increasing. Ms. Moyer answered that those figures are from senior ticket sales, and added 29% of Pompeii visitors were seniors.

Strategic Planning

Mr. Conti reviewed the following points regarding strategic planning:

- The key to all of the success the Museum has been experiencing recently is a very meticulous planning process with execution
- The Museum is in a good position to gather information and formulate plans for the future
- Assistance from the Board would be requested for developing plans that look several years ahead, including the following:
 - Site and space planning, including the future of the fifteen acres from the Redskins training site and the VCU Worker's Comp project.
 - Making hard choices about what programming the Museum should focus on
 - Building relationships with the Northern Virginia Science Center.
- The new planning groups will work at their own pace and should come online within the next year.

Mr. Mills asked how the Trustees could communicate their preference for different areas of interest. Mr. Conti responded to just let him know.

New Business

Mr. Davidson asked for any new business with nothing heard.

Adjournment

There being no new business, Mr. Davidson adjourned the meeting at 4:56 p.m.

The next meeting will be on January 23, 2020