

**ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM  
BOARD MEETING  
December 12, 2016, 10:30 a.m.  
ISM – Research and Collections Center,  
1011 E. Ash St., Springfield, IL**

**MINUTES**

**Attending:** President Dr. Lorin Nevling, Vice President Mr. Leo Welch, Secretary Dr. Brian Anderson; Board Members Dr. George Rabb, Mrs. Donna Sack, Ms. Beth Shadur, Dr. David Sokol, Mr. Roger Taylor, Mrs. Rosemary Winters; ISMS Board Member Mrs. Susan White; Staff Members Interim Director Dr. Michael Wiant, Assistant Curator of Education Mrs. Elizabeth Bazan, Interim Director of Visitor Services Ms. Karen Everingham, Curator of Zoology Dr. Meredith Mahoney, Interim Director of Art & History Mr. Robert Sill; Department of Natural Resources representative Mr. Chris Young.

**1. Call to Order - Dr. Lorin Nevling**

Dr. Lorin Nevling called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes of September 12, 2016 Board Meeting**

Dr. Nevling asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Dr. David Sokol moved to approve the minutes, Dr. Brian Anderson seconded, and the motion carried.

Dr. Nevling took a minute to congratulate Ms. Karen Everingham on her election as President to the Board of the Illinois Association of Museums and he congratulated Mr. Chris Young on his appointment to Director of the Office of Resource Conservation at the Department of Natural Resources. Dr. Nevling noted that Mr. Young would continue to serve as the liaison to the Museum and expressed the Board's appreciation of his efforts.

Dr. Nevling reported the staff held a reception in honor of Society members. He noted that about one hundred attended the event including several Board members.

**3. DNR Report - Mr. Chris Young**

Mr. Chris Young noted that several job vacancies from the first critical hire were approved for posting while the Museum was still closed. He said currently the second critical hire list has not yet been approved by CMS, and none of the Museum positions have been posted.

Mr. Young reported that the labor dispute between the Administration and AFSCME regarding the legality of proposed layoffs has concluded. The lay-offs that were announced as part of the Museum's closing on October 1, 2015, were suspended per agreement between Labor and the Administration. Employees remained on the job while the dispute was decided by the courts. In November, the court rejected an appeal by AFSCME and upheld an earlier court decision that the Administration has the right to lay-off workers to manage its budget. However, lay-off notices for most Illinois State Museum employees were rescinded after the museum reopened, with the exception of two positions at the Chicago gallery and one at Lockport. At this time, no final decision has been made regarding the disposition of the three positions.

Mr. Young asked if the Board had any questions. Dr. Nevling asked about the potential of a union strike. Mr. Young said he has heard nothing on it at this point, but that the issue was being closely monitored.

#### **4. Directors Report - Dr. Michael Wiant**

Dr. Michael Wiant noted that the stop gap budget expires at the end of the year, but added that \$20,000 in equipment money was used to purchase a new plotter for exhibits and a new projector for the auditorium.

Dr. Wiant reported that the five positions put forth for critical hires included a visitor services associate; curators for art, decorative arts & history, education and anthropology; and a librarian. He said the Museum Director position would move through the department once we've approved the job description. Dr. Wiant added that the proposed temporary assignment of Mr. Paul Countryman, Ms. Karen Everingham, Ms. Linda Kloppe, and Mr. Robert Sill to Section Head II had been approved. Dr. Anderson asked if these staff would be compensated and if they would remain at the Museum in the event of a strike. Dr. Wiant said all had received salary adjustments, but they would remain in the union and likely carry forward those responsibilities in the event of a strike.

Dr. Wiant noted that with regard to our facilities in southern Illinois, Chicago, and Lockport arrangements are still being explored. He added the rent for the space in Lockport had not been paid since September of 2015. Dr. Wiant has spoken to the owner and they are working to resolve the issue.

Dr. Wiant reported that work on the reaccreditation study is moving forward and is due to the American Alliance of Museums on February 1, 2017. The strategic plan was distributed to the Board noting that staff assisted in updating the document and other documents required for the self-study. He welcomed input from the Board, adding that the document is due December 31<sup>st</sup>. Dr. Nevling noted that the strategic plan requires Board approval and asked how to accomplish that prior to the deadline. The Board discussed various approaches to accomplish input and approval. Mr. Roger Taylor made a motion to authorize the Board Chair to approve the final draft of the strategic plan with input from Board members by December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Leo Welch seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Dr. Wiant continued noting the Museum had submitted a proposal to the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, St. Louis District, to continue our responsibility to be a regional depository for the district collections. The Museum has held this responsibility since 1990 and brings support for a collections manager position in anthropology under the auspices of the Museum Society. He said we have also been invited to submit a proposal to the Corp to employ veterans to do collections work. We would have positions available to us here to assist with training the veterans in collections work.

Dr. Wiant reported that operations are running smoothly due to the unwavering commitment of the staff to get the job done. He noted that the lobby and atrium renovations were done in house with assistance from the Secretary of State's office; a plan is being devised to recognize the contributions of Society members in the lobby; and the Barker Paperweight collection has been moved upstairs to a new case in the atrium. He noted that Mrs. R. Lou Barker, who with her husband donated the collection, was very pleased with the presentation. He added that the

Brown Bag presentation had resumed and that the Mickey Lectures would also resume in January. Director Wiant noted that the National Science Foundation indirect rate was successfully renegotiated. The rate is 39.42% until June 30, 2018.

Finally he reported that the History of Dickson Mounds manuscript prepared by Dr. Alan Harn and Ms. Dawn Cobb has been completed and that Director Emeritus Dr. Bonnie Styles served as editor. She insisted on receiving no compensation for her work. The publication has been funded by a generous donation of \$10,000.

Dr. Sokol asked for an update on the Clayville request for the return of object. Dr. Wiant said a response rejecting the request was sent, but he believes they are still interested in acquiring the objects. Mr. Welch asked about the progress of the installation of the *Under the Prairie* exhibit. Dr. Wiant noted the construction of the cabin is complete; label copy is written but has yet to be mounted and installed. A touch screen is also being set up to accompany the exhibit.

Dr. Nevling asked Dr. Wiant to report on the Becker family gift. Dr. Wiant said the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles and Elizabeth Becker, Mr. Bruce Becker, donated \$48,000 per his mother's will. The funds will go to the Museum Society's restricted endowment with interest generated going to support the Museum's educational programs. Mr. Becker was very happy with the arrangement. Dr. Wiant also noted that he sent a letter to Mr. Barry MacLean regarding the Mary Ann MacLean Play Museum and Resource Center. He said the original agreement included using interest from the \$600,000 restricted funds to offset the salary for the Mary Ann MacLean Educator as well as an additional \$200,000 towards the restricted fund. He said the total sum of this contribution when complete would be \$1 million dollars. As yet, Dr. Wiant has not received a response. He did note that the Play Museum remains popular drawing more than 7,000 through November.

Dr. Wiant reported that the membership levels of the Museum Society were updated and a new membership brochure was distributed. As of last Friday there was more than \$10,000 in new and renewed memberships.

### **5. Metropolitan Outreach Working Group Report - Dr. David Sokol**

Dr. Nevling thanked the group for its exceptional work. He noted that he understood the frustration of not having guidelines to work with. Dr. Sokol reported that it has taken considerable time to gather proposals and determine how the group could meet and still be in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. The group comprised of Ms. Beth Shadur, Mrs. Rosemarie Winters, and Dr. Sokol, met at the State of Illinois Building with staff member Ms. Jane Stevens on November 15th, 2016. He noted that Ms. Stevens did a considerable amount of work in reaching out to potential partners. Dr. Sokol said there was a far ranging discussion, learning of some of the prior involvements the Museum branch in Chicago shared with other organizations, groups of artists, and forms of support. Ms. Shadur reported on her more recent visit to the State Street Gallery, Mrs. Winters discussed aspects of the reopening of the Lockport Gallery, and Dr. Sokol reported he met with the Chair of the Illinois Humanities Council.

He said the group feels that in terms of trying to generate exhibitions with groups the Museum could exhibit at the State Street Gallery, Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi, and Fermilab. He noted Ms. Stevens wrote a report on the proposed Potawatomi partnership that was

distributed to the Board. A list of the members of the Collaborative and the exhibitions in which they have participated is also on the report. The members of the Working Group were impressed by the potential of having such an exhibition, and believe having such an exhibition in the Chicago Gallery would be an excellent way to serve a non-traditional constituency, would attract financial support, and be a kick-start of a new era of partnerships between the State Museum and other groups. Dr. Sokol said the possibility of an exhibition of the science related art of Chicago artist Ms. Ellen Sandor, which will be showing at the Fermilab, could then travel to the Museum's Chicago Gallery with support to offset the shipping, catalog, and a reception, at a minimum. This exhibition would also explore a new area and provide sharing with a non-traditional partner. He noted that the discussion with the State Street Gallery continues with the potential to collaborate, despite the decision that the space was not suitable for a permanent presence. He said he hoped that the Department of Natural Resources would be supportive of these ideas. Dr. Nevling noted that on a short-term basis we should pursue re-opening at the Thompson Center, understanding it will not be the long-term solution. Dr. Sokol added that given the state's precarious financial position it was unlikely that the Thompson Center would be sold and state offices moved in the near future.

## **6. Personnel Committee Report - Dr. George Rabb**

Dr. Nevling noted that the search for a new director is the first in many decades. He added that the process has been challenging. Dr. George Rabb shared the notes from the Personnel Committee meeting with the Board. He said the group reviewed the position description which was distributed to the search committee and to its ex-officio members. He asked Mrs. Donna Sack to comment on the qualifications of the new director, noting the requirement of an advanced degree or relevant experience equivalent. Mrs. Sack said that the group discussed the PhD requirement. She noted that many in the museum field with exceptional skills would then not be considered eligible for the position. She added that she felt the expertise required for particular aspects of content could be handled by the Museum's curators, and that it was critical to find a director that can engage with the community. She added that she felt community engagement and education were as important as research to rebuild the Museum. Dr. Rabb asked for comments on Mrs. Sack's statements. The group discussed the educational and experience requirements. Mrs. Sack said the key was to find a seasoned professional to lead the Museum. Dr. Sokol asserted that the requirements could be instead looked upon as "desired" in order to keep the pool broad. Dr. Anderson agreed noting that it will be difficult to entice a candidate to come to the state. Dr. Wiant suggested changing the language from a number of years to "substantial experience" to give the committee more flexibility. Mr. Welch agreed the committee needed flexibility. Dr. Rabb stated he felt the group had come to an agreement on the language of the description and noted that Dr. Wiant had done an exceptional job culling and combining input from the group. He noted that we need to move quickly to secure funding for advertising the position based on Mr. Young's report on the deadline for budget requests. Dr. Nevling said the Board needed to approve the minutes of the meeting and approving the recommended position description. Mr. Welch moved to accept the minutes of the personnel committee, Ms. Shadur seconded, and the motion approved. Dr. Anderson moved to approve the director's position description, with the understanding that minor changes may need to be made to accommodate state requirements. Mr. Welch seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.

Dr. Rabb shared a report on his observations on accreditation, the strategic plan and the priorities of the Museum. He said the diversity of the Museum's programs and collecting areas

could be expanded to include such topics as performing arts, science, and music. He said he felt the Board needed to make a strong case for the need for a director and funding. Dr. Anderson said he felt Dr. Rabb's observations were exceptional and recommended that they be incorporated into the strategic plan. Dr. Wiant noted that the current strategic plan is limited to the next two years and that he agreed with Dr. Rabb's suggestions. He added that the plan is short-term to get the Museum back on its feet with the understanding that there is much more to be done. Dr. Wiant said he wanted to underscore the bicentennial project noted in the plan to assemble a group of objects that tell the story of Illinois and to post those to a website. He said we are working with other partners including the Department of Innovation and Information Technology, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, and the Department of Natural Resources to develop this concept. He added that in Ms. Everingham's capacity with the Illinois Association of Museums, the group has agreed to help publicize the virtual exhibit to the broader Illinois museum community for their participation. He said the virtual exhibition and database will allow us to leverage parts of the project to assist with various areas of the strategic plan. The database structure that will serve as the back end of the virtual exhibition can be used for the entire Museum collection and thereby help us achieve several goals of the strategic plan. He said he will share the bicentennial prospectus with the Board.

At 12:07 p.m. Dr. Nevling adjourned the group briefly for lunch. Dr. Nevling called the meeting back to order at 12:30 p.m. and asked that the report of the Museum Society be moved ahead of the next agenda item.

## **7. ISMS Report - Susan White**

Mrs. Susan White reported that the Society Board had met twice after adjusting its schedule to meet bimonthly rather than quarterly to address the urgent matters at hand. She said the membership categories had been changed as well as the benefits package with each level. She said she was not aware of the current membership numbers, but that the campaign had been successful thus far. Dr. Wiant noted that prior to closure the Society membership was about 1,200, but dropped to 600 during the closure. He said it was now around 800 members and growing. Mrs. White continued by saying that the Society Board hoped to have the membership near former levels by the end of 2017. She said the finance committee was taking steps to address the financial challenges created by the closure and losses from the Museum Society stores. She said the Society Board, as part of its by-laws revision, would increase from twelve to fifteen members. She thanked the Museum staff and Dr. Wiant for a lovely reception in honor of Society members. She said the evening was very much appreciated by the Becker family, who were officially recognized for their contribution, and by Society Board member and long-time Museum supporter Mrs. R. Lou Barker, who was very pleased to see the Barker Paperweight Collection newly displayed in the Atrium. Dr. Wiant added that the Society trip to the Field Museum was a big success and thanked Curator Mrs. Elizabeth Bazan for organizing the outing. Dr. Sokol asked that in the future the price structure be adjusted for those already in the area of the trip who would not require transportation. He added that he was confused by the most recent Society member correspondence and that the Society should take care to be sure the message was clear. Mrs. White outlined some of the changes to the membership levels, the consideration of annualizing the membership, and that the historic *1877 Club* was being replaced with the Director's Circle membership. The group also discussed the timing of various Society correspondence and lifetime memberships. Dr. Wiant noted that the *1877 Fund* would continue to be the name of the endowment fund, and that life members had been very generous with their giving over the years.

Dr. Nevling noted that he attended the last Society Board meeting. He added that the Society had recently completed a successful audit with no findings, and that they were moving to a new accounting system. He said the new system would be easier for the Society Board members to understand. Mrs. White added that there was a learning curve for the Society Board members with regard to the numerous accounts and endowment funds held by the Society. Finally, she thanked Dr. Wiant for his support and for answering the Society Board's questions.

### **8. Appointment of Director Search Committee – Dr. Lorin Nevling**

Dr. Nevling distributed the list of appointments to the Director Search committee to the Board. He said the appointments were carefully considered. He thanked Mr. Roger Taylor for agreeing to chair the committee and those asked to serve. The committee is as follows: Mr. Taylor, Chair; Dr. Rabb, chair of the personnel committee, Mrs. Sack, member of the personnel committee, Mrs. Bazan representing education; Ms. Meredith Mahoney representing the sciences, and Mr. Robert Sill representing art. Dr. Wiant will serve as administrative assistant to Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Young and Dr. Nevling are ex-officio members.

Dr. Rabb asked for the list of possible outlets for advertising the director position. Dr. Wiant said he would share the list and asked for feedback from the Board.

### **9. Old Business**

Dr. Nevling reminded the Board that its still has an open position that needs to be filled. He asked that the Board share possible candidates with Dr. Wiant.

### **10. New Business**

Dr. Nevling noted that the Museum needed a new representative on the Board of the Illinois State Academy of Science and that Dr. Wiant's recommendation was Dr. Mahoney. Dr. Rabb moved to appoint Dr. Mahoney, Dr. Sokol seconded the appointment and the motion carried.

Dr. Rabb noted and moved that a letter of congratulations should be sent to Dr. Bonnie Styles on her appointment as Executive Director of the Association of Science Museum Directors. Dr. Sokol seconded the motion and the motion carried. Dr. Nevling remarked that he was confident Dr. Styles would be a great asset to the association and would move it forward tremendously.

### **11. Adjourn - Dr. Lorin Nevling**

Dr. Nevling adjourned the meeting at 1:01 p.m.

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Lorin Nevling, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Brian Anderson, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date