



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD MEETING
556 W. Maple
Thursday, December 5, 2024
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Mike Abelson, Kristy Barrett (Alternate) Alexandra Harris, Eva Kirkman (arrived 5:15), Marty Logue, Pat Hughes (left at 6:10 PM), Judith Keefer (left at 6:10 PM)
Members Absent: Bev Erickson
Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM by Chairperson Logue.

**Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of November 7, 2024**

MOTION: by Keefer, seconded by Abelson:

To approve the minutes of November 7, 2024.

VOTE: Yeas, 7
Nays, 0

New Business

Members were reminded that the Friends' annual membership is up for renewal and the ordinance requires that all Museum Board members are also Friends members. The Friends board has an opening, and they have suggested that a member of the Museum Board would be an ideal fit for the open board position. They plan to meet on a quarterly basis, most likely by Zoom. Any Museum Board member interested should get in touch with Marty Logue, who is also their treasurer.

Museum Director Pielack gave a brief introduction of the museum's Diner Culture display in the kitchen at the museum, part of the larger Transportation and Transformation exhibit. The display highlights the restaurants along Woodward that were popular among teen drivers in the 1950s and 1960s, and how the drive in/diner culture was important for Birmingham's young people.

The board reviewed the sample strategic plans provided in the packet and compared them for common features and elements in their plans. Members shared their reaction to the plans. A summary of the major points emphasized by the board include:

- Common threads in the plans include elements of financial, staff development, collections, and community outreach.
- Keeping a museum vibrant and relevant is important in strategic planning and is a strength that our museum has, and should continue to focus on. Our youthful staff and contemporary approach are unusual in small community museums, but have been key to our effective connections with the community.

- Brevity is a virtue in strategic plan documents. It helps readers quickly understand the institution and its mission, what its goals are and how it wants to achieve them.
- Stating values is common and useful in museum strategic plans. Inclusive language and objectives are important to incorporate, and a plan should identify which communities are being served. Clearly distinguishing/defining mission, values, and vision is important
- Actionable items should be measurable and have a timeline
- A plan can include a brief history but should not be a 'report' of past accomplishments, but identify future directions and how resources will be distributed for the most important activities
- A good plan should reflect who we are and what our museum actually does; what makes us unique; and what we excel at and not appear 'canned,' too generic, too vague, or too ambitious
- Who is the document is being written for/directed to? It should be clear enough for any director to understand and implement, and any member of the public or outside organizations to grasp the museum's basic character/focus of activity
- Using specific objectives directed toward mentoring or collaborating with other community organizations can be stated directly in the plan
- The Museum Board was enthused about developing and executing an oral history project within their own local neighborhoods. With some training in the essentials of oral history interviews, they could use their cell phones to record conversations with elders regarding their memories of places and people around Birmingham. One particular focus could include the interviewee's knowledge about the heritage of neighborhood houses, for example. A board-led project like this can reinforce board values and commitment to the museum's mission and strategic plan

In January, Museum Director Pielack will be including data and metrics for the past few years to illustrate museum engagement (audience, activity, and reach) and other achievements.

Communication and Reports

Museum Director Pielack provided updates to the Director's Report. The Quarton family materials are being scanned at a fast pace and Quarton family members are satisfied with the progress, which we hope will be complete by the end of the year.

Member Comments

Ms. Logue provided a brief summary of the Friends' recent board meeting and the Friends' interest in seeking a Museum Board member to join them, as they have one board opening.

Public Comments

None.

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 2, 2025, at 5:00 PM.

Ms. Logue adjourned the meeting at 6:36 PM.