



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD AGENDA
556 W MAPLE
Thursday, August 7, 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 July 11, 2024

4. New Business

- A. Hunter House Interpretive Presentation on Dining by Donna Casaceli
- B. 2026-Museum Projects
- C. Proposed cancellation of September meeting

5. Unfinished Business

A. Museum Board "What's Your Story?" Oral History Project-updates/reports

6. Communication and Reports

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

7. Next Meeting: TBD (October meeting is Oct. 9)

8. Adjournment

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**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MUSEUM BOARD MEETING
556 W. Maple
Thursday, July 10, 2025
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Mike Ableson, Kristy Barrett (Alternate), Alexandra Harris,
Eva Kirkman, Marty Logue
Members Absent: None
Student Representative: Mercy Wisecup
Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack
Guests: Kamala Cummings, Judith Keefer

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by consensus in the absence of a sitting Chair. An amendment to the agenda was proposed to include the annual election of Chair.

Amendment of the Agenda

MOTION: by Kirkman, seconded by Logue:

To amend the agenda for July 10, 2025 to include the annual election of Museum Board Chair.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

Election of Chair

Nominations for Chair were considered.

MOTION: by Kirkman, seconded by Ableson:

To elect Marty Logue as Museum Board Chair for FY 2025-2026.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

**Approval of the Minutes
Minutes of April 3, 2025**

MOTION: by Ableson, seconded by Harris:

To approve the minutes of June 5, 2025.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0

New Business

Kamala Cummings of In The Know Experiences discussed the ways the museum may be able to meet specialized interests of visitors to Birmingham. The ability to walk around town, enjoy the city and its culture are desirable characteristics. Ms. Cummings would like to offer information to clients about the museum, including Jacobson's, Creem Magazine, and our hyper-local focus on Birmingham's story. Opportunities to integrate the museum's mission with the Birmingham Shopping District's tourism-related goals would potentially reach a new audience for the museum.

Unfinished Business

Ms. Harris has another person in mind for 'What's Your Story,' and Mr. Ableson may have someone later this summer to interview. Members also reviewed potential survey items, size, and style, and offered helpful edits. Members agreed that a short survey, both in electronic form and in paper-pencil form is optimal. Methods of promoting the survey through a press release, Engage Birmingham, Facebook (Museum and City), and through the Around Town e-newsletter will give broad exposure to the Birmingham community. Potential physical locations for survey stations include the Museum, Municipal Building, Baldwin Library, the Ice Arena, Parks & Rec office, Ice Arena, Next, and the YMCA. Museum Director Pielack will complete the survey and inform the commission through the City Manager's report, and the survey period will be August 1 – September 15. After gathering public feedback, a report and proposed document can be prepared for the City Commission for their consideration toward the end of the year.

Communication and Reports

Director Pielack briefly reviewed the Director's Report, and shared a communication about the upcoming Historic Property Owner Roundtable Input Sessions coming up that the Planning Department will be holding to get input on its Historic Preservation Master Plan. Director Pielack also passed around some reproduction redware items that the Friends have provided the funds to purchase as use items for the Hunter House's updated interpretation. By having reproduction items on display, visitors will be able to handle some of them to get a better sense of life in that time period. Museum staff are looking for ways to provide tactile and sensory experiences as part of the storytelling of Birmingham's past. She also shared the City's official patriotic logo for 2026, and the board checked out the new carpet runner installed on the central staircase.

Member Comments

Mr. Ableson commented that he liked the topics for the fall program and hopeful that the programs will take place in the large room in the basement this fall. Director Pielack indicated that the museum did make that request.

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 7, 2025, at 5:00 PM.

Ms. Logue adjourned the meeting at 6:09 PM.



Director Report

DATE: August 7, 2025
TO: Museum Board
FROM: Leslie Pielack, Museum Director
SUBJECT: Director Report

Museum Board Position Opening/s—Welcome, Kamala Cummings to the City Manager Museum Board appointment! We look forward to your contributions! Ms. Keefer’s appointment has been delayed until she can attend a City Commission meeting. We still have a regular opening as well.

John West Hunter Park Project—We are still waiting for EGLE to issue a permit so we can continue with the next phase of the park improvements. When we get the green light, we will go out for a RFP to prepare the boardwalk across the pond edge, stone retaining walls, and pathway around the south side of the pond.

Allen House-Hunter House Repairs/Maintenance—Updates and refresh projects have been completed in the lobby, stairway, and fencing. A possible foundation issue will need to be investigated over the next year at the southeast corner of the front porch. Historic architect Jackie Hoist has reviewed the situation and will be developing a set of recommendations. This work will likely be addressed in the 2026-2027 budget, as no funds are available in our current budget and the matter is not considered an emergency at this time. The small stairs and rails at the Hunter House and for the staff entry of the Allen House should be completed this summer. The A/C condenser at the Hunter House will need replacement soon, so will be repaired as soon as we have the required competitive bids.

2026 Exhibits-Programs-Projects—The museum will be offering research support for the City’s various 2026-related activities and events to tie our history in to parks, events, and sites around the city. Museum staff continue to plan for our 2026 exhibit, and are looking at ways to provide interactive experiences that will help people connect with the past in a personal way. We are exploring opportunities for sensory experience, including light, sound, and texture with materials and items that complement our exhibits and displays. Stay tuned for updates.

Special Volunteer Projects—Kathy F is working a couple days a week to clear up duplications in some of our digital photo files. Molly M is joining our team until she returns to college. She is working with Donna to inventory and catalogue items in our Hunter House use collection. Sofie, a middle school student, is inventorying some of our news clippings from the 1970s and 1980s *Eccentric* dumpster files. Nancy K is creating biographies for Greenwood Cemetery. Jesse’s work on the Clizbe papers and finding aid is being wrapped up by Donna and will be made available online.

Temporary Suspension of Research Services—Because of the many demands on the museum staff and planning for events and activities during 2026, the museum is suspending research services until 2027. However, we will try to give guidance to people interested in pursuing their own research through other accessible sources.

Collections—We’ve added a few other items to our Use Collection for the Hunter House and look forward to updating the display this fall. Most of the recent collection activity has involved organizing and storage consolidation. We also receive small personal family papers and photo collections from time to time and have been working to accession and digitize these items.