**VMNH Board of Trustees**

**Strategic Planning Committee Minutes**

December 7, 2022, 12:30-1:30pm

Patrick Henry Building, 1111 East Broad Street Richmond, VA 23219

Attendees: Roberto Quinones (BOT), Mark Buss (BOT), Joe Keiper, Mary Zell Galen

Absent: Sherri Jordan (BOT), Cord Cothren (BOT), Bill Kirby (VMNH-F), DB Poli (VMNH-F, unofficial committee member)

Virtual participants: Ryan Barber, Jonathan Martin

1. **Welcome, Committee Chair, Roberto Quinones**
   1. **Foundation Updates**

* Roberto Quinones: Provided overview of the previous meeting’s minutes and conversation with Bill Kirby, Foundation Board member. Roberto and Bill met by phone the day before and explained Bill’s perceptions of VMNH-F’s strategic planning activities and future aspirations.
* Mark Buss: asked if the VMNH-F has taken steps to make changes, but Roberto reported that Bill had not seen long-term plans for the Foundation: these were usually discussed by the executive committee and trickled down to rest of the board. No strategic planning seems to be done. He had not seen any longer term planning on what foundation “may want to look like” in later stages.
* Joe Keiper: explained that much of the Foundation’s work is completed by the Foundation’s executive committee and VMNH staff. Budget is planned for full year in advance. Joe spoke with nominating committee to ensure that members have fundraising experience, but that has not led to results. *(Strategic concern? -RQ)*
* Joe Keiper: Current Board does provide some fundraising support, including current Board president who helps provide funding for the Museums for All program.
* Joe Keiper/ Ryan Barber: Other limitation is Martinsville a small city with a larger number of nonprofits, with limited economic resources.
  1. **Meeting Outcomes**
* Joe Keiper: Several items wanted to discuss from the agenda.
* Mark Buss: All material will fit into the agenda.
* Roberto Quinones: Hopes to create a list of ongoing questions that help define the Board, and also develop a list of formal suggestions/ recommendations to pass along to the Board. Wants to regularly share items with Board for action. Need a better understanding of what the Foundation will do ongoing into long term.

1. **Diversity, Joe Keiper & Ryan Barber**
2. DEAI webinar hosted by the Virginia Association of Museums, upcoming on December 12, 2022

* Joe Keiper: Will be attending along with Mary Zell Galen, and hope to get good DEAI information to implement.

1. Bilingual exhibits at VMNH, including VMNH-Waynesboro

* Joe Keiper: Science of Flight, the museum’s first fully bilingual exhibit, has been well-received.
* Joe Keiper: VMNH trustees are requesting exhibits/ spaces that will be fully multilingual in Waynesboro facility.

1. Increasing workforce diversity

* Museum Experiences Manager position advertised on Diversity.com
* Joe Keiper: Limited interaction with Diversity.com, with only 8 clicks and 0 applications from portal. More diverse engagement through the state job portal
* Ryan Barber: Received a diverse pool for the museum experiences manager, just not from Diversity.com.
* Other roles
* Roberto Quinones: Need to identify websites that cater jobs to diverse audiences. Suggested reaching out to other groups, like Museum Hue or AAM Affinity Group.
  + Mark Buss asked about state support for hiring, and Joe explained that resources are limited.
  + Roberto Quinones: Suggested connecting with Omar Eaton-Martinez about future hiring diversity questions.
* Roberto Quinones: asked about facilities roles that are available, and Joe Keiper explained that all roles have been filled.

IDEA Center at Florida Museum of Natural History

* + Joe Keiper: Rearranged DEAI to IDEA, provide internships for students of diverse backgrounds, and provide feedback for job search processes. Last two faculty hires came from Brazil, so are meeting with some success.
  + After they receive their reaccreditation, VMNH can reach out and model after this program.

1. **VMNH Strategic Plan**

Joe Keiper: Overview of strategic plan

* + History of original plan:
    - Created in 2020, before and at the beginning of Covid closures
    - VMNH brought in David Chesebrough, museum consultant, to facilitate a five-year planning process
    - Initial plan had Goals 2-7, but Goal 1 was created to include Research and Collections in the plan and provide marketing leverage. However, these research centers have not picked up traction.
  + Explained current efforts to reach plan’s goals and objectives

1. Establish VMNH Research Centers: ongoing due to new staff and new opportunities

Proposed use of organically formed centers of excellence at VMNH, instead of prior research centers:

- The Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab

- The STEM Lab (digital resources), including 3D scanning and printing

- The Microscopy and Student Instruction Lab (hands-on resources), just hosted 1st student group

- Molecular/ Genetics Lab, where DNA is extracted

Discussion

* Mark Buss: asked to make sure all research centers were tied directly to the museum’s charter, and then spending reflects these goals (and as needed, goals are expanded or amended).
* Mark Buss: Additionally, expressed concern that the museum does not spend enough time presenting themselves as specified centers of excellence, instead of all current efforts surrounding visitors and museum education.
* Joe Keiper: Staff can help identify how much of budget goes to research and collections.
* Mark Buss: Provided document [see referenced materials] that outlines museum charter and spending. Wants to ensure that charter and strategic plan still meets museum’s goals.
* Roberto Quinones: ASAE management threads have provided resources about these questions, including creating an ongoing list of questions for the Board as the organization changes, including ensuring that the Board measures itself, compared to how customers and stakeholders measure VMNH.
* Mark Buss: Part of Board’s job is to track where museum is going, so museum can evolve as its work as priorities (or its operating environments, i.e., remote education) shift.
* Roberto Quinones: asked about how museum tracks visitors, satisfaction, and progress for strategic plan. Supports Mark’s chart, as he hasn’t seen any other indicators measuring strategic plan accomplishments.

2. Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion: proposed opening 2023.

- Slowness of architects, DGS process

- Staff presently ready to work

3. Establish a canopy walk at the nearby J. Frank Wilson Park.

- Working gradually with professional architect to develop roadmap

- May benefit from meeting with Dept of Engineering and Building early

4. Create an Early Childhood Learning Center

- Results of 5 December 2022 meeting with house appropriations staff

- Proposal for state funding resubmitted

- Working title to be renamed the Young Explorers Center

5. Rehab the Douglas Avenue Building

- Roof complete

- Conducting some interior clean-up and repair

- HVAC targeted for upgrade using Maintenance Reserve Funds

- The environment of Douglas is important for the rehousing of the museum’s physical library to free up space for Early Childhood Learning Center

Discussion: Joe Keiper: Started project following the AAM reaccreditation in 2010, as VMNH needed to reach a larger audience and increase earned revenue. The basis for this project came from the Charter.

6. Establish at branch of VMNH near the Shenandoah National Park

- Detailed Planning continuing

- Hard cost analysis in January 2023

- Floodplain and archaeological survey

7. Attain reaccreditation through the American Alliance of Museums in 2025.

- Ad hoc committee to be formed 2023

- Two BOT, two VMNH-Foundation, Keiper and Galen as ex officio

Discussion: Joe Keiper: Prior discussion leads into goals for AAM reaccreditation.

- Joe Keiper: Worked with Lisa Carter to develop of committee members, including Roberto Quinones, Sherri Jordan, Jennifer Thomas, and Phyllis Newbill. All other staff and Board members will also be welcome to participate. VMNH will complete the self-study, and committee will review them.

- VMNH staff will create forms, update policies, and share.

1. **Open Discussion**
   1. **FOIA Discussion**
      * Roberto Quinones: Asked about update on possibility of virtual meetings, as it’s challenging to make progress when in-person participation is limited. (Maybe reschedule dates as needed for full participation.)
      * Joe Keiper: explained FOIA limitations and his past requests for remote participation and reminded that remote voting is now allowed.
   2. **VMNH Annual Report**
      * Roberto Quinones: Asked about viewing annual report. Ryan Barber explained what appears on the website, including all year-end financials by November 1 annually. VMNH also publishes donor information.
      * Link to 2021-2022 Annual Report here: <https://www.vmnh.net/about/annual-report>
      * Roberto Quinones: State statute says the BOARD must be sending report in. Besides statute requirement, creating this could be used as strategic tool when meeting with legislators. Mark Buss pulled up statute to confirm this requirement.
   3. **Leave-Behinds**

* Mark Buss and Roberto Quinones: Propose that the basis of the annual report should be transformed into the leave-behind.
* Mark Buss: Suggests creating additional report, that could be part of the leave-behind, that lists all items of the charter and budget amount. Explains that this is a Board issue, not a problem for staff. Joe Keiper: Explains that VMNH can show benchmarks in each element of the strategic plan, with the exception of the first goal on the strategic plan. Mark Buss says goals on Strategic Plan suggest the needs to update the charter, such as including the goal to be an accredited institution.
* Joe Keiper: Leave-behind can take any format, but one main message needs to be that the VMNH-Waynesboro project needs to move the capital pool as soon as possible. VMNH could potentially make a separate leave-behind for broader budget.
* Roberto Quinones: Committees themselves should be completing work, such as the leave-behind for legislators.
* Mark Buss: volunteers to put some thought/ brainstorming into what the leave-behind will look like.
* Ryan Barber: Reminds leave-behind will depend on what the governor’s budget looks like, which will be released on December 15th.
* Joe Keiper: Reminds the capital pool funding will typically be the biggest ask, which is already written in legislation.
* Joe Keiper and Jonathan Martin: Much of this is impacted by state staff, not the legislators. Joe Keiper explains yesterday’s visit from appropriations committee staff, who set the budget.
  + Joe Keiper: Reminds committee that form letter, requested by Lauren Woodson, will be sent to all Board members to send to their legislators later this week. VMNH will send out calendar invite along with sending letter.
  1. **Question proposed by Joe Keiper** (from last committee meeting): How would the 2032 Board finish the statement, “I’m glad the 2022 Board moved forward with A-B-C to give us 1-2-3…”
* Roberto Quinones: Discussed it some, but need to figure out how to get everyone on the same page. Wants to know what VMNH/ the Board wants to look like at next level/future. How can VMNH set things up to ensure goals are met?
  + Mark Buss: Worksheet of budget/ plan was created for future meetings, to help better check in on progress.
* Joe Keiper: Part of answer is changing narrative of museum’s authority. Museum first attempted to lay low, but VMNH-Waynesboro will be first step to VMNH larger presence. VMNH’s projects can add value, revenue, and dollars flowing into the local economy. Wants to leave Board with larger budget, and more options when pursuing future goals.
  + Roberto Quinones: To support these efforts, need to clarify priorities and determine how the Board thinks about goals. The frequent changes of Board members makes this challenging, and we need to set up better process to orient new Board members and ensure continuity of goals/plans.
  + Joe Keiper: In 2010, the museum’s collection and education goals were the museum’s best asset. While these are still the museum’s backbone, there’s larger goals to pursue.
    - Roberto Quinones: Need to define the museum’s national reputation.
    - Mark Buss: Need to push to pursue goals or will stagnate. Exciting projects, like the Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab, draw national attention (centers of

excellence for research need PR attention as well).

* 1. **VMNH-Foundation**

Roberto Quinones: Asks if Foundation centers on public-facing fundraising, while grants are completed by VMNH staff?

* + Joe Keiper: Curators are self-sufficient, and all bring in additional funding (with Ryan Barber serving as grants officer). Educators also bring in funding, but with more support from Ryan Barber. Exhibits, staff professional development, and scholarships have more support from Foundation.
  + Roberto Quinones: Asked if Foundation members work with other Foundations to find funding. Joe Keiper explained that have some supports, but corporation foundation support is limited. Foundation does not have that core competency yet.
  + Mary Zell Galen: Explains that many Foundation spots will be open in the new year, and Board members are welcome to make recommendations.
  + Joe Keiper: Martinsville does not have many national headquarters, which limits supporters.
  + Roberto Quinones: Museum is a state resource, so should be able to require supports from all across the state.

**f. Review of current stakeholders list**

* Joe Keiper: VMNH will share list with the committee to review.
* Need much deeper detail with actual people contacts and potential board connections.

1. **Adjournment:** Roberto Quinones: Conclude meeting by reviewing chart of Board goals [See attached].

*DRAFT #1*

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FULL BOARD DISCUSSION/ADOPTION**

1) Annual Report as “strategic tool”

\* Add draft requirement to scheduled annual meetings

\* Use as leave behind (for meetings with legislators)

\* Monitor contacts list and relationships

2) Scheduling time with the Foundation on some frequency

3) Need all to develop DEIA fluency and how to integrate on “all we do”

4) Stakeholder list: each member’s key contacts

**ONGOING PLANNING QUESTIONS FOR BOARD**

1) How to develop tools to monitor progress? Metrics? Surveys?

2) How is each “project” fulfilling “mission”? Does mission need refinement?

3) How to define “success”?

4) How does accreditation drive planning process?

- ongoing tasks/teams

5) National/state “reputation” as ROI component