

Kalamazoo Valley Community College

Arcadia Commons Campus

Kalamazoo Valley Museum

Advisory Team

5:30 PM

October 2, 2018

Present: C. Baker, L. Baker, Deittrick, Hollins, Jbara, Laabs, McElhone, Schroeder Kobb (left at 5:40), Washington (joined at 5:45)

Absent: Baskerville-Jones, Johnson, Larson, Stinson

Meeting Agenda

1. Acceptance of the Agenda
 - The Agenda was accepted as presented.
2. Acceptance of the Minutes – July 10, 2018
 - The Minutes were accepted as presented.
3. Informational Updates
 - Lexie Schroeder Kobb, our new Assistant Director for Museum Programs introduced herself. She came from Hannah Lindell Children's Museum and is currently living in South Bend. She started July 16.
 - Attendance through August was down due to last year's dinosaur exhibit. We are still okay looking towards our goal.
 - Social media metrics have changed again, so the numbers are still good. We are lucky to have Elizabeth doing both numbers and social media.
 - Sarah Humes (Collections Registrar), Ron Cleveland (Exhibit Tech) have left; Lexie Schroeder Kobb, Matt Gibson (PT IS Staff) are new hires.
 - The front desk renovation project is underway. We are recreating the profile of the front desk to have staff physically closer and facing the front entry. This will offer a better presence to greet everyone when they come through the door. We will also be reworking the first floor gallery so that the office with the safe is connected to the front desk area, not in a separate area. This will create a new gallery that is more of a rectangle with more consistent lighting. We hope to be done by the time Fretboard Festival starts.
 - Fountain of the Pioneers: Museum sent a memo to Jeff Chamberlain, Deputy City Manager, to inquiry about partnering with the City of Kalamazoo to take at least a portion of the exhibit to talk about the controversy and revisit the Native American story. The Museum is a good place to interpret the story, but with everything that has been going on in Bronson Park, this has not been addressed yet. A 3D scan of it was taken before it was removed, and we hope to use that to virtually recreate the fountain.
 - Outreach has included Maranda in the Park, Back 2 School Bash, WMU Bronco Bash, and entrepreneurial event about social media.
 - Murphy Darden was awarded a Michigan Educator's Award from the Michigan Historical Society.

- Inaugural events are Oct 19 4 p.m. investiture and presentation, and Oct 20 8:30 to 11 a.m. meet and greet at the Museum. We will have free planetarium shows and activities that day for visitors.
- Capital projects were shared, with Collections Mobile Storage Conversion, Permanent Wall Construction in 3rd floor gallery, and Building Improvements not yet completed.
- Frank Lloyd Wright runs through Dec 9, Bikes runs through Jan 6, What We Carried runs Dec 16 to April 15. Jim Lommasson will be coming for a week to work with local Syrian and Iraqi population to replicate the work and add to our collection. We are looking to expand our storytelling.
- Sensory Saturdays programs will run through April for families with children with autism. The program is both for parents and children so that they can experience the Museum in a more comfortable way.
- Art Hop Fridays are limited this year but will be Nov, Dec, Jan to tie in with exhibits and festivals.
- Sunday Series will be a balance between science and history topics. We are being intentional in creating things for an adult audience.
- Chemistry Day is coming up, then Ghoulish Transportation, Recycled Gifts, and Art and Tech Talk. We are always taking volunteers for these programs.
- We had “boot camps” geared for middle schoolers to get them thinking about college. Animal Instincts hands-on days over the summer were successful as well, tied to our Cats & Dogs exhibit.
- Our DEQ rainwater program is progressing, with finishing touches to be added.
- Kalamazoo A – Z is still on display and will be left up until construction starts.
- Cats & Dogs attendance was 44,533 over the summer. This exhibit was the first in America to show the exhibit. It offered special challenges due to being in multiple languages.
- Future Exhibits include Amusement Park Science & Team Up, Patient No More, Ripley’s Amazing Micro Sculptures, Secrets of Bees, What We Carried, XOXO, and Wicked Plants.
- Dr. Washington looks forward to seeing everyone again and hopes that everyone can make it to some part of the inauguration weekend events.

3.1 Strategic Planning Update

- Updated Strategic Plan with a slightly tweaked Mission Statement and Strategic Initiatives were presented, and handout was given. Updates will allow us to examine current programs and processes to determine if some can be discontinued to make way for new opportunities.

4. Advisor Discussion

- Has anything been keeping us from accomplishing the Strategic Plan Initiatives? Many of them are the same as the previous 5-year plan.
 - Marketing is ongoing. Maintaining an authentic collection needs to continue and should be outlined to be sure we’re collecting actual materials and not moving toward a virtual experience. We will continue to be more actively engaged in Initiatives 3 and 4. Strategic Initiative number 5 makes use of the College’s Core Value of inclusivity.
- Do you work with the city on number 5?

- Not directly, but we are aware of their policies.
 - Within the vision, what does the collaboration refer to?
 - It's about community partnerships, within the college, etc. It encompasses all relationship-building.
 - How do you measure the goals?
 - Underneath the tasks, there are specific metrics. It will involve visitor surveys and perception studies that will give us direct feedback. We are looking at having a Visitors Count survey that is specifically for museums. We will also find out who is not coming and why.
 - There is virtual reality that could be used through Public Media Network.
 - That is another opportunity we will look into. It would be helpful to raise awareness. We would like to find the right way to use this opportunity. Brian Gonda passed away, and he was the one who used to do a monthly program with Tom Dietz about the KVM.
 - Where is the Murphy Darden Project?
 - Tammy Barnes and Museum staff have been working on a comprehensive inventory of his collection. Murphy would like to find a home for his collection, but we didn't know what he had. Staff are almost finished, including videos of Murphy talking about some of his most important items. Tammy estimates that he has well over 1500 items. There has not yet been formal discussion of what will happen with his collection.
 - Could a traveling exhibit be created to showcase his items?
 - Yes, anything is possible. But at this time until the long-term disposition of the collection and its care are known it's not likely that a traveling exhibition would be created. It's more likely that temporary exhibit at one institution could be prepared. He has a lot of items related to art, specifically African American cowboy art and historic items.
 - Is Art Hop only the performance?
 - We have opened up the planetarium and theater and closed off the rest of the building. Attendance doesn't warrant having the entire Museum open.
 - We could open up the Museum to allow local people to show items. It could open up new audiences.
 - In the past, we have opened WorldWorks to local artists to display, but we currently have exhibits planned for WorldWorks. Bill will follow up with how we vet artists.
 - Sonya will be having a program for her Merze Tate Explorers here at the Museum. Girls will be doing auditions and "report" at the news desk. This helps them see the Museum a different way. Merze Tate was the first female African American graduate of WMU in 1927. She started a travel club, and Sonya's club is based on it.
 - The distance between the front door and Museum entrance is still an issue.
 - We are working with Disability Network to see if there are ways to address this. Bill will take a look at the curb cut to see if it can be improved.
5. Next Meeting – January 8, 2019 @ 5:30 PM
 6. Adjournment