

Friends of the Museums of Florida History, Inc.
MEETING MINUTES
10:00 a.m., Monday, February 7, 2022
Room 307, R.A. Gray Building

Participants

Directors: Ms. Laura Rogers, Chair; Mr. Lester Abberger; Mr. Steve Birtman; Ms. Monesia Brown; Mr. Andrew Collins; Ms. Kathy Guilday; Ms. Lena Juarez; Dr. Dennis Moore

Staff: Ms. Lisa Barton; Dr. Timothy Parsons; Dr. Thomas Robinson; Ms. Kaitlin Silcox

Guests: Mr. Scott Hilton, Wells Fargo Advisors

I. Call to Order

Ms. Rogers, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

II. Introduction of Board, Staff, and Guests

Ms. Rogers welcomed all board members, staff members, and guests attending the meeting.

III. Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Rogers requested a motion to adopt the agenda.

MOTION TO PROCEED WITH AGENDA: Ms. Rogers

SECOND: Mr. Abberger

MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

IV. Chair's Comments

Ms. Rogers wished everyone a happy new year since this was the first board meeting of 2022. Ms. Rogers stated that she was looking forward to things getting back to normal as the museum hosted events related to *Spirits of the Passage*.

V. Consent Items

Ms. Rogers inquired if there were questions about any items on the consent agenda. There were no questions so Ms. Rogers asked for a motion to accept the minutes and the financial report at the same time.

Note: Consent items up for vote were provided to the Board in advance via email.

A. Meeting Minutes from September 21, 2021 quarterly board meeting

B. Financial Report through December 2021

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT ITEMS: Mr. Abberger

SECOND: Dr. Moore

MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

VI. Business Items

A. Financials

1. Endowments Progress Report

Ms. Rogers introduced Mr. Hilton to discuss the endowments. Mr. Hilton started with a broad overview of the economic outlook and to give an overview of the past year. Mr. Hilton stated that GDP growth was very good for the year as a whole in 2021, but economic experts did expect that to slow a bit in 2022. The biggest concern is inflation, the rate of which is currently 7%. Mr. Hilton stated the Federal Reserve expects inflation to be temporary and to drop down to closer to 5% and unemployment is expected to drop as well. Overall, Mr. Hilton felt the economic outlook was mainly positive.

Mr. Hilton then discussed each individual endowment. The Charles Knott Endowment ended the year with a balance of \$240,223, which was up 11.76% for the year. That account is down 5% year to date in 2022. That account is invested heavily in bonds, which has tempered returns so far this year. The James Knott Endowment was up 5.27% for 2021 with gains of over \$8,000. The account ended the year with a balance of \$167,820. The account is down 3.3% for 2022 so far, primarily due to volatility that the stock market saw due to fears of the Omicron variant. The Cultural Endowment ended the year at \$630,029. Interest rates are expected to go up in 2022, which should help the Cultural Endowment. Overall, Mr. Hilton stated that he thought the endowments were well positioned regardless of what happens and he remains optimistic about the long-term prospects. Mr. Hilton thinks earnings should remain good with all of the endowments and could be very good by the end of the year, even if things are tough in the short term, such as what was seen in January.

Mr. Hilton opened up the floor to questions. There were no questions so Ms. Rogers thanked Mr. Hilton for his presentation.

B. *Spirits of the Passage* Update

Ms. Rogers called on the staff to provide any updates they have on the *Spirits of the Passage* exhibit that is scheduled to open on February 18, 2022. Ms. Barton let board members know that invitations to the *Spirits* opening reception, which would occur on the evening of February 17, had gone out the previous week and people should receive them soon. Ms. Rogers stated that she had received her invitation already and thought it looked very good.

Ms. Barton discussed some of the planned programming to occur during the run of the exhibit. Ms. Barton stated that the programming would start with the opening reception featuring remarks and a guided tour from Dr. Madeleine Burnside, who wrote the book on the exhibit and was integral to the creation of the original version of the exhibit. There will be a History at High Noon in February featuring an archaeologist that is working at Prospect Bluff. Other programming will include an evening lecture in April and a film screening in March.

Ms. Rogers asked if there was anything board members could do to help with the reception. Both Ms. Barton and Dr. Robinson stated that the plans for the reception were completed and board members did not need to help with that, but board members are encouraged to attend the reception and spread the word to friends and colleagues.

Ms. Rogers asked if there were any specific outreaches were made to area schools about seeing the exhibit. Ms. Barton stated that education staff had reached out to area middle and high school teachers about the exhibit and encouraged them to come see it. Ms. Rogers asked if any field trips had been planned specifically to see the exhibit. Ms. Barton stated that no specific field trips had been planned to see the exhibit, but the spring schedule was starting to fill up so many schools will see the exhibit through that.

Ms. Rogers asked if there was anything else to add about the exhibit. Ms. Barton stated that she was pleased to add that the History Shop would be selling copies of the book that accompanies the exhibit and some of the books would be signed by Dr. Burnside. Dr. Robinson added that the book is currently out of print and is very expensive on secondary markets so being able to have the book in stock should be a good marketing opportunity. Ms. Rogers asked how many of the books would be available. Ms. Silcox stated that the Shop received four boxes of the books.

C. Other Staff Updates

Ms. Rogers asked staff if they had any other updates beyond *Spirits*. Ms. Barton let board members know that the Knott House is still closed to the public. MFH staff are currently in the process of trying to hire a new site manager for the Knott House. While the museum is closed, the interpretive plan is being updated and there are building projects occurring at the house, including updating the HVAC and the fire suppression system. Cleaning and maintenance is still occurring at the house while it is closed. Mr. Collins asked if the capital outlay money for the building updates does not kick in until FY 2022-23. Dr. Parsons stated that the money is available now and the state has until 2026 to spend it but the projects at the Knott House will take place soon. Ms. Barton added that the Knott House will still host 20th of May despite the building closure. Ms. Rogers stated that the downtown area is being revitalized and she hopes the Knott House will play an integral role in that revitalization in the Park Avenue area.

Ms. Barton added that the Museum of Florida History will also see a building project due to federal funds. Department of State and the Department of Management Services are going to use federal funds to fix the leak issues that are occurring due to issues with the plaza. The Museum has to stand prepared to potentially close all or part of the museum due to this, but right now things are still in the stage of procuring services. Dr. Parsons added that DMS is currently meeting with contractors and is trying to make sure the fix is going to not only protect the Museum's artifacts, but also make sure the building remains structurally sound. Due to that, Dr. Parsons is not sure how long the project will take or how it will impact the current building usage but promised to pass along updates as they came.

Ms. Rogers asked Dr. Robinson if there were any updates on the café. Dr. Robinson stated that the Museum is still seeking a new vendor. Dr. Robinson stated that two vendors came and looked at the space in December and while one passed, the other wanted to come back and look again with their business partner. Dr. Robinson stated that he is still trying to get in touch with the vendor to try to set up this second visit. Dr. Robinson added that he is still actively reaching out to vendors and encouraged board members to send along any names that they think would be worth reaching out to.

Ms. Rogers asked Dr. Robinson if he had anything else to add. Dr. Robinson stated that the annual audit is in the process of being completed and would be wrapped up in the coming weeks, if not days. Dr. Robinson said that the audit would be on the agenda at the next board meeting, which would be sometime in April. Dr. Robinson also wanted to let board members know that the year-end appeal generated almost \$3,500 in unrestricted contributions.

Ms. Silcox let board members know that the shop has been doing quite well compared to previous years although the Shop has been encountering supply chain issues. Sales have largely been back on level with 2018 and 2019. Ms. Silcox stated that the Shop is starting to add new inventory after waiting in the first few months of opening to sell off old stock. Some of the new items the Shop has acquired include socks with local, Tallahassee images and honey from Pensacola. Mr. Collins asked if legislative session was helping with sales at the New Capitol. Ms. Silcox said that while sales have been okay, they are not on par with 2019 due to current construction at the Capitol.

VII. Other Business

A. Upcoming events

Ms. Rogers asked if there were any upcoming events that were worth highlighting that were not already discussed. Staff indicated that all upcoming events had already been covered.

Ms. Juarez stated that she wanted to thank the staff for their hard work and Ms. Rogers for running such a smooth meeting. Mr. Collins stated that he received an email about judging for Florida History Day. Ms. Rogers added that MFH staff should reach out to board members if they need more FHD judges. Ms. Guilday asked what the date of FHD was in 2022 and Ms. Barton let her know that it will be held on May 2.

B. Wrap Up—Summary of Meeting Accomplishments

Ms. Rogers stated that the only thing she wanted to say at the end of the meeting was to remind board members to try to come to the *Spirits* reception.

Ms. Rogers opened the floor for questions or comments. There were none. Since there were no questions and no members of the public on the call, Ms. Rogers suggested ending the meeting.

VIII. Public Comment:

IX. Adjourn

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

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING: Ms. Rogers
SECOND: Dr. Moore
MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Presented by Ms. Laura Rogers, Chair

Dated: _____