

**ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM
BOARD MEETING**

March 1, 2021, 1 p.m.

Zoom meeting

Attending: Chair Donna Sack, Vice Chair Lisa Yun Lee, Secretary Sarah Doherty; Board members Laverne Backstrom, Tamira Brennan, Andrea Carlson, Graham Peck, Beth Shadur, Roger Taylor, and Nikhil Trivedi; Museum Society Board Chair Cinda Klickna and Advancement Director Jamila Wicks; Museum Staff Members: Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, Robert Sill, Jennifer Edginton, and Karen Everingham.

I. Welcome

Donna Sack welcomed attendees and the meeting commenced at 1:04 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Karen called the roll and a quorum was present.

III. Approval of the Minutes of December 14, 2020

The minutes were presented for approval. Sarah noted that Tamira was listed as present when she was absent. Beth moved to approve the minutes, Andrea seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

None present.

V. Chair's Report

Donna welcomed the board to the first meeting of 2021. She advised a schedule change was needed. The next scheduled meeting on June 7th conflicts with the American Alliance of Museums conference. Donna proposed moving the board meeting to June 14th. The schedule change was approved unanimously.

Donna shared that a revision to the board's statute has been filed. This is meant to clean up language that was written pre-union. The affected board duties were fixing salaries for museum staff, along with requiring board approval of the staff appointments. These are now functions of IDNR.

Museums Advocacy Day 2021 was held remotely last week over Zoom instead of in-person in Washington D.C. It was a good opportunity to bring museums' need for COVID relief assistance to the attention of federal legislators. Cinnamon remarked that shifting the event format to Zoom made it more accessible and doubled the number of delegates. All fifty states were represented for the first

time. Donna said it was reassuring to have strong support from Senators Durbin and Duckworth, as well as strong support from House members. It was good to hear their deep level of concern and it was reassuring that support for museums is a strong priority.

VI. Museum Director's Report

Cinnamon introduced the ISM's current Leadership team that was formed in January when Jennifer Edginton joined the museum. The three members of the Leadership team are Jennifer, Director of Interpretation, Jamila Wicks, Director of Advancement, and Robert Sill, Director of Collections and Research. Cinnamon invited the leadership team to introduce themselves.

Jennifer is originally from Chicago, and moved to Kenosha, Wisconsin before joining the ISM in Springfield. Her resume includes working in the Education departments at the Museum of Science and Industry, Naper Settlement, the Field Museum, and Kenosha Museum Campus. She loves working in museums and wants to make them inviting for everyone. She focuses on privileging marginalized voices and accessibility for all.

Jamila is an ISM Society employee who started working with the museum on March 1, 2020. She was originally from Atlanta where she worked with the non-profit Four Points of Light and was a consultant for the Atlanta Housing Authority. She moved to Memphis where she worked with the National Civil Rights Museum and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. Jamila's work with the ISM Society is focused on development and marketing, as well as fostering relationships with the community.

Bob became Director of Collections and Research in December 2020. He previously served over 30 years as an art curator with over 30 exhibitions focused mainly on contemporary art. He also served as Assistant Director of Art History and was the ISM Interim Director before Cinnamon. Bob expects 2021 to be a year of transition as he works on choosing a new collections management system and making the museum's work more visible to the people of Illinois. Future plans also include updates to the collections building and lab spaces, as well as taking inventory of the collections. Other priorities include the decolonization of the collections and ISM's DEAI work.

Cinnamon shared that the ISM's organization chart has been updated and streamlined with a post-Covid world in mind. While there are many vacancies some are considered priority hires.

IDNR, along with other state agencies, has been working on their DEAI plan. They are working with the Morton group and governor's office to ensure goals are attainable and manageable. Every agency has a DEAI coordinator, and a committee. Cinnamon is the IDNR coordinator. Eventually a Chief Diversity Officer will be hired to oversee DEAI efforts.

IDNR's DEAI committee is currently in the learning stage with fundamental work needing to be done. The agency itself has serious gaps in terms of employee demographics. Other agencies are in a different place on their journey. Cinnamon is incredibly grateful to have Director Callahan putting DEAI at such a high priority. The current Governor's DEAI plan is only for 18 months, with a new plan to be developed to continue the work

Four main goals were identified by the DEAI committee. First, who is in the agency and are they being supported in their work? Second, what would help the agency learn and grow? Third, think about the communities we serve. Fourth, what do we need to structurally change to be a more inclusive agency? IDNR's structure is a bit unbalanced now, with the Historic Preservation Agency merged into the Department during the period after the ISM was shut down.

At this point questions were entertained. Beth said that she understands the importance of decolonization and wanted to know how the ISM is serving the large population of African American and Latinx residents. A list of potential exhibits shown at an earlier meeting seemed to indicate that the Great Migration is a low priority. Cinnamon clarified that an exhibition on the Great Migration is an Illinois' core story that requires time and planning to execute. Additionally, ISM needs to rethink its permanent exhibits, considering how much space they occupy. Currently, ISM is collaborating on a Juneteenth partnership and Jenn is actively reaching out to institutions and communities across the state. Her current focus is on Emmett Till, Ida B. Wells, and the Latinx community.

Andrea explained that decolonization and DEAI work for Native Americans is a very immediate issue because it involves the bodies of ancestors and ongoing human rights violations.

Tamira asked for clarification on the final location of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency in IDNR since historic sites went to lands and regulatory went to real estate. Cinnamon advised that she is assisting with ironing out a more logical way of organizing the offices for better cooperation and more logical synergy in order to identify a more sustainable way to care for the state's historic sites.

Nikhil asked if the Illinois state government had wage transparency. Cinnamon confirmed that every state position had the wage and pay range online.

Sarah asked if there was approved funding for a NAGPRA officer and director of tribal relations since the positions were included on the museum's organizational chart. Cinnamon confirmed that they were approved.

VII. Orientation Part 4

Cinnamon provided examples from her work at the Abbe Museum to exemplify the process of decolonization. She acknowledged that this work is in early stages at the Illinois State Museum. She stressed that decolonization is a process, not an end goal.

Cinnamon also provided an overview of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which was enacted in 1990. NAGPRA addresses the repatriation of Native American cultural items which can refer to bodies of Native ancestors, their belongings (called "associated funerary objects"), cultural patrimony, and sacred objects. Cinnamon identified a need for the ISM to take greater action on NAGPRA-related matters beyond the minimum federal requirements.

There are many ISM specific issues and harms that need to be addressed. The ISM is believed to hold 7,000 individuals (NAGPRA data reports 5,930). Brooke Morgan updated inventory lists in 2020 so the numbers for NAGPRA will change. Since the passage of NAGPRA, only 2 percent of the ancestors held at ISM have been repatriated. The ISM has plans to hire multiple NAGPRA-related positions to aid in the continued work at ISM and Dickson Mounds.

Current NAGPRA action steps include: a pause on research access to NAGPRA-eligible individuals and objects until a new policy is written and approved by the ISM Board; closing the *Peoples of the Past* exhibit (to be replaced by a new exhibit that more appropriately interprets the history and continuing stories of Illinois' indigenous communities); and ongoing consultation with multiple communities. Cinnamon expressed her gratitude for a diverse board willing to open the conversation and help the museum tackle these issues.

Nikhil thanked Cinnamon for the information and asked about the daunting task of repatriating 7,000 Native American ancestors and how the framework would apply. Cinnamon said that it is still in the early stages. Brooke and Duane are scoping out the task and consulting Native peoples about what repatriation will

look like, along with what the museum should do and if the Dickson Mounds Museum itself should be changed. It is a conversation about how sacred the space is, and collaboration will be paramount. Native peoples will have the final decision. The history of the mound closure should also be shared publicly as part of truth-telling. Cinnamon intends to do whatever she can to ensure that Indigenous voices have authority over that space.

Tamira asked how power sharing will be achieved with over thirty groups as stakeholders. Cinnamon said that the interested groups are considering holding a meeting without ISM staff present to determine their needs and desires for the space. Then the museum will be brought in after a plan has been decided. Cinnamon's job will be to reallocate funds and support. Power sharing through the museum leadership positions may also be rethought in the future.

Lisa thanked Cinnamon for the transparency of the NAGPRA numbers. She asked if there are any forces working against repatriation and what the primary obstacles are to completing NAGPRA work. Cinnamon said there are many obstacles. It is a common in the Midwest to disconnect Native peoples from historical sites like Cahokia which academia has nurtured. Forced removal made a detachment for Native peoples even though they consider those places their ancestral homes. Cinnamon believes that people in state government are receptive, but they are often afraid of cracking open laws and policies and remaking everything. There is a need to educate people that change is possible and attainable.

Beth asked if any action had been taken on repatriation since NAGPRA has been enacted. Cinnamon said that not much work has happened yet. Brooke had facilitated a few, such as the Australian repatriation but the number is still close to the 2%. International repatriation continues but there is no global law like NAGPRA. Work is currently being done to return Kenyan vigango which had been brought to ISM as a result of the closure of another museum. One had been repatriated before because there was documentation that confirmed it was stolen. The others were also stolen but lack documentation to facilitate repatriation. The museum will host a series about global efforts to return Indigenous artifacts at the end of April.

Donna said that as a board, the best work we can do is advocate and work on educating local governments, the legislature, and the general public about the importance of this work. It should be a key part of the ISM Board's plan.

Andrea brought the language in museum inventory lists up for consideration. When writing about Native Americans in inventory lists, the “prehistoric” line of demarcation is 1673, marking the arrival of Joliet and Marquette. Native peoples are considered “culturally identifiable” only after the arrival of Europeans. Also problematic is language calling it pre- and post-contact instead of pre- and post-invasion. Native peoples mainly kept an oral history, but they did have birch bark scrolls for inventory and clearly marked where ancestors were buried, so writing did exist before Europeans arrived so “prehistoric” is inaccurate. The inventory lists also had interesting vocabulary choices such as “amateur archaeologist” which is a euphemism for grave robber.

Andrea also raised the issue of the cooperative agreement with the Peoria that implied that the ISM wanted to work exclusively with the Peoria nation in Oklahoma. Many institutions want to work with only one group, when there are many other Native nations ready to collaborate. Cinnamon confirmed that the agreement expires next year, and changes will be made.

Andrea asked about an appraisal in 2000 that was made of the collection for insurance purposes. Native American bodies and objects were appraised. Andrea asked for the determined value and the purpose of the appraisal. Cinnamon clarified that the museum does not appraise any collections in a way that would show up in audited financials. The appraisal in 2000 does not show up in state records in any obvious way so Cinnamon will have to investigate it to determine the purpose and results. This conversation will continue in future ISM Board meetings.

VIII. Illinois State Museum Society Report

Cinda reported that the ISM Society board has adopted a strategic plan which includes DEAI. They are currently working on a timeline. Committees are developing charters which have not existed before. ISM Society Board meetings are also having ISM staff talk about their work.

Cinda thanked the ISM Board for a very interesting and informative meeting. She believes that the ISM Society board would benefit from a similar conversation around decolonization and repatriation.

At this time, Chair Donna Sack had to leave the meeting and turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Lisa Yun Lee.

IX. Old Business

Lisa called for old business.

X. Adjournment

Lisa asked for a motion to adjourn. Graham moved to adjourn, Andrea seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2: 57 p.m.