

# **PACIFIC GROVE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

## **Museum Board Meeting**

### **MINUTES**

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13 May 2009

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

**ABSENT:** *none*

**STAFF:** Lori Mannel

**GUESTS:** Pat Herrgott, Sally Herrgott, Deborah Lindsay (Council  
Liaison), Nancy McDowell (Lighthouse Docent  
Coordinator), Esther Trosow

Chair Shonman called the meeting to order at 3:36pm

#### **I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Approved unanimously after Pearse noted that the meeting of April 21, 2009 was a Special Meeting, not a Regular Meeting.

#### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Pearse noted small corrections in the minutes of the April 8 and April 21, 2009 meetings. Both were approved unanimously with Pearse agreeing to send Shonman the corrections before having them posted on the Board's webpage.

#### **III. CORRESPONDENCE**

Shonman reported that he had received the minutes of the recent Association Board meeting, and gave them to City Clerk Ann O'Rourke. He said it was his hope that they would be put on the Board's webpage to be shared with the Public. Pearse pointed out that the webpage was not organized in such a way for such information to be readily found. Shonman suggested that he and Pearse get together to consider reorganizing the Board's webpage.

#### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Pat Herrgott thanked Blaziek for her work with the volunteer dinner.

#### **V. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMENTS**

Council Liaison Deborah Lindsay said she was pleased with the turnout of Museum supporters at the City Council meeting of 29 April.

#### **VI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Wills mentioned that although she could not attend the City Council meeting of 29 April, she heard good comments about it. She also said she enjoyed the volunteer dinner. Shonman concurred.

#### **VII. MANAGER/STAFF REPORT**

Mannel distributed the Manager's Report for April 2009. Very positive: (1) wildflower show great success, (2) education program very strong, and (3) Science Saturdays are picking up steam.

Arcanin asked where the different school groups came from; Mannel replied from many areas in our region.

Arcanin asked about quarantining items: Mannel replied that Mark Walker had set up a special room to quarantine new acquisitions.

Arcanin asked about the return of a long-term loan from the 1950s: Mannel replied that a Native American tribe in Arizona had made the loan, and requested that it be returned, which the Museum was doing.

Shonman asked when the backyard work would proceed: Mannel replied that Public Works was currently overwhelmed but would get to it as soon as they could; she also complimented Public Works for how well they have taken care of things for the Museum.

Shonman noted that the previous evening both the Association and the Audubon Society were meeting at the same time at the Museum and asked how Mannel was keeping track of the different groups: Mannel assured him she was doing so.

Shonman inquired how Holdren was involved in the programs as Chair of the Program Committee: Mannel assured him that she was very involved and mentioned that Katie Swanson was a great help with the wildflower show.

Shonman said that more care needed to be given to proof-reading materials sent out under the Museum's name. Mannel agreed.

Shonman thanked Mannel for her report.

Sally Herrgott agreed with Shonman about better proof reading and noted that the misspellings and misuse of commas on the MPA banner on the outside of the building were particularly embarrassing.

## VIII. LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

**A. Museum Association** Blaziek passed out a report covering activities of Association Board, which detailed (1) fundraising with the annual wildflower show (correcting the number of visitors from 1,970 to 2,700) and the lecture by Paul Ehrlich, (2) work beginning with the summer issue of the *Horizons* Magazine, and (3) the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. The report also mentioned that the Association continues to support the new Museum Foundation of Pacific Grove, although the relationship between the Association and the Foundation remains undetermined.

Shonman asked if there was any response to a letter sent by Association President Frank Penner to Association members about the Foundation: Blaziek and Mannel both said some positive feedback had been received.

Sally Herrgott asked why Mannel should get queries from Association members about the Foundation, saying she is confused: Blaziek reiterated that the Association is not yet clear about relationships.

**B. Monarch Advocacy** Blaziek also presented the Monarch Advocacy Liaison Report, which provided information on the planting of bottlebrush plants, and use of and relocation of a weather station.

There was some discussion about whether bottlebrush plants are native (they are not.)

Blaziek also mentioned that a replacement for Jessica Griffiths was still being sought. Pearse said he had tried to contact John Dayton but was unsuccessful. He will try again.

## IX. OLD BUSINESS

**Museum Foundation Update:** Arcanin recused herself and left the meeting.

Shonman presented a statement he sent to the Mayor and Council Members regarding the Board's Special Meeting of 21 April

dealing with the Museum Foundation of Pacific Grove's Letter of Intent. He further reported that he made comments about the Board's Special Meeting to the 29 April meeting of the City Council. He was pleased with the Council's action, accepting the Foundation's Letter of Intent as the Board had recommended.

Shonman said he understood that negotiations were proceeding with the hope that a proposal could be brought to the Council at their meeting of 3 June, but the Board should review the proposal first. He asked that the Board members keep 27 May open for a possible meeting to consider the proposal, but he will not call for the meeting unless he receives the proposal, expected to be about 15 pages long, several days earlier.

Lindsay inserted her opinion that the schedule was too fast, and that she did not think the Council would be ready to make a decision at their 3 June meeting.

Shonman mentioned that the Foundation received Federal approval of non-profit status last week. Consequently, the public/private partnership was moving forward (explaining that "public" means "City" and "private" means "Foundation".) Shonman also reported that with respect to the availability of the Foundation's By-laws Councilwoman Bennett said at the 29 April Council meeting that they are available from the State. However, Shonman will strive to get them posted on the Board's webpage.

Shonman further commented on things he heard at the 29 April City Council meeting:

(1) The City is selling the Museum. Not true; the Letter of Intent is for the City to contract for the Foundation to operate the city-owned Museum.

(2) The Foundation will rename exhibits, even the Museum itself as part of rebranding for fundraising. Not true: any renaming will have to be done with City approval.

(3) The Packard Foundation and/or the Monterey Bay Aquarium want to take over the Museum. Extremely unlikely: the Packard Foundation has funded many causes but has never taken over any of them. However, Shonman pointed out that the Museum and Aquarium share many supporters and volunteers so the link between the two organizations is to be expected.

Pearse then commented on statements he made and heard about the California Academy of Sciences:

(1) He corrected a statement he made at both the 21 April Board meeting and the 29 April City Council meeting that the California Academy of Sciences is a private/public institution. In fact, the City of San Francisco only shares responsibility with the Academy over the Steinhart Aquarium, which is part of the California Academy of Sciences.

(2) He corrected a claim made by Trosow at both the 21 April Board meeting and the 29 April City Council meeting that the California Academy of Sciences operated under the Brown Act. He did that by reading a response he received from Alison Rempel Brown, the Chief Finance and Operations Officer of the Academy, saying that the neither the Brown Act nor the City of San Francisco's Sunshine Law applies to the Academy.

Trosow replied that she had found out the same thing, but she thought the Brown Act did apply to the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (i.e., the Palace of the Legion of Honor and the DeYoung Museum.)

Pat Herrgott said she did not want to see secrets at the Museum and in particular, she had lost trust with the Association. Pearse said he agreed that there should not be secrets with how the Museum operates, whether the Brown Act is in place or not.

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

Shonman said he asked Mark Walker to come to one of the Board's meeting to give a report on the Museum's collections. However, Walker cannot come on Wednesdays so the meeting may be shifted to a Friday next month.

Shonman said the next City Council meeting is scheduled for 20 May and he will give an update on it. He encouraged other Board members to attend.

**Adjournment:** 4:55pm

Respectively submitted,

John Pearse

Member, Museum Board, City of Pacific Grove