



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD AGENDA
556 W MAPLE
Thursday, April 3, 2025
5:00 PM**

Mission Statement: The Birmingham Museum will explore meaningful connections with our past, in order to enrich our community and enhance its character and sustainability. Our mission is to promote understanding of Birmingham's historical and cultural legacy through preservation and interpretation of its ongoing story.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of the Minutes

A. Minutes of March 6, 2024

4. Unfinished Business

- A. Museum Board "What's Your Story?" Oral History Project
- B. Strategic Plan
 - Finalize goals and review/develop working objectives
 - Public feedback

5. Communication and Reports

- A. Director Report
- B. Member comments
- C. Public comments

6. Next Meeting: May 1, 2025

7. Adjournment

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**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD MEETING
556 W. Maple
Thursday, March 6, 2025
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Mike Ableson, Kristy Barrett (Alternate), Alexandra Harris,
Eva Kirkman Marty Logue
Members Absent: Pat Hughes, Judith Keefer
Student Representative: Mercy Wisecup
Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 PM by Chairperson Logue. Members introduced themselves and welcomed Mercy Wisecup, the newly appointed student representative.

**Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of February 6, 2025**

MOTION: by Ableson, seconded by Harris:

To approve the minutes of March 6, 2025.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

Unfinished Business

Using examples and a brief demonstration, board members revisited the 'What's Your Story?' Oral History Project to discuss conversation starters, techniques for keeping the conversation focused on the subject, and clarifying what the intent of the project is. Members are ready to begin the project. Museum Director Pielack will send out the Deed of Gift form and the guidelines for those who wish to get started.

Members reviewed the strategic planning (working) goals and agreed on the following first drafts:

1. Priority: Observe professional standards, ethics, and best practices for long-term preservation and care of the museum collection in the public trust.

Goal: Maintain, preserve, and enhance the museum's collection of artifacts, archives, digital content and buildings to make these resources available to the public in accordance with established professional museum practice.

2. Use the museum and its collection to encourage greater equity and inclusion and to humanize history for the benefit of the community.

Goal: Utilize best practices to engage the whole community and encourage empathy and understanding of our diverse cultural and personal experience.

3. Establish and strengthen collaborative relationships in the community to implement the museum's mission.

Goal: Leverage collaborative relationships to expand the museum's sphere of influence and provide beneficial outcomes for the community.

The board will review these draft goals at the April meeting to make final refinements, and will consider specific objectives for each goal. We will also begin to consider the best way to get public input.

Communication and Reports

Director's report: Director Pielack noted that there is a position opening on the Museum Board that has been posted by the Clerk's office for possible appointment by the City Commission on March 24. As of today, there are no applicants.

Member Comments

Ms. Logue mentioned that the former Big Rock restaurant in the 1929 Grand Trunk RR depot is adding an outdoor seating area on the east side of the building, and that things are moving along. Mr. Ableson inquired whether the Quarton materials were able to be digitized fully and expressed interest in learning more about them.

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 2025, at 5:00 PM.

Ms. Logue adjourned the meeting at 6:22 PM.

Priorities/Goals Worksheet for 2025 Strategic Plan, v.2 (4/3/2025)

DEFINITIONS: The following definitions are used in this document:

Priorities: incorporate the values and general direction in the plan for the use of the museum's resources.

Goals: state where the museum will focus its energies over a particular timeframe and can be viewed objectively. They can be short or long term in nature and are not necessarily directly measurable, but are derived from the museum's priorities.

Objectives: Objectives are shorter-term milestones that support individual goals. Each goal has several tangible objectives that will move the museum toward reaching that goal. Objectives are concrete, measurable and focused on results.

Tasks/Strategies: Specific actions or steps that lead to the accomplishment of the objectives. They are action-oriented, short-term, and include specific "what, by when and by whom," components.

Museum Strategic Plan Priorities for 2025 Strategic Plan

1. Maintain professional standards, ethics, and best practices for long-term preservation and care of the museum collection in the public trust.

***(Proposed Goal):* Maintain, preserve, and enhance the museum's collection of artifacts, archives, digital content and buildings to make these resources available to the public in accordance with established professional museum practice.**

Working Objectives:

- Improve museum collection's storage organization and environmental controls to protect and preserve the collection
- Improve efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of collection object records and documentation
- Implement collections-related policies and procedures for collections management for its buildings, grounds, physical and digital materials
- Provide increased access through virtual exhibits, online materials, and digital access
- Seek opportunities to enhance inclusivity of the collection
- _____
- _____

2. Use the museum and its collection to achieve greater equity and inclusion and to humanize history for the benefit of the community.

(Proposed Goal): Utilize best practices to engage the whole community and encourage empathy and understanding of our diverse cultural and personal experience.

Working Objectives:

- Develop exhibits and interpretive materials that facilitate engagement, relevance, and inclusion and offer multiple perspectives
- Utilize specialized outreach programs and presentations in off-site settings
- Explore opportunities to enhance and expand virtual reach
- _____
- _____

3. Establish and strengthen collaborative relationships in the community to implement the museum’s mission.

(Proposed Goal): Leverage collaborative relationships to expand the museum’s sphere of influence and provide beneficial outcomes for the community.

Working Objectives:

- Develop programs and projects that integrate the museum’s strategic priorities within the City’s internal and public-focused functions and services
- Seek partnerships with local institutions that are aligned with the museum’s mission
- Provide leadership to area organizations in developing and promoting public history content
- _____



Director Report

DATE: April 3 2025
TO: Museum Board
FROM: Leslie Pielack, Museum Director
SUBJECT: Director Report

Museum Board Position Opening—The City is still looking for applicants to the open Museum Board position.

Budget 2025-2026—The City's annual budget hearing will be held on April 26. The museum's proposed budget includes our general operational costs and a funding request to complete Phase 4 of the landscape project for next year. We do not know for certain whether CDBG funds will be available for that project, but the City has requested the funds through the County according to the required process. The EGLE permit is still in process for Phase 3.

Allen House Repairs/Maintenance—Point-of-use hot water has now been installed and is a hit with staff and visitors, who get immediate hot water for handwashing. It is also more efficient and sustainable because it uses far less water. Proposals are being sought to complete the repair of the small porch roofs, including removing and refinishing/repainting the railings. The fence work is waiting for supplies, and then will take approximately a week. The staff are going to make some changes in the lobby and the carpet will be cleaned sometime after school tours.

Programs-Projects-Presentations—Planning for America's 250th is ongoing. The City will be integrating an overall theme for events that will help commemorate our local history in the context of the larger picture of American history.

The podcast makes headway into new locales—We were surprised to see that our March podcast was downloaded multiple times in Iran, to add to our audience all over the world. The other Middle Eastern listeners are in Uzbekistan, and naturally the largest number are in the U.S., Europe, and South America.

Coordinating school history content with Birmingham's teachers—The elementary social studies curriculum coordinator will be distributing some additional classroom materials (slides and photos) to help teachers zero in on local history and the tour of the Hunter House this spring. The slides are intended to be used in their entirety or just the photos and captions. In this way, teachers can select what works best for them.

April is Volunteer Month!—The museum has created a new volunteer brochure and will be distributing it to interested members of the community at two fairs during April—one at the library and one at Next. There are four categories for volunteers-visitor services, tours, collections, and research. Volunteer positions will depend on applicants' interests and best fit and museum need and available work stations.

Collections—The museum recently discovered three bound volumes of some of the earliest *Birmingham Eccentric* issues from 1879-1880, 1891-1892 and 1892-1893. A museum volunteer will be working to photograph them, as they are too large to be scanned by our existing equipment and are too fragile to document via traditional scanner. The bound newspapers were taken in by historical society volunteers during the 1980s. Unfortunately the object/document records were inaccurate and incomplete, so the existence and location of the materials was unknown until found amongst some other items.