



Virginia Museum of Natural History
Waynesboro Advocacy Committee Meeting
Held on January 6, 2025, 1 PM
Minutes

Attending: Mr. Mark Buss, Mr. Len Poulin, Dr. Carole Nash, Ms. Faye Cooper, Mr. Greg Hitchin, Ms. Stephanie Duff, Dr. Joe Keiper (staff), Mr. Jonathan Martin (staff), Mr. Ryan Barber (staff), Zach Ryder (staff), Jennifer Whitlow (staff - minutes)

Welcome

Mr. Mark Buss welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:06. Ms. Cooper made a motion to approve the December minutes as presented, seconded by Mr. Buss and approved by unanimous vote.

Detailed Design

Dr. Keiper reviewed the design notes and renderings that were presented by Glave Holmes to VMNH staff last month. Mr. Poulin noted that the front façade has been simplified from the original design. Mr. Martin explained that in keeping with the states budget restrictions some of the non-essential architectural details were removed from the façade for an estimated cost savings of 5-6 million dollars. Mr. Martin shared there will be a cost review of the project in February with Glave Holmes still working on HVAC and other systems. Mr. Martin reviewed the timeline of funding for the project with submission of costs to the state budget analyst in April/May and hopeful approval of the necessary funds in July/August.

Community

Securing guest speakers for the Waynesboro Spring Lecture Series is almost complete. A speaker for March is still needed.

Trailer

Dr. Keiper shared that securing renovations to the mobile science trailer are ongoing. Mr. Barber noted that one area of the wrap is ripping but cannot be repaired until the weather is a bit warmer.

Advance Project

Dr. Keiper noted that a funding support draft letter was provided to the WAC committee. Each committee member was encouraged to review the language, include their own name and address in the letter and provide any feedback to staff as soon as possible. The goal is to present a draft copy of the approved letter to each Board of Trustees member at their next scheduled meeting (February 1, 2025). Dr. Keiper also reiterated the need for additional community support such as Chamber of Commerce, Superintendent of schools, and other community leaders involved in the letter writing campaign. Staff feels having support from multiple regions of the state will further enhance the funding request in the state budget.

Open Discussion

Dr. Keiper informed the committee that the Governor has approved two new Board of Trustee members; Cathy Hincker and David Furth. Staff will be providing a Zoom orientation to get the two new members involved in the work as quickly as possible. Mr. Buss volunteered to assist and participate.

Mr. Barber noted that the current “Bats” exhibit will be closing soon, and our new “Dinosaurs” exhibit will be ready for visitors in February. The museum is running a program (in conjunction with the opening of the new exhibit and with our request for funding) to allow any state employee to enter the museum for free. Mr. Barber noted we will review visitor analytics to see if this practice is beneficial. Employees will be notified of this benefit through email.

Stephanie Duff reminded the committee of upcoming events.

River Fest – May 3, 2025

Farmer’s Market – May 10, 2025 (Tentative)

Virginia Street Arts Festival – May 17, 2025

Waynesboro Economic Development is also hosting a Trade Show for Tourism Ambassadors on Monday, February 10, 2025, from 10 - 3 and would like representation from Virginia Museum of Natural History.

Adjournment

Mr. Poulin made a motion to close the meeting, Dr. Nash seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Next Waynesboro Advocacy Committee Meeting

Monday, February 3, 2025

1 PM

Waynesboro Office of Economic Development

