

PACIFIC GROVE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Special Museum Board Meeting

MINUTES **DRAFT**

9 December 2009

PRESENT: David Shonman (Chair), Geva Arcania, Sharon Blaziek, John Pearse, Judy Wills

ABSENT: *none*

STAFF: Lori Mannel (Museum Director, latter part of meeting), Mark Walker (Curator)

GUESTS: Deborah Lindsay (City Council liaison), Celia Perez-Martinez (Public Works Business Manager, early part of meeting), Nancy McDowell (Lighthouse Docent Coordinator), Pat Herrgott, Sally Herrgott

- Chair Shonman called the meeting to order at 3:40pm.

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approved unanimously after Shonman requested that item X. B. Monarch Grove Sanctuary be split because two of the principles involved could only be present early (Perez-Martinez) and late (Mannel) during the meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of November 18, 2009 meeting approved unanimously.

III. CORRESPONDENCE

none

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Pat Herrgott expressed concern that liaison from the Museum Foundation was not present. She was also concerned about the lack of Museum staff on the public floor when Museum was open; she said when she and her sister Sally work in the gift shop, they are often the only people visitors see.

V. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMENTS

Lindsay reported that the City Council has scheduled a public meeting on December 17th to discuss the future of all the City's Boards and Committees, the chairs of which were invited to attend.

VI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Shonman said he received a letter from the Mayor asking him to attend the December 17th meeting to discuss the future of the City's Boards and Committees; he asked Board members to think about what we do and let him know. The Board agreed to hold a special meeting from 10:30 to noon, Tuesday, December 17 to discuss the matter.

Shonman reported that Sheila Randazzo had replaced Ann O'Rourke as Acting City Clerk, and had been very helpful to him.

Shonman said he checked on the terms of the Board members and was told that the February 2010 date on the website for all the Board members except him (February 2011) was not accurate. He said Randazzo was checking.

Arcanin reported that the Museum Foundation of Pacific Grove was involved in multiple things (fund raising, marketing, logo redesign, relationship with the Association, etc.) Shonman said he was still frustrated about not knowing what the Foundation is doing.

Blaziek reported that the Association is dissolving.

VII. MUSEUM DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

Director Mannel provided her monthly report of November to Shonman, who distributed it by e-mail to the Board members, and made printed copies available at the meeting. Wills pointed out a typo about the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District class, and asked for clarification about digitizing the card catalog; Walker did so. Lindsay said it would be good to analyze the surprisingly large number of hits on the website. All agreed.

VIII. LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Museum Association [Blaziek]

There was no written report from the meeting the previous evening, but Blaziek said the *Horizon* is at the printer, there is little activity by the Association Board, and the main concern is the upcoming vote by the members about dissolving the Association.

Sally Herrgott asked how many members were in the Association (800), and Pat Herrgott asked if Association members would become members of the Foundation (yes, similar to members of the Monterey Bay Aquarium.)

Shonman said he was trying to get the Foundation to send a liaison person from the Foundation Board to the Museum Board meetings.

B. Monarch Advocacy Liaison Report [Blaziek]

Blaziek provided Shonman with her Monarch Liaison report, which Shonman distributed to the Board members last week. She reiterated that the Monarch Madness was a great success; it was “mad and fun.”

Lindsay asked about the decline in numbers of butterflies this year; Mannel (who had arrived) said she was organizing a symposium on monarchs for next spring to address that issue.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update - Point Pinos Lighthouse Issues

Shonman said he continues to meet with people concerned about the Lighthouse, and the City has appointed the Golf Course Superintendent, Daniel Gho, to oversee it. He anticipated the formation of a Friends of the Lighthouse group.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Museum Collection: Proposed Accessions.

Walker discussed a letter Shonman had distributed earlier by e-mail about accessioning two baskets and a hat that had been in the collection since the mid-1980s. This needed to be approved by the City Council. Lindsay asked if there would be other items to be accessed, and Walker said yes. Lindsay requested that they be bundled together so that the Council could consider them altogether; Walker agreed.

It was moved that the Board recommend to the Council that the accession of the baskets and hat be approved; approved unanimously.

**B. Monarch Grove Sanctuary - Management Responsibilities
(part 1)**

Because she had to leave for another meeting, Shonman asked Perez-Martinez to give near the beginning of the meeting an overview of how the Public Works Department dealt with the Sanctuary, specifically trimming trees earlier in the fall.

Perez-Martinez reported that Paul Finnegan gave her his file on the Sanctuary when he left the Museum in 2007. That included a Sanctuary Management Plan prepared for the City in 1998 by Stuart Weiss, then at Stanford University. She said the Department has followed the guidelines in that plan, including care for the trees in the Sanctuary. Two large limbs fell into private yards adjacent to the Sanctuary in April and May, 2009, and there was concern about public safety. A tree-trimming firm was contracted to trim additional hazardous limbs.

Perez-Martinez said the trimming was done over two days in late September, following specifications in the 1998 Management Plan, and before the monarchs were expected to arrive. However, to date very few monarchs have appeared in the Sanctuary, or elsewhere in Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties. Some people, including Francis Villablanca a population geneticist at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, suggested that the trimming discouraged the butterflies from returning to the Sanctuary, although there could be other factors as well.

Perez-Martinez said Stuart Weiss had been contacted to evaluate the situation and to update the Management Plan. She also said that Pat Herrgott requested a report be made of the action; she said that was a good suggestion, and it would be done in the future.

Pearse asked what the role of the Board might be with this issue, and who would negotiate or coordinate the science oversight of the Sanctuary. Arcanin was reassured that the trimming was consistent with the Weiss Management Plan. Wills confirmed that an arborist was present during the trimming. Shonman said there had to be a balance between public safety and the butterflies; if public safety was threatened by the trees, and they could not be trimmed because the butterflies depended on them, the Sanctuary should be closed to the public.

In public comment, Pat Herrgott reviewed the history of the Sanctuary site going back to the 1920s, and pointed out that she and her sister have been involved with the site for nearly 20 years. She said they were instrumental in getting the City to acquire the property. She worried that the piles of branches and leaves that were in the Sanctuary now were a fire hazard, and stated that the Management Plan needed to be updated. She also said she was frustrated that she had not received the public documents about the trimming she had requested. In response, Perez-Martinez said (1) she thought removing the piles of branches and leaves might disturb the butterflies at this time, (2) she had given the documents the Herrgotts requested to the Director of Management and Budget (Jim Becklenberg), and (3) she is working closely with Museum Director Mannel on managing the Sanctuary, as required in the City's General Plan. Perez-Martinez left the meeting.

(part 2)

Because she was only able to attend the second half of the meeting, Mannel could only speak of the tree-trimming issue at the end of the meeting. Shonman reviewed the issues and asked Mannel to give her views both about the trimming and the Museum's responsibilities to the Sanctuary.

Mannel said there was never any complaint from the Museum about the safety at the Sanctuary that led to the trimming, as stated and quoted in a public document prepared by Pat Herrgott, Sally Herrgott, Bob Pacelli,

and Esther Trosow dated November 18, 2009. She said the Museum often comments on issues, but it does not serve as a scientific advisor to the City. She pointed out that Paul Finnegan, the Museum Director before her, was involved with the Sanctuary, but that was not in his job description, and he never had a role of hiring or obtaining scientific advisors. Whether the Museum should have such a role was up to the Council; it could do so if funding for it was provided.

Sally Herrgott gave Mannel a copy of an e-mail with her quotes, and Mannel responded that that was a note she wrote to the City Manager and Perez-Martinez when she passed on an email to them from Paul Cherubini about the trimming. It was not a complaint nor the basis for the trimming, which had already happened.

Lindsay pointed out that the delay between the time the limbs fell (spring) and the trimming (September) was simply because Public Works is short of staff, including even those arranging outside contractors. She also said the management of the Monarch Grove Sanctuary was the responsibility of the City Manager, although the Museum could provide scientific assistance. Mannel said that is what the Museum does, but not as a specified advisor.

Shonman said he was concerned that responsibility for the Sanctuary was specifically written out of the agreement between the City and the Foundation. He then talked about his visions for the Museum; he would like to see it be the center for all science and nature-related issues in Pacific Grove, from mountain lions, to tidepools, to kelp forests, to monarchs.

Pat Herrgott expressed her opinion that Shonman should say what he means once and then move on to action. She felt she had wasted her time at the meeting. She thought there should be a steward for the Sanctuary, and Shonman should move to see that happen, not just talk.

Sally Herrgott said that scientists (presumably such as Paul Cherubini, who is not a scientist) came to the Museum unaware, in her opinion, that it is not a “scientist’s place” now; she thought science had been dropped by the Foundation, and that the Board had become non-functional.

Shonman thanked Pat and Sally Herrgott for their opinions.

Adjournment: 6:20 pm

The next Museum Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15, 2009 at 10:30 am to discuss the Board’s role in the City governance.

Respectively submitted,
John Pearse
Member, Museum Board, City of Pacific Grove