

Friends of the Museums of Florida History, Inc.
MEETING MINUTES
10:00 a.m., Thursday, October 22, 2020
By Video and Conference Call Only

Participants

Directors: Ms. Laura Rogers, Chair; Mr. John Boudet; Ms. Monesia Brown; Mr. Andrew Collins; Ms. Lena Juarez; Dr. Dennis Moore

Staff: Ms. Lisa Barton; Dr. Thomas Robinson

I. Call to Order

Ms. Rogers, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m.

II. Introduction of Board, Staff, and Guests

Ms. Rogers welcomed all board members and staff members attending the meeting. Ms. Rogers asked that everyone on the call would discuss something they have learned about themselves since they have had to work from home more. Everyone took a turn discussing things they learned.

III. Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Rogers made a motion to adopt the agenda.

MOTION TO PROCEED WITH AGENDA: Ms. Juarez

SECOND: Dr. Moore

MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

IV. Business Items

1. Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

Ms. Rogers provided an overview of the purpose of the self-evaluation, saying that she felt with some new members to the board and some members who had been on the board for several years, it was important to see what people thought the strengths of the board were and what were potential areas of improvement. Ms. Rogers stated that she thought it also showed where people want the board to achieve more and showed priorities of individual board members, which do not always come out in meetings. Ms. Rogers stated that she thought the self-evaluations showed that the board has good leadership, is well established, and has good governance, but also that the board is in a unique situation due to the Friends being a CSO and some of the quirks that come with that.

2. Board Skills Matrix

Ms. Rogers asked Dr. Robinson to share the skills matrix document for those who were on the video conference so they could see it. Ms. Rogers stated that she thought the skills matrix was a good visual way to decipher the strongest areas of representation on the board in terms of areas of expertise, but it also allowed evaluation of areas of weakness. Ms. Rogers was happy to point out that she thought the current board was really strong in the area of belief and support of the mission and she thought the current board was very good in terms of community access. Due to the fact that many current board members are active in the community, Ms. Rogers stated that fundraising needed to be a higher priority and it is currently listed as a top priority on the skills matrix.

In looking over the skills matrix, Ms. Rogers stated that it was obvious that the board had some holes when it came to demographics since there is only one board member who lives outside of Tallahassee and most of the board is white. Having representation from outside Tallahassee and from members of the Hispanic, African American, or Asian American communities, for example, is very necessary.

After going over the skills matrix, Ms. Rogers asked if anyone on the call had any ideas for how to find candidates that would complement the current board membership. Specifically, Ms. Rogers thought it was important to find people who support the mission of the museum, are willing to learn, and have some background in fundraising. Mr. Collins agreed with Ms. Rogers that fundraising was vitally important, but also pointed out that getting young professionals in the state on the board could be helpful. Mr. Collins thought Florida History Day could be used as a recruitment tool to engage with the younger demographic because some of the judges tend to be younger.

Ms. Rogers agreed and said that brought up a good segue into why people get involved on boards. Ms. Rogers stated that often times, people get on boards because their friends ask them too and current board members should think about if they have any friends who could be good board members.

Ms. Rogers asked Ms. Barton to speak for staff and ask what type of people staff would like to see on the board. Ms. Barton stated that targeting younger people would probably be smart, as well as having a diversity of board members that represents the diversity of the audience the museums serve. Ms. Barton added that staff think that having someone on the board who has expertise in retail could be beneficial since the CSO administers the gift shops.

Ms. Rogers asked the board members on the call to help her brainstorm ideas for how to get potential new board members involved. Ms. Brown stated that people who want to be on the board are probably either passionate about the issues or they are friends of people currently on the board. Ms. Brown added that in order to get new boards members who stay active and engaged, it would probably be wise to pursue prospective members who are passionate about museums and/or Florida history or are friends of current board members.

As the one member of the board who lives outside of Tallahassee, Mr. Boudet explained that he joined the board because the Secretary of State at the time expressly asked him to join the board. Mr. Boudet said he thinks that is representative of a good way to get people involved—by simply asking them and being straightforward. Mr. Boudet said that if current staff or board members know people who might be willing to join the board, they should reach out and discuss the idea with them. Mr. Boudet added that he thinks current board members should look within their own organizations and the people they work with and see if there is someone who would be interested in joining the board from within those circles.

Ms. Rogers thought Mr. Boudet's suggestion of looking within a board member's own circle was very smart and she added that she thought that could be expanded to partner organizations of the museum as well. Mr. Boudet agreed, adding that perhaps partners or vendors could be looked at for potential board members. Ms. Rogers asked Ms. Barton if there were any restrictions on approaching partners or vendors for something like board membership. Ms. Barton stated that as long as the new board member followed the bylaws and code of ethics.

Ms. Rogers asked if anyone had any comments on how to start the process of engaging with potential new board members. Mr. Collins stated that one strategy could be to start a list of prospective candidates to at least talk to and added that he thought looking within everybody's own organization and personal connections could be a smart way to approach this and build up a list. Ms. Brown recommended meeting with Department of State leadership to find out exactly what type of board members the Secretary of State would like to see, including where people come from. Ms. Rogers agreed, adding that she remembered several prospective board members were put up a few years ago but they were never signed off on once it went up to the administrative staff. Ms. Rogers stated that perhaps meeting with DOS staff ahead of time could prevent something like that happening in the future. Ms. Barton said that she would be happy to try to facilitate a meeting with the Secretary of State to discuss board appointments.

Ms. Brown and Mr. Collins both spoke up and said they would be happy to help with any board recruitment assistance that Ms. Rogers might need.

3. Summary of Meeting Accomplishments

Ms. Rogers stated that she thought that would be a good place to end the meeting since there were so many good ideas shared. She said she also wanted to give time to staff to provide any updates. Ms. Barton stated that both museum sites are trying to use social media daily to provide information, post virtual tours, and things of that nature. Ms. Barton also said that a team from the museum has been working with other DOS museums on providing virtual resources that would be available to teachers statewide, which could be helpful in the absence of field trips. Ms. Barton added that the Knott House is having a virtual family program related to Halloween.

Dr. Robinson stated that he wanted to update board members on the exhibit update work that is going on at the Museum of Florida History. Dr. Robinson said that a team of MFH staff are looking at adding to the discussion of Reconstruction in Florida, labor history of the time period, and providing a newfound focus on immigration during that time period. The Civil War exhibit is also going to be updated by changing out some artifacts, reworking the space, and providing details on groups that were not previously discussed.

V. Public Comment:

VI. Adjourn

Ms. Rogers asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING: Mr. Collins
SECOND: Ms. Brown
MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

The meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

Presented by Ms. Laura Rogers, Chair

Dated: _____