

**ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM
BOARD MEETING
December 14, 2020, 1 p.m.
Zoom Meeting**

Board Minutes

Attending: Officers: Chair Donna Sack, Secretary Sarah Doherty; Board members: Tamira Brennan, Andrea Carlson, Graham Peck, Beth Shadur, Roger Taylor, and Nikhil Trivedi; Museum Society Board Chair Cinda Klickna; Museum Staff Members: Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, Robert Sill, Jamila Wicks, Karen Everingham, Department of Natural Resources Representative Rachel Torbert. Vice Chair Lisa Yun Lee was unable to attend.

I. Welcome

Donna welcomed attendees and the meeting commenced at 1:06 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Karen called the roll and a quorum was present.

III. Approval of the Minutes of November 9, 2020

The minutes were presented for approval. Beth moved to approve the minutes, Graham seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

None present.

V. Chair's Report

Donna thanked the Board Members for completing their required trainings. The revised strategic plan was approved at the last meeting. Per the plan, the Diversity Equity Access and Inclusion (DEAI) committee of staff and Board members has been formed. Lisa, Andrea and Nikhil will represent the Board. Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, Lorna Shuman, Jenn Edginton, and Bob Sill will represent the staff. Work will start with a review of the inclusion assessment conducted by Dina Bailey. The assessment included interviews with staff, small group discussions and an internal survey that was sent to the Museum's email list. She thanked the committee for their willingness to work on this important committee.

Donna thanked the staff for working so diligently throughout the pandemic to ensure that programs were offered online and initiating a collecting effort around the pandemic. She noted the Board will continue to have orientations in the coming year including a history of the Museum's 2015 closure and near loss of its accreditation with the American Alliance of Museums. She said it is important for Board members to have an understanding of the closure and its impacts on the museum today. Additionally, discussions will continue around the strategic plan as our guiding document and to ensure we are moving forward. Donna added that over the coming months she will be calling individual Board members to get a

sense of their ideas about the Board and the future of the Museum. She thanked the Board members for serving the state, nation, and international community. She thanked Cinnamon for her work in her first year, especially during this time of great challenge. She finished by thanking the Department of Natural Resources for their support, especially Director Colleen Callahan, Rachel Torbert, and John Heidingger.

VI. Museum Director's Report

Cinnamon expressed her thanks and gratitude to the Board and its work for the Museum. She introduced the Museum's leadership team members Robert (Bob) Sill, Director of Collections and Research and Jamila Wicks, the Society's Director of Advancement. Cinnamon announced that Jenn Edginton has accepted the Director of Interpretation position, that is also a leadership team position. Jenn comes from Kenosha Public Museums where she has worked for the last 5 years and has a background of working with tribal communities. She is Latina and is energized to connect the Museum to communities that it has not previously included in programming.

Cinnamon shared that she will be providing an executive summary of Museum operations at each Board meeting and the leadership team will share updates and initiatives as well. She shared her report highlights via a Power Point presentation including news and updates, the upcoming metrics dashboard, 2021 priorities and her leadership intent for 2021.

Funding has been secured for a new Museum collections software package. Currently there are multiple databases being used and they don't allow for data sharing and have security issues. A new solution is being funded by the Klassen Trust, which also supports a staff position dedicated to the Museum's ethnographic collections. Currently, Claire Martin is doing this work and she is retiring at the end of the year. The funds will now be used for a staff position to transition the Museum's collections data to the new system and assist with research. Cinnamon said the Trust provides about \$35,000 to the Museum each year.

The *Indigenous Illinois* exhibit is funded in part from the Peoria Nation as well as the Lincoln Land Community Foundation in the amount of \$5,000. Former long-time Museum and Society Board Chair Guerry Suggs left a generous gift of over \$70,000 for acquisitions for the Museum. Guerry's family happily approved the Museum's request to use the fund to focus on communities and collections historically excluded and under-represented in the Museum's collections. Guerry's executor is supporting leveraging this new funding initiative by sharing it with the public to inspire additional public support.

Community engagement work is gearing up for the new year. The Museum has had many successful partnerships in the past including with the African American Museum of Springfield and Central Illinois. We will examine our partnerships to ensure we are good partners and are furthering our goals. We have recently begun discussions with the Juneteenth Celebration Committee in Springfield on a future event. Cinnamon has also been working with the Equal Justice Initiative in Springfield to develop community conversations

and shared learning. Engagement will be extended beyond Springfield as we seek out new partners.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has adopted a DEAI plan and launched a committee from across the agency, including Museum staff members Erika Holst and Karen Everingham. Cinnamon is co-chairing the committee with Chief of Staff Kristen DiCenso. The DEAI plan is part of the DNR strategic plan and part of a larger initiative coming out of the Governor's office requiring all agencies to produce an 18-month plan.

The Museum closed again due to COVID-19 on November 20th and will likely continue to be closed through the end of the year, potentially re-opening on January 9th, 2021.

Cinnamon shared a snapshot of the metrics dashboard that Karen has been developing. The dashboard will serve as a quick conduit for Board members to get a sense of what is happening at the Museum.

Priorities for 2021 include activating the strategic plan and the leadership team has discussed how to share it and build excitement around it. The plan is being shared via the website. The intent is for future Board meeting agendas to reflect the plan and its progress.

The leadership team will begin work on an interpretive plan. The plan will address everything from exhibits to education and will include identification of stories we need to tell that we are not. Bob will be working to evaluate the Museum's adjunct researchers and emeritus staff to determine how it adds to the Museum's research and how it fits with the Museum's research agenda. Additionally, the leadership team will identify policies that need updating in preparation for presentation to the Board. Several funding campaigns are underway, and work will begin on budget planning.

Other activities for 2021 include the shared work of the Museum's DEAI committee, work on collections data conversion, and IT infrastructure improvements. IT infrastructure has had some progress and a meeting with DNR's IT leader is scheduled to address issues.

A new exhibition *Human/Nature* spearheaded by Curator of Art Doug Stapleton will be opening in June. The exhibit will explore the connections between humans and the environment and human dependence on environmental resources. Fundraising will address direct (\$8,000) and indirect costs (\$22,000). Other shows for 2021 include *Indigenous Illinois*, *Ancestral Threads*, and updates to the *Changes* exhibition in addition to some smaller exhibitions at Dickson Mounds and the Lockport Gallery.

Another priority for 2021 is to activate our decolonizing practices. This includes repatriations at Dickson Mounds including a Tribal Caucus held without Museum staff, hiring a NAGPRA Assistant, writing policy, instituting a research moratorium, and a plan on working with DNR around these projects.

Donna asked how the Board can support the hire of a NAGPRA Assistant. Support could include a letter from the Board, but Rachel emphasized that DNR is stretched for critical staff across the board. Expectations should be tempered. Andrea suggested in addition to writing a letter that the Museum issue a statement on its NAGPRA activities and efforts to address our tardiness in addressing them. There is currently a moratorium on destructive analysis as well as research requests. This is something that could be shared right away. The DEAI Committee will take the lead on the letter and statement.

Cinnamon stated that her intent and energy for the coming year will be around advocacy sustainability, DEAI and Decolonization as well as Museum organization. Work will focus on implementing an inclusive work culture, engaging widely across Illinois, and positioning the Museum for change and support.

The Museum will build its reach via online opportunities spurred by the pandemic, putting our collections online for access across the state and beyond, and to restart our work on sharing the Museum's collections and exhibits at other venues across the state.

VII. Orientation Part 3

Exhibits at the ISM

An exhibits planning process has been instituted to build the Museum's exhibit schedule for the next five years. This has not really been possible in the recent past. Starting after the *Fashion* exhibit the calendar is open, and the five-year exhibits plan will be built with an eye for: including community voices, funding opportunities, exhibit ideation, process, and budgets. Planning is also beginning on a complete revamp of the second-floor exhibit space which may also include a community exhibits space.

VIII. IDNR Report

Rachel reported there are plans to keep the Museum closed over the holidays. January 9 is a target date but could change. Budget talks are underway with the Governor's Office of Management and Budget (GOMB) and outcomes are unclear at this point.

DNR leadership met regarding NAGPRA to learn status and upcoming needs. Continued communication is a priority.

IX. Illinois State Museum Society Report

Cinda said the online store has opened and is doing well. The Cocktails with Curators event was a big success. Attendees had the opportunity to learn about some of the Museum's collections while enjoying three specialty cocktails. The Society Committees are up and running and work is beginning on the Society's strategic plan.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

Donna noted the next year's Board meetings will be held on March 1, June 7, September 13, and December 6, 2021 at 3 p.m. If we are able to meet in person those meetings typically start at 10:30 a.m. We will also try to hold Board meetings at other Museum locations and other venues across the state.

XII. Adjournment

Donna asked for a motion to adjourn. Sarah moved to adjourn, Beth seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.