

PACIFIC GROVE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Museum Board Special Meeting

MINUTES

22 July 2009

PRESENT: David (Shonman Chair), Sharon Blaziek, John Pearse,
Judy Wills
ABSENT: Geva Arcanin
STAFF: Lori Mannel
GUESTS: Nancy McDowell (Lighthouse Docent Coordinator)

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

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Shonman proposed putting item XA. before IXA. to give Mannel the opportunity to leave early. Approved unanimously.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Wills corrected two typos she spotted. Corrected minutes approved unanimously

III. CORRESPONDENCE

none

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

none

V. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON COMMENTS

Council Liaison Deborah Lindsay told Shonman she would not be able to attend because of other duties.

VI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Wills reported that she found Science Camp to be going extremely well.

Pearse said he was pleased to see that City Clerk Ann O'Rourke had placed all the material handed out at the meetings on the City's Museum Board website with the "agenda" listed for each meeting. Shonman confirmed that has been the case since April, and said O'Rourke told him she would also make sure that all the Council members received the minutes of the Board meetings before their City Council meetings.

VII. MANAGER/STAFF REPORT

Mannel discussed the monthly reports for both May and June, that were available in printed form as well as on the Museum Board's website (see above.) Both were very positive reports: attendance has been strong and the education programs are doing very well; kids are now bringing their parents to the Museum. The Museum's first summer camp was in June highlighted by a squid dissection directed by Professor Gilly at Hopkins Marine Station.

Blaziek complimented Annie Holdren for doing so much with the education program, saying she is just incredible.

Pearse suggested that visitor attendance and volunteer hours be presented as running graphs so trends could be seen; Mannel agreed. Pearse also suggested that the locations of the visiting school groups be listed as it appears that they come from a wide area in Monterey County, not just Pacific Grove. Mannel also agreed.

Wills asked about the "continued to estimate storage expansion area needed" in item VIII on the May report. Mannel said that the staff has been going through the collection space to see where it might be expanded.

Shonman asked what could be expected when the Foundation takes over running the Museum in August. Mannel said the transition should be seamless. The staff would continue as before (Mannel would become the Director, and the administrative assistant and perhaps the curator would both go to full time.)

Shonman also asked what is being done with respect to AAM accreditation. Mannel said she is working with past Directors Finnegan and Yadon, as well as Mark Walker, the curator, to prepare for the site visit in October. She said accreditation will be of highest priority for the Foundation.

Mannel also reported that the oak habitat exhibit planned for October has been cancelled. The exhibit was to be done by Dr. Mark Stromberg of the University of California, Berkeley's Hastings

Natural History Reservation in Carmel Valley. However, he has lost most of his staff and has been put on part-time himself as a consequence of the State budget restrictions, and is unable to work on the exhibit. Fortunately, Mannel will be able to replace that exhibit with one featuring material in the Museums collections, called “Treasures from the Basement.”

VIII. LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Museum Association

Blaziek reported that the Association Board met the previous evening and discussed how they would work with the new Foundation. They will engage an attorney to negotiate their future, whether to disband or merge in some way with the Foundation; membership will be retained. She also said that Jacque Colbert has joined the Museum Association Board, replacing Andres Durstenfeld who resigned because budget cuts at the Monterey Peninsula College require that he teach more there. Blaziek further reported that the Association would be holding a fund-raiser for the Museum in connection with the Treasures from the Basement exhibit.

B. Monarch Advocacy Liaison

Blaziek said she had no report.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. Museum Foundation Agreement

Shonman reviewed the June 17 City Council meeting, and how the Board helped in the Council’s decision process by holding public meetings and passing on information to the Council. He said that Foundation President Jason Burnett’s letter to the Council also helped, and asked Board members to pass on suggestions for further modification to the Agreement.

The other Board members all complimented Shonman for his leadership, and on the gracious way he treated people at the Board meetings, even those who were highly critical of decisions being made. Shonman said he always welcomed public comment, which could alert the Board of unforeseen problems.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. De-Accession and Repatriation of Museum Collection Items

Mannel explained a request from the Arizona State Museum for the return of 8 funerary items loaned to the Museum in 1952. She presented a document prepared by Mark Walker recommending their de-accession. The items are to be repatriated to the White Mountain Apache tribe under the North American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. Shonman moved, Blaziek seconded, and the Board voted unanimously to support the recommendation.

B. Museum Board Function and Responsibilities

Shonman presented his overview of the Board's function, referring to the City Attorney's letter addressing Council questions about the Museum lease. It appeared clear that the Board has the responsibility to watch over the collections and facilities. A good discussion followed, with agreement that the Board continues to have a major role to both advocate for the Museum and look out for the City's interests.

Adjournment: 5:10 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12th at 3:30pm

Respectively submitted,

John Pearse

Member, Museum Board, City of Pacific Grove