

Strategic Planning Committee
Monday, August 25, 2025, 4 PM
Virginia Museum of Natural History
All-Virtual



Present:	Dr. Melany Clark (Chair) Ms. Lisa Carter	Dr. Art Evans Ms. Cathy Hincker
Staff Present:	Dr. Joe Keiper (Ex Officio) Mr. Ryan Barber	Mr. Jonathan Martin Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (Minutes)

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Melany Clark called the meeting to order at 4 PM. With no absences, a quorum was found to be present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Art Evans made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Cathy Hincker to approve minutes from the 5.12.25 Strategic Planning Committee meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

REVIEW OF AAM REPORT

Dr. Keiper spoke about the AAM site reviewers' assessment of the Douglas Avenue storage facility. Preliminary work is underway to secure a remediation company who will remove all asbestos from the building. The museum is also simultaneously working with the Department of Building and Engineering (DEB) to finalize building plans for renovations. Nothing can be done, however, until the asbestos is remediated. The projected timeline to begin abatement is May 2026 with a target completion of November 2026. The taxidermy items that are currently stored at Douglas are in temperature and light controlled rooms and will be moved around as renovation takes place.

Dr. Keiper reported that in response to the AAM site review team's concern for the library books housed at Douglas, Hobo measurements were conducted, and the environment was found to be relatively stable. However, to improve conditions the museum plans to install air conditioner(s) and other environmental stabilizers to bring the room up to standard. Following discussion regarding the books and compactor shelving, Dr. Evans stressed the importance of getting the important work of upgrading the library book storage environment up to standard as soon as possible.

Another aspect of the site review report included pursuing a professional destination management firm to promote the museum with other destinations in the region. The museum is currently gathering information about fees associated with these firms. Once the cost vs return can be calculated, the museum can decide if it is feasible.

BOARD PRESENTATION REVISIT

Dr. Keiper reviewed proposed strategic plan measures. Of note,

- VA 250 events are time sensitive to 2026
- Developing and marketing 1-2 traveling exhibits is more realistic for our staff.
- The timelines included in projects that are funding dependent such as Waynesboro and the Young Explorers Center are projections. Instead, staff may include matrix about asking for the appropriate funds for these projects.

Other ideas from the committee regarding identifying strategic uses of the Adams Education Pavilion and Douglas Ave. included:

- Broaden the verbiage regarding the Adams Pavilion and Douglas Ave. to “Position the Adams Education Pavilion and Douglas Ave. as strategic tools to advance education, community vitality, and organizational stability.”
- Promote facilities with specificity to audiences such as businesses looking for a place to hold a business lunch or team building exercises.
- Host a museum “after hours” for members.
- Develop a reoccurring partnership with a business or organization in a way that doesn’t require a lot of staff time or input.

TIMELINE – NEXT STEPS

By the first full week of October the matrix and all measurables will be added to the proposed strategic plan and emailed to the entire Board of Trustees. Board members will then have time to make any comments or edits to the plan prior to the quarterly meeting in November.

Staff will schedule a meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee a couple of weeks before the board meeting. The full Board will then discuss and approve at their quarterly November meeting. Following approval, the 2025-2030 plan will be converted to a PDF electronic format and printed as necessary.

Ms. Carter proposed the adding of specific language about the many aspects of community engagement accomplished by the museum. Dr. Clark added that incorporating community engagement graphics or pictures would help readers visually make the community partnership connection.

Dr. Evans requested status updates as the library conditions at Douglas Ave. progress toward improvement.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, Dr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 4:35.