

City of Fairhope Museum Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes for July 24, 2019 (approved 10/2/19)

Call to Order and Meeting Minutes: The meeting was called to order by Chair Catherine King at 3 p.m. Attending were Louie Blaze, Wayne Brunson, Paul Czajka, Oliver Gilmore, Alan Samry, John Taratsas, Thelma Todd, Jessica Walker and Darby Wiik. Jack Burrell emailed his regrets. Lee Turner did not attend. Motion was made and seconded (Brunson, Czajka) to approve the Minutes from the April 3, 2019 meeting; motion passed unanimously.

Membership: Chair King welcomed new member Thelma Todd. Ms. Todd was appointed to the Board at the July 8th City Council meeting, at which time the other six current members were reappointed. Terms are as follows: King and Taratsas- terms end in January 2020, Brunson and Czajka- terms end in January 2021, and Blaze, Gilmore and Todd- terms end in January 2022.

Ordinance and By-laws Review: At the April 2019 meeting, the matter of updating the Board Ordinance and By-laws was discussed. A draft of the updated version was distributed via email to members within the 30-day window prior to the meeting as stipulated by the by-laws. Motion was made and seconded (Brunson,Blaze) to accept the revised version of the Ordinance and By-laws. Discussion followed, with Mr. Gilmore commenting that the main changes were a) to refine the language and b) to state that only the seven appointed members had voting privileges and only those seven could be counted to attain a quorum. Ms. King noted the change in the secretary/director position, with the updated version stipulating that the secretary be elected from the appointed members. Motion passed unanimously. Ms. King will forward the updated document to the City Clerk for inclusion on the City Council's agenda.

Director's Report: Alan Samry was welcomed to the Board and congratulated on his selection as director; he gave a summary of his professional background. Asked about his priorities for the Museum, Mr. Samry commented that his priority was on the collection and digitizing and archiving the material. Discussion followed about other priorities including the need to focus on visitors. In addition, Mr. Samry distributed a chart showing 2019 Museum attendance figures and comparison information for the last two years showing a slight decline in guests for the current year. Director Samry also distributed an Accessions report for 2019; motion made and seconded to accept the items acquired since the last meeting (Czajka,Blaze) and unanimously accepted.

On behalf of the Board, Chair Catherine King thanked Ms. Darby Wiik for her leadership as Interim Director from late January through May, 2019.

Old Business:

Museum Copy Machine: Jessica Walker reported that the Museum copy machine will be added to the City contract for copiers effective January 2020, thus relieving the Friends of the Fairhope Museum of History from this expense after December 2019.

Museum Archive Space: Jessica Walker reported on the recent receipt of the architectural assessment for the Welcome Center outlining costs and recommendations to make the building functional, safe and ADA compliant. She indicated the issue will be on the City Council work agenda in August. Discussion followed centering on concerns about access to Museum archives (both during a possible renovation and on a permanent basis), issues with ADA regulations vis a

vis official job requirements specific to the archive space, and other concerns. Mrs. Walker and Mr. Samry both commented on their understanding about the concerns expressed.

City's organizational plan relative to the Museum: Mrs. Walker has recently been named the Director of Economic and Community Development for the City of Fairhope. The Museum and staff fall under her area of responsibility.

Welcome Center: Members expressed their opinions about the importance of the Welcome Center for tourism and stressed the need for a City employee to be on-site and that it be adequately staffed with volunteers. Mrs. Walker indicated the City was investigating placing a permanent part-time position at the Welcome Center.

John Taratsas reported that his plan for a permanent Fairhope Veterans Wall at the Nix Center will now not occur because the photographer has left town. Additionally, Mr. Taratsas introduced his idea for an exhibit about small businesses in Fairhope. Discussion followed; the consensus was that this good idea might be a project for the Chamber of Commerce or another local merchant organization.

New Business:

Accessions/Collections Management Policy: The matter of developing an Accession/Collections Management policy was discussed. Ms. King referred to the guidelines issued by the American Alliance of Museums and other similar professional associations as good references for the FMOH. Director Samry said this issue was of concern to him. While no motion was made, the understanding from Mr. Samry was that he would be addressing this issue.

Insurance on Collection: The matter of insuring the Museum's collection, how Museum-owned items on loan are insured (and by what entity), and how items loaned to the Museum are insured was brought up. Motion was made and seconded (Gilmore,Blaze) for Director Samry to investigate this issue and report back at the next meeting; motion passed unanimously.

Museum Mission Statement: The need for a Mission Statement for the Museum was discussed favorably; Director Samry indicated he would be looking into this in conjunction with his work on an Accessions/Collections Management Policy and will report back at the next meeting.

Communication/Publicity for the Museum: The need for an effective communication policy was discussed. The Museum has experienced low turnout for some excellent programs due in large part to poor publicity. Mrs. Walker indicated that there will soon be a communication policy for City departments to generate their own publicity using all forms of media platforms. Mrs. Walker was asked if the Friends group would have access and she agreed.

Support from City Officials: The lack of participation at Museum events by City officials was noted. They are regularly invited to events at the Museum and their support is welcomed and needed.

Motion to adjourn and seconded (Blaze,Czajka) and unanimously agreed at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Catherine King, Chair, Museum Advisory Board

7/29/2019

Next meeting is Wednesday, October 2, 2019 at 3 p.m. at the Museum.

