

**ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM
BOARD MEETING**

May 24, 2022, 4 p.m.

Special WebEx meeting

Attending: Officers: Chair Donna Sack, Secretary Sarah Doherty; Board members Andrea Carlson, Beth Shadur, Roger Taylor, and nikhil trivedi; Museum Staff Members Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, Jennifer Edginton, Brooke Morgan, and Meghan Lindstrom.

I. Welcome

Chair Donna Sack welcomed attendees and the meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Meghan Lindstrom called the roll and a quorum was present.

III. Museum Director's Report

Deaccession request

Brooke Morgan thanked the Board for meeting on short notice in order to discuss a deaccession request before the end of Fiscal Year 2022. She presented the deaccession request for 37 vigango, carved memorial statues made to honor members of the Mijikenda people in Kenya. Brooke started planning the repatriation in the fall of 2018 but encountered difficulty navigating the customs process in Kenya. Vigango are considered art pieces and have been assigned monetary value, which meant financial charges would be incurred when transporting them into the country. As the vigango are items of cultural patrimony and are being repatriated, they should not have assigned monetary value despite being treated as art by collectors. Brooke sought the assistance of curators from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science to navigate the issues of transport and customs, since they had successfully returned 30 vigango to Kenya in the past.

After deaccessioning of the vigango is approved, Brooke plans for them to be shipped to Chicago and then flown to Nairobi where they will be accepted by the National Museums of Kenya (NMK). The NMK are prepared to take responsibility for repatriation and will determine which Mijikenda communities are the original locations of the statues. The repatriation process is projected to be completed in either September or October.

Andrea asked if it was possible to repatriate items like the vigango or NAGPRA-eligible individuals without needing Board approval for

deaccessioning. Cinnamon said that is not the current practice but a policy could be written in the future to help expedite the process. This would fall under the responsibility of the Director of Tribal Relations. Cinnamon warned that any changes to the deaccessioning process must not contradict state property laws.

Roger asked if any media coverage was expected for the vigango repatriation like the Museum previously saw for the Australian repatriation. Brooke reported that a photographer from National Geographic took photos of the vigango last October, but no article has been published yet. She plans to work with the curators at the National Museum of Kenya to coordinate media coverage closer to the return.

Roger moved to approve the deaccession of the vigango and Beth seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Old Business

Donna called for old business.

V. Public Comment

None present.

VI. Adjournment

Andrea moved to adjourn, Kristin seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:27 p.m.