

**ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM
BOARD MEETING
May 1, 2023, 10:30 a.m.**

**Illinois State Museum
Lockport Gallery
201 W 10th St, Lockport, IL**

Attending: Officers: Chair Donna Sack, Vice Chair Lisa Lee, and Secretary Sarah Doherty; Board Members Leverne Backstrom, Tamira Brennan, Andrea Carlson (via Webex), Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Director Natalie Phelps-Finnie, Chris Pappan, Beth Shadur, and nikhil trivedi (via Webex); Illinois State Museum Society Staff Member Jamila Wicks; Illinois State Museum Staff Members Jennifer Edginton, Erika Holst, Meghan Lindstrom, Heather Miller, and Brooke Morgan;

I. Welcome

Chair Donna Sack welcomed attendees and the meeting was called to order at 10:34 am.

II. Roll Call

Meghan Lindstrom called the roll and a quorum was present.

III. Approval of the Minutes of February 6, 2023

Secretary Sarah Doherty presented the minutes for approval. Leverne Backstrom suggested a grammar correction to the Minutes. Leverne moved to approve the Minutes with the correction, Beth Shadur seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. New Business

Chair's Report

Donna shared that Roger Taylor had stepped down from the Board for health reasons. She thanked him for his years of service since he joined the Board in 2016, particularly dealing with the closure and the last Director's search.

Donna announced that Jennifer Edginton had been selected as Interim Director.

Donna reminded Board members due to the Open Meetings Act there could be no Museum business discussed by Board members in groups of over three as it violates the Act.

Donna reminded the Board that strategic planning meetings with consultant Laura Roberts had been tabled following Cinnamon's passing. She anticipates the meetings will resume soon since it is important to have a strategic plan set as the Museum prepares for reaccreditation.

Beth moved to allow Andrea to attend the meeting via Webex. Leverage seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Andrea joined the meeting at 11 am.

Donna reported she spoke with Director Finnie and Assistant Director John Rogner to outline the search for a new director and they are considering hiring a search firm. She encouraged Board members to share any search firms they would recommend. Lisa asked about the expected timeline of the director search and if Museum staff would be involved. Donna confirmed the search committee would have representatives from the Board, DNR, ISM staff, and the Society. The process is estimated to take 12 months.

Repatriation statement

ProPublica articles and US Senate letter

The DEAI committee created an outline for a statement to be made by the Board, to be released to the public to educate them how important the Illinois State Museum (ISM) considers the repatriation of ancestors. Lisa emphasized that this would be to educate the public, not to respond to the ProPublica articles about the Museum or the letter received from the US Senate. She said it would be an opportunity to take public accountability and give a pledge to continue the work, which the Board has prioritized for the last four years. Sharing the ongoing work could be used to encourage the hiring of more staff to continue repatriation work under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Jennifer confirmed that repatriation work is primarily the responsibility of Brooke Morgan but she also has other duties to complete for the Anthropology Department.

Andrea advised the Board to refrain from celebratory language in the statement and that Native communities have different standards than NAGPRA requirements.

Donna thanked the DEAI Committee for their work on the statement outline. She hoped it would help Illinoisans understand the importance of NAGPRA work and that, as a State institution, the ISM will likely always be involved in repatriation.

Lisa described more of the outline. The DEAI committee recommended two statements to acknowledge wrongs committed by the institution, then the challenges and current active work, then accomplishments.

Leverne recommended the committee make it clear in the statement that the perspective of harmed people will be prioritized in repatriation work.

Heather shared that she brought existing Tribal relationships with her to the Museum but she appreciated the work that had already been done by others to form solid relationships with several Tribes. She praised Brooke for helping to establish good consultation practices for the Museum and ensuring that all work is guided by the Tribal community, particularly the ongoing work at Dickson Mounds Museum (DMM). Heather shared some of the progress ongoing at DMM but could not share much due to the sensitive nature of the work. She confirmed the work was done with Tribal guidance and the support of Tribal partners.

Sarah asked if the DMM project could ever be considered complete if it remained open to the public. Heather confirmed that the Museum's Tribal partners support keeping the museum open and want it to become a NAGPRA center. Jenn also confirmed that Tribal partners have given the museum guidance on what they want to see at DMM in the future, including a permanent exhibit by the Peoria Tribe, funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Lisa suggested the work at DMM be highlighted in the statement.

Beth asked what the process was to respond to the US Senate letter. Brooke confirmed that she will draft answers to the questions presented in the letter along with an explanation of the Museum's established repatriation process, along with some corrections to quotes from the NAGPRA law. Her draft answers will go to the Museum's NAGPRA team for evaluation, then the Leadership team, then DNR's Legal office.

Heather informed the Board that there are unique issues delaying repatriation efforts in Illinois because it is a removal state. Tribal capacity to complete repatriation limits the process, especially since many Tribes would prefer to rebury their ancestors in Illinois but do not have Tribal land. Brooke confirmed that the first question brought up in consultations is where reburial could occur and that NAGPRA does not account for the sensitive care, physical transfer, or reburial of ancestors.

Heather shared that the Ohio History Connection had been advocating for a law which would allow cemeteries to be built on State land. She hopes that since this law passed in a nearby state that Illinois will follow with the suggested updates to the Burial Law, which would allow for faster repatriations in Illinois.

Donna recommended the statement also include information about the long fight for repatriation in Illinois. She would like the statement to acknowledge the effort of repatriation advocates and the resistance they faced, to help the public understand the history of the process.

The Board broke for lunch at 12:12 pm. The Board reconvened at 12:45 pm.

V. Director's Report

Jennifer updated the Board on the approaching reaccreditation process, the State Historic Sites transition being put on hold, and the DMM capitol project. She also shared that Brooke Morgan was invited to travel to Kenya in July to witness the return of the vigango.

Jennifer shared that the Museum was once again asked to join the First Lady's Tent at the Illinois State Fair. The tent design and activities will be based on the *Growing Up X* exhibition.

Jennifer provided an update on the exhibit schedule of all current Museum sites to the end of 2023. She also shared that the ISM would run Illinois' National History Day events starting in July. The Museum will need to hire at least one more person to run the program.

Deaccession Requests

Brooke presented a deaccession request for one bag of archaeological material collected from Shawnee National Forest in 1991 as part of a surface collections survey. Recent looting at the site revealed the presence of a burial site at the location. The Shawnee National Forest requested the return of the collection for consultation and repatriation. Tamira moved to approve the deaccession request. Beth seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Brooke presented a second deaccession request for six boxes of archaeological material collected from Gourd Creek Cave. The boxes were part of a larger collection which was gathered by a professor from Illinois State University in 1964. The boxes were transferred to the ISM in 1983. In 2019, ISM was contacted by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville regarding

the Gourd Creek Cave collection and whether it held any ancestral remains. After the collection was reviewed, ancestral remains representing at least two individuals were found. If approved for deaccessioning Brooke planned to personally transfer the collection to the University of Missouri, which has legal control of the collection and would be responsible for consultation and repatriation.

Andrea expressed concern that there was no actual repatriation work for two Board meetings and with these requests, the Board was not actually voting to return ancestors to Tribal nations. Brooke disagreed and insisted the work being done was significant and part of the repatriation process, it just was not the final step of repatriation. Heather explained that the deaccession requests presented today were requested by Tribal partners of the requesting universities.

Andrea asked what the policy was if a request came to send anything NAGPRA related to a private collection. Brooke assured the Board that no part of the Museum's collection could or would be handed over to a private collection, and that any NAGPRA eligible holdings could only legally be sent to other institutions subject to NAGPRA. She furthermore assured the Board that more active repatriation work from Museum staff is ongoing and she anticipated a vote for direct repatriation at the Board meeting in August.

Donna requested a dashboard report be created to keep the Board informed on the progress of repatriation efforts. Brooke said it was possible but she would be unable to include any sensitive or Tribally privileged information. Andrea requested links to postings made on the NAGPRA site be included.

Lisa moved to approve the deaccession request. Director Finnie seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Brooke presented a third deaccession request for ceramic shards also collected from Gourd Creek Cave. Beth moved to approve the deaccession request. Leverne seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Erika presented a deaccession request for the Cargoni collection, barring one torchlight with historical significance and proven connection to Illinois. The collection contains more than one thousand antique tools, furniture, dolls, toys, and household items which were the inventory of John D. Cargoni, an antique dealer. There were no records of where or how Cargoni acquired the items and only one had a documented connection to Illinois. The collection is

extremely large, both in number of items and in the size of many of the items. It takes up vast amounts of storage space at the Research and Collections Center while offering very little research or exhibition potential. If deaccessioned, the ISM Audience Engagement Department would look over the collection and select any items that could be used in hands-on or educational study collections. Items from the collection that are currently out on loan to historic Edwards Place would be offered to them permanently. Erika would then organize an 'open house' for the remaining items where representatives from regional museums could view the collection in person and make selections for transfer. Donna recommended the open house be expanded to include State Historic Sites.

During Erika's explanation of the Cargoni collection, nikhil trivedi joined the meeting via Webex. Donna moved to allow nikhil to attend the meeting via Webex. Lisa seconded and the motion passed unanimously. nikhil joined the meeting at 1:30 pm.

Beth moved to approve the deaccession request. Tamira seconded and the motion passed unanimously, with nikhil abstaining.

VI. DNR Report

Director Finnie provided the DNR report. She reported that DEAI remained a top priority for the agency, especially in State Historic Sites where there is a need to ensure stories are told consistently and completely. Work is also being done to meet the 30 by 30 conservation initiative by creating more state parks and other natural areas around the state. The State of Illinois is currently only at 4%. Director Finnie also reported that DNR remains understaffed and she has requested a headcount of 1250 in the next budget, which is roughly 100 more than the number of current employees.

A question was asked if there was any progress in adding "Cultural" to the department name. Director Finnie reported there had been some pushback against adding "Cultural", as many people who use other DNR services do not understand the need for the change.

Andrea asked if Director Finnie was familiar with the Landback movement. Director Finnie confirmed she was aware of it but could not speak on active work.

VII. Society Report

Jenn presented the Society report, written by Bryan Finn, the Society Chair.

Stephanie Gragg, former Shop Manager, took a new job in Indiana so the Society has begun the search for an interim shop manager. Patty Chamberlain, former accountant, resigned on March 27th. Jamila Wicks, Director of Advancement, took over Patty's former duties and the Society signed a Letter of Engagement with an accounting firm to come in twice a week to help complete financial work.

The Society plans to make two new committees. A policy committee will review existing bylaws and a personnel committee will review the employee handbook and chart structure. There are still three open positions on the Society Board.

Jamila provided a summary of events the Society has planned for the next few months, including a revival of the bus trip program. After a trip to New Harmony, Indiana in September the Society plans to continue the program with two trips per year.

VIII. Old Business

Donna asked for old business.

IX. Public Comment

None present.

X. Adjournment

Donna asked for a motion to adjourn. Leverne moved to adjourn, Beth seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.