

## PACIFIC GROVE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

### Museum Board Meeting

### MINUTES

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11 March 2009

PRESENT: David Shonman (Chair), Geva Arcanin, Sharon Blaziek, John Pearse, Judy Wills  
ABSENT: *none*  
STAFF: Annie Holdren, Lori Mannel  
GUESTS: Jason Burnett, Paul Finnegan, Pat Herrgott, Sally Herrgott, Deborah Lindsay (Council Liaison), Nancy McDowell (Lighthouse Docent Coordinator), Harriet Mitteldorf, Lila Staples, Esther Trosow,

Chair Shonman called the meeting to order at 3:35pm

- I. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Approved as presented.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Board members pointed out several corrections in the draft minutes of the 11 February 2009 meeting. Wills moved and Arcanin seconded that the corrected minutes be accepted. Approved unanimously.
- III. **CORRESPONDENCE:** No correspondence had been received by the Board since the last meeting.
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** No comments from the public attending the meeting.
- V. **CITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMENTS:** Council Liaison Deborah Lindsay reported that the City budget for the 2009-2010 fiscal year was projected to be \$1.3 million short; she recommended that this be taken into consideration as plans are made for the Museum. She also said the City staff is scheduled to brainstorm with the City Council on how to deal with the shortfall.
- VI. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** Shonman discussed the letter he had sent to interim City Manager Charlene Wiseman, suggesting that the Museum Board and the City Council cooperate wherever possible as each group reviews the Museum Foundation of Pacific Grove's proposal to fund and operate the Museum. Pearse complimented Shonman for sending the letter and mentioned it would be good for the City Attorney to coordinate his advice to the Board and Council to reduce legal charges.  
Shonman thanked Mannel and her staff for the work they have been doing.  
Wills commented that she brought her second grade class to Science Saturday and it was incredible. She complimented Holdren for organizing the program.
- VII. **MANAGER/STAFF REPORT:** Mannel's report had been distributed earlier to the Board and she commented on it. Mannel reported that that the opening of the Darwin exhibit, with Steve Palumbi's opening lecture, and the following Darwin birthday party was a huge success. There is even talk that the exhibit be made permanent.  
Mannel said that Science Saturday was fabulous, with family after family complimenting it. The education docents have been excellent, and their management by Tama Olver and Holdren also excellent. We now have distinct categories of volunteers:

for the store, garden, exhibits, and welcoming. Mannel also reported that the paperwork on the volunteers is now in order.

Mannel reported that the City Council approved the proposed design for the backyard at their last council meeting.

Mannel's report was discussed by the Board members. Arcanin pointed out that even though the counter was broken, an estimate of the visitors coming into the Museum should be made. Mannel said a new counter would soon be installed.

Arcanin noted that Holdren is now doing school outreach visits, and that Museum curator Mark Walker was able to attend the California Association of Museums meeting. Mannel said she obtained a scholarship to pay for Mark's attendance.

Mannel clarified concern about the drainage system under the Museum; Public Works checked it and it works fine. She also reported that grinding stones, earlier thought to be missing, had been located.

Shonman asked about the report of an incident at the Lighthouse; Nancy McDowell responded that a docent turned an ankle, but is OK.

The Board accepted Mannel's report.

### VIII. LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

**A. Museum Association:** Blaziek reported that a new Store Manager has been hired, Nancy York, who is fixing up the store and ordering new items. She said the Horizons newsletter is in press with information about Science Saturdays, the backyard remodel, Andres Durstenfeld's and Paul Erhlich's lectures, and the upcoming exhibits on Marine Protected Areas, Wildflowers, and Feast of Lanterns.

Shonman mentioned that Association President Frank Penner agreed to send Shonman the Association Board meeting minutes to post with the City's records.

**B. Monarchs:** Blaziek also presented the Monarch Advocacy Liaison Report, including butterfly population count (over 19,000 this year at the Sanctuary, but none in Washington Park), tagging activities (some 2,900 tagged), and the search to replace the wildlife biologist, Jessica Griffiths, who is leaving. Her funding from Helen Johnson was noted in appreciation.

Pat Herrgott noted that there are many visitors to the Sanctuary who come from all over the world.

### IX. OLD BUSINESS: *None.*

### X. NEW BUSINESS

**A. Exhibits & Programs:** Mannel distributed the schedule for the exhibits and programs earlier and discussed them at the meeting. She thanked the Association for stepping in and taking care of them during the transition period over the past year, but said the Museum staff will now have the responsibility for these activities.

She reported that the Feast of Lanterns exhibit will look at the history of Pacific Grove and the place of the Chinese in that history.

Mannel said that she learned that the Museum's annual wildflower show is the largest in the western hemisphere, with over 600 species being displayed.

Arcanin recommends that the Darwin exhibit be made permanent.

Blaziek moves, Arcanin seconds, that the Board accepts and supports Mannel's schedule. Passed unanimously.

**B. Museum Ethics Policy Upgrade:** Mannel distributed the Code of Ethics Handbook for the Museum earlier. She had upgraded and updated it after discussion with City staff and a review of City Policy 200-5. It needed to be aligned with the current Mission Statement and City Codes.

Typos were noted in the document and Shonman suggested that Board members get corrections to Mannel.

Shonman and Arcanin asked for some changes and clarification, to which Mannel agreed.

Arcanin moves, Shonman seconds, that the Board support the revised document. Passed unanimously.

**C. Museum Exhibits - Opposing Views:** Shonman brought up for discussion the subject of opposing views in exhibits put on by the Museum. This was in response to an earlier email from Esther Trosow regarding following guidelines established in 1996 and adopted by the City Council about temporary exhibits that were developed in cooperation with other organizations. However, as Shonman pointed out, the contents of most or all exhibits present information that might have opposing viewpoints. Board members briefly discussed the need to be sensitive to such viewpoints, and agreed with Lori that the Museum should simply follow the science involved in the exhibit material.

**D. Museum Perspectives:** Former Director Paul Finnegan presented his perspectives about where the Museum is going now. He thought inviting him was good, and recommended getting perspectives from other former Directors. He thanked Mannel for how she is handling her position and the people around her, especially her support of Bernie Ferrara.

Finnegan then introduced an analogy of the Museum being like a bus with different drivers over time, and regular check-ups through accreditation, and funding for keeping it running.

Mannel asked about Finnegan's views on a private/public management system and he thought it would be good, especially if other museums are operating that way. Mannel said there were, and Finnegan suggested we get their advice and insight.

Finnegan said his goal was, and he still thinks should be to simply get 100,000 visitors or more to the Museum in a year. Shonman disagreed somewhat, mentioning that providing visitors with a good experience was perhaps a more important goal than just having large numbers.

Finnegan said he had been through two AAM accreditation site visits and it is really important that the City Council as the governing body of the Museum be well informed.

Finnegan thought a major weakness of the Museum was its lack of connection to the business community, with the Chamber of Commerce simply ignoring the Museum. Harriet Mitteldorf completely agreed, and said she thought the business community was missing a big opportunity by not valuing the draw the Museum, Lighthouse, and Monarch Sanctuary have for tourists. She recommended that Board members present highlights of the Museum to the City Council at all the Council meetings. It was also suggested that the Museum join the Downtown Business Improvement Association, especially because the Museum does operate a store.

The Board thanked Finnegan for his enlightening, wonderful presentation and discussion.

**Adjournment:** 5:45pm

Respectively submitted,

**John Pearse**

Member, Museum Board, City of Pacific Grove