



**Virginia Museum of Natural History  
Waynesboro Advocacy Committee Meeting  
Minutes 11.12.24**

Attending: Tom Benzing (Chair), Faye Cooper, Maggie Van Huss, Greg Hitchin, Joe Keiper, Jonathan Martin, Jennifer Whitlow (minutes)

Attending by Zoom: Carole Nash, Ryan Barber

Dr. Tom Benzing called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone at 1 PM. There was no quorum present, therefore no votes were taken. It was noted that minutes from the last two meetings (August 2024 and September 2024) will be approved at the December meeting.

Dr. Keiper reported that the exhibit design work was not fully funded due to an error that underfunded the amount of exhibit space available in the new facility. We are about \$100,000.00 short.

Dr. Keiper recommended use of the \$50,000.00 that was appropriated for artistic renderings and preliminary exhibit development. Then as the full amount of capital funds become available this will offset the shortfall. General discussions and agreement to use funds. Dr. Nash asked about guarantees for amount of funding. Mr. Martin assured the committee that the state budget office is aware of the error and this plan to rectify was recommended by their office.

Further discussion tabled until a quorum is reached.

Reminder the next installment of the Waynesboro Theatre lecture series is Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup>, featuring, Dr. Jackson Means, Assistant Curator.

Dr. Benzing added there will be a 5:15 - 6:45 PM reception at the Center for Coldwaters Restoration Office. The lecture will begin at 7:00 PM.

Dr. Keiper reported that the Fall Foliage event didn't go as well as expected due to the primary location of the event (Downtown), foot traffic moved away from the trailer location. VMNH staff may set up a table next year in the Downtown area as was handled in previous years.

Dr. Keiper reported that VMNH is looking to hire a professional trailer rehab/renovation/repair company. \$100,000 in Maintenance Reserve Funds has been set aside to rehab the trailer. The trailer will likely be moved to the company's site during renovation/repair. Target date of first of the year to begin project.

Dr. Keiper asked about electricity from the city being wired to the trailer to eliminate the need for generators. Mr. Hitchin recommended the Waynesboro Parks and Recreation Director, Dwayne Jones for further information.

It was noted that while the trailer is still on site, Rotary or other groups can continue to utilize the trailer. Volunteer coordinator Mary Poulin can be contacted to open the trailer for individual groups.

Dr. Keiper reported the trail sign project is ongoing. Colorful graphic designs are being handled by VMNH. Waynesboro Parks and Rec will install with the target date of being finished and installed by River Fest.

Dr. Benzing added if there were extra funds, he would like to see a rock timeline to be installed on greenway. Each sign will include logos for VMNH, City of Waynesboro and Dominion Power.

Open discussion regarding the next several dates for the additional meetings. Meetings are generally the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month. These potential dates will be December 3, Jan 7, Feb 4. The Waynesboro lecture series speakers are ongoing. Although there will not be one in December. Series will return in January with speakers TBD.

VMNH Foundation board needs a local Waynesboro member. Committee will submit names for consideration.

The non-profit group, *Project Grows* is the non-profit group running the Waynesboro Farmers Market. VMNH is open to conversations and discussions with these possible partners. One idea is a harvestable landscape design with the possibility to donate the harvest to a local food bank. Dr. Benzing mentioned other potential partners such as the Master Naturalists to help with roof top garden and other people excited to get involved in the project.

To be considered next meeting are engaging any newly elected officials.

Meeting adjourned at 1:36 PM.