

# PACIFIC GROVE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

## Museum Board Meeting

### MINUTES

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10 June 2009

PRESENT: David Shonman (Chair), Sharon Blaziek, John Pearse, Judy Wills  
ABSENT: Geva Arcanin  
STAFF: Lori Mannel  
GUESTS: Ed Bredthauer, David Laredo (City Attorney), Deborah Lindsay (Council Liaison), Nancy McDowell (Lighthouse Docent Coordinator), Tama Olver, Frank Penner (Museum Association President), Judd Perry, Lila Staples, Terry Trotter, Vern Yadon, Nancy York

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

**I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Approved unanimously.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approved Minutes of 13 May 2009 Museum Board meeting unanimously with Pearse agreeing to send Shonman minor corrections before he has them posted on the Board's webpage.

**III. CORRESPONDENCE**

Vern Yadon presented the Board a memorandum about the condition of the collections when he became the Director in 1957, some of the changes he had made while Director, and his concern about its care in its current state and if and when it is turned over to the Foundation.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*none*

**V. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMENTS**

Council Liaison Deborah Lindsay said she was pleased with the City Council's unanimous support of the first reading of the proposed Agreement between the City and Museum Foundation at their meeting of 3 May.

**VI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Pearse said he was impressed that all the Council members were able to read the Agreement on such short notice before their 3 May meeting.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

Shonman summarized the ongoing process in developing an agreement between the City of Pacific Grove and Museum Foundation of Pacific Grove, the unanimous support of the first reading of the Agreement at the 3 June meeting of the Council, and the Mayor's request that the Board look at it carefully before the second reading at their meeting on 17 June. He asked two questions of the Board: (1) Are there any parts of the Agreement that would lead the Board to recommend a "no" vote. (2) Are there any parts of the Agreement that need minor revision or clarification. He then opened the floor for comments from the public.

Foundation Board member Judd Perry said he thought that the Agreement was "just fine." He said the arrangement should be looked at as a partnership with the two parties working together with open, on-going negotiation throughout the partnership.

Vern Yadon said that he thought the creation of the partnership was very timely, and that it was beyond the time when the collections should be gone through carefully to catalog them and sort through what is valuable and what might be discarded in a documented way.

Tama Olver reported that she continued to support the partnership but was concerned about Section 5.07 in the Agreement; she suggested that the donations received at the Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary be used for the support and promotion of the Sanctuary.

Frank Penner spoke on behalf of the Board of the Museum Association. In April the Association Board sent a letter to the Association members saying they thought an arrangement with the Foundation was the only alternative for keeping the Museum open. At the Association Board's meeting the previous evening (June 9), the idea of a "partnership" was reinforced, as was Foundation President Jason Burnett's metaphor of a 6-month "dating period" to fine tune the Agreement. The Board of the Museum Association then voted unanimously in favor of the Agreement to form a public/private partnership between the City and Foundation.

Comments from Museum Board members followed:

Blaziek expressed concern about three sections of the Agreement: (1) 3.04. The Lighthouse store is part of the Association's Museum store, so that should be mentioned. (2) 4.06. There needs to be more thought about who manages the Lighthouse and how. (3) 5.07. The donations at the Butterfly Sanctuary currently pay for promotion and maintenance, and that should continue.

Wills asked about the grammatical errors that were in the draft of the Agreement presented to the City Council. Shonman said the draft had been thoroughly cleaned up in that respect.

Pearse said that there should be a summary somewhere of the anticipated full costs to the City for entering into the partnership in comparison with the full cost of the Museum to the City now, or if it is "mothballed" or closed completely.

These costs include the Annual Contribution (4.02a), maintenance (3.02), and insurance (4.05).

Pearse also said more thought needed to go into the roles of the Museum Board and the Museum Association after the partnership takes effect.

Shonman pointed out that the American Association of Museums would be looking for financial stability as they consider accreditation later this year, and the Agreement would help there. And he thought that earlier concerns about the Museum collections at City Hall and the Lighthouse had been addressed.

Shonman noted in 3.05 that the City might pay for Major Repairs out of the Museum Improvement Fund, and he asked how or if the Fund would be maintained; there seemed to be no impetus to replenish it. He also asked about the cost of “mothballing” the Museum as mentioned in 4.02c.

Mannel responded that there would be a “considerable” cost to maintaining the Museum and its collections if it was to temporarily close, or even if it was closed permanently. Lindsay asked how long it would take to dispose of the whole collection. Mannel replied that considering the care that needed to be given to the distribution and disposal of the collection, the process of fully closing the Museum would take two years or more. Lindsay said she would like to see the costs involved clarified. David Laredo pointed out that the City’s obligations to the collections are already in place, although not in the Agreement, and the Museum Board has a role in watching over those obligations.

Shonman expressed concern about the Lighthouse, saying that the City has never developed a plan for caring for the Lighthouse, and it should do so.

Shonman also pointed out that the Wildflower show ran for three days, two of which were days when the Museum was normally open. Donations were collected, which might be counter to 5.06a. Perry responded that the key word in 5.06a was “private,” and the restriction would not apply to public events, even those that accepted donations. There was also discussion about how 5.06b would be interpreted.

Shonman agreed with Olver and Blaziek about retaining the donations at the Monarch Sanctuary for use by the Sanctuary; Perry said the Association should receive the funds since it is responsible for the Sanctuary.

With no further general discussion, Shonman repeated his first question to the Board: Does anyone see any fatal flaws with the Agreement? The Board was unanimous in agreeing that there are none, and that the Agreement should be approved.

Two issues emerged with further discussion about suggested changes or clarifications that the Board saw needed resolution: (1) the role of the Museum with the Lighthouse, and (2) the role of the Board itself within the partnership if it is to form.

Shonman suggested that the Museum have a more active role in managing the Lighthouse; Yadon reported that the Heritage Society wants to return the landscaping to what it was like during World War II, including bringing back alien species; Olver thought the City should clarify its intentions with the Lighthouse, and Mannel pointed out that the Museum already cares for the

collections on display both at the Lighthouse and in City Hall, which are treated as formal loans. David Laredo finished the discussion saying that the City needed to work with the Museum Board in dealing with its responsibilities for those collections.

Shonman then asked for a motion from the Board about what to advise the City Council. Blaziek moved and Pearse seconded that the Board recommend to the Council that they approve the Agreement between the City of Pacific Grove and the Museum Foundation of Pacific Grove, and that a partnership be formed that would continue good faith discussions over the next six-to-twelve months fine-tuning the agreement. Passed unanimously by the four members of the Board present.

Shonman suggested that at next month's meeting the Board discuss what its role should be during and after the transition to the partnership between the City and Foundation, if such a partnership is formed.

**Adjournment:** 5:15 pm

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