

**Culture & Heritage
Board of Commissioners Meeting
October 26, 2015
6:00 PM
Museum of York County**

Approved: 11-23-2015

Person Presiding: Dale Dove, Co-Chair
Members Present: James Duncan, Jeff Lyon, Craig Lentz, Nancy Craig
Members Absent: Marcia Buike
Ex Officio Absent: Carolyn Mendenhall
Staff Present: Carey Tilley, Barbara Ardrey, Steve Fields, Alison Gray
Others Present: County Attorney Michael Kendree, Pat Veasey

Prior to the meeting being called to order, Attorney Kendree administered the oath of office to Jeff Lyon, the new commissioner for District 4. Tilley introduced Mr. Lyon to the other commissioners and Lyon spoke briefly as to his background, etc.

Tilley then informed the commission that the new ex-officio member of the board is Penny Sheppard from Tega Cay and that she will be joining the group at the November meeting.

Attorney Kendree advised that Leo Yakutis has notified the Clerk to Council that he will no longer be participating on the Commission.

Call to Order

Nancy Craig called the meeting to order at 6:15pm in the absence of the Chair and Co-Chair.

Craig noted that the first order of business was the approval of the draft minutes of the September 28, 2015 meeting.

Craig Lentz moved to approve the draft minutes of the September 28, 2015 meeting; James Duncan seconded; no discussion; a vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Craig then noted that the next minutes were from a special called meeting on October 13, 2015.

Craig Lentz moved to approve the draft minutes of the October 13, 2015, special called meeting; James Duncan seconded; no discussion; a vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports and Information

- Report of Executive Director
 - Tilley introduced staff member Alison Gray, who is currently in charge of our membership program. He noted that he had asked her to attend the meeting and give a presentation on membership and requested that she be allowed to present prior to his report. There being no objection, she went on with her presentation.

- Gray began by noting a 17% increase in membership since this time last year. She went on to explain the benefits of membership including but not limited to free admission and participation in reciprocal programs. She noted that the Annual Campaign (Year-End Ask) is coming up and we are hoping to send letters out to our former general and donor-level members. Commission members were asked to assist by providing names of potential donors.

(Dale Dove arrived during Gray's presentation. At the request of Nancy Craig, Dove presided over the remainder of the meeting.)

- Tilley presented his report. [See full report attached to approved minutes as Addendum "A".]
 - Under "Foundation for the Carolinas"

Tilley noted that a request was made to the Foundation for the Carolinas for \$939,000 for Phase I of the HB Interpretive Plan as approved by the Commission in June. The approval was for the total amount of the listed projects and not the itemized estimates. The request also included flexibility to reallocate funds between the listed components and for funds leftover be made available for Phase II of the plan.

Tilley further noted that, because we have been awarded a grant of \$150,000 from the Morrison Foundation for the Brick House restoration, the estimate of remaining funds needed to complete that part of the project was reduced to \$300,000 which will include some anticipated expenses that were not included in the earlier estimate. The estimate of funds needed for the structural analysis of the Homestead was increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000. In an effort to increase emphasis on awareness and preservation, original estimates for the Master Plan were revised from \$95,000 to \$150,000 to allow for incorporation of community input and preliminary structural analysis of some of the other original buildings. These items could be included as alternates in the scope of work.

- Under "McCelvey Center"

Tilley emphasized the need to define the role of McCelvey. Tilley wants that to be included on the next agenda.

Committee Reports

- Finance Committee
 - Nancy Craig advised there was nothing to report from Finance. She noted that once a committee is in place, there should be some recommendations from the committee especially for the budget procedure next year.
 - Tilley asked the Committee Chairs if they would like the topic of committees to be on the agenda for the next meeting and asked if the Commissioners wanted to try to establish committees for the November meeting or at least make it a topic of discussion? It was decided to include that item.

- Governance Committee
 - Board Vacancies Discussion

- Chair Dale Dove asked for a report on the status of the Commission vacancies. Tilley noted that Jeff Lyon is filling Councilman Roddey's seat; and that Penny Sheppard has been selected and approved by the Council as an ex officio member and only needs to be sworn in; in addition, Leo Yakutis' seat in Councilman Henderson's district is vacant now but it appears that someone has been discussed to fill that seat and a recommendation could be coming out of committee and then sent on to council.
- Collections Committee
 - Chair Craig Lentz noted that there were no Recommendations for Accession or Deaccession to be considered this month.
 - Lentz further advised that he will be having his first committee meeting on November 12.

Old Business

- Carolina Thread Trail Update
 - Tilley reported that he spoke with the State Archaeologist, who recommended archaeological testing along the proposed path of the trail to include shovel tests every five meters. Travis Morehead with Carolina Thread Trail was on board with that recommendation. Work should be simple and may be able to be done using volunteers and staff. Tilley noted that language is needed in the contract that would allow the CHC to stop access if anything significant is found. Attorney Kendree added that because it is on land that is in the name of the Commission at the moment but will be in the name of the County, he felt once it has been finalized, Council's approval should be noted – maybe add a signature block for the County so there would not be any question. Kendree advised that he has gone through the document and has a couple of non-substantive changes. He suggested finalizing the contract based on the language discussed.
 - No action needed until there is something to present.
- Community Awareness
 - Tilley noted there is a need to know how the community perceives us and what do they know about us.
 - Although the initial idea of circulating basic survey cards as discussed at an earlier meeting seemed simple, upon further analysis by staff cost estimates (printing, postage, etc.) were significantly higher than originally expected. This expense is not in our budget.
 - The Institutional Plan does identify the need for branding. Site specific branding and the community awareness surveys should be incorporated into that process. This is not in the current budget but it could be considered for next year's budget.
 - Tilley recommended continuing to work on community awareness using survey cards when speaking to groups, etc. but keep the cost down for now until we can pursue branding and do it right.
- Fundraising Events Committee
 - Tilley noted that he would like a more traditional fundraising committee that has fundraising events within its larger scope.

- Dove called for suggestions for committee members. Commissioners were asked to pursue this for next meeting.

New Business

- Annual Calendar for Commission
 - Dove reiterated his request for an annual calendar. Tilley will contact the County Finance Director for her list of deadlines and look into other action dates for the Commission.
 - Lentz suggested a posted calendar.
- Emails
 - Kendree checking with County IT Department.

Pat Veasey asked to briefly address the Commission. She introduced herself to those Commissioners whom she had not met at the last meeting and thanked the Commission for approving the HB Interpretive Plan, which she noted was long overdue. She spoke of the positive effects of the changes at the different sites over the past few years and expressed her excitement and enthusiasm for the upcoming plans at Brattonsville.

Co-Chair Dale Dove noted that there was no further business to come before the Commission and all voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.

Prepared by: Barbara Ardrey
Submitted by: Nancy Craig, Secretary/Treasurer

Addendum A

Culture and Heritage Museums Director's Report October 26th, 2015

Mission: to communicate and preserve the natural and cultural histories of the Carolina Piedmont, inspiring a lifetime of learning.

CHC Commissioners,

Thank you once again for your service to the mission of the Culture and Heritage Museums. Fall is a very busy time for our staff. School Groups pick up and weather is usually ideal for special events. This year, September has been a very strong month for visitation and membership continues to be at historically high levels.

On-site Visitation

Through the end of the first quarter, overall on-site visitation is now up by 12% over this same period in 2014-15. This is a significant turn-around from last month when we were trailing last year's totals by 2%. September was an exceptionally strong month with an increase of 79% over last year and growth at all four sites. Visitation from month to month will vary greatly with such factors as timing of specific events, weather, and number of weekends; still, the September growth throughout the museum system is very encouraging.

Year-to-date On-Site Visitation Comparisons through September 30th

	Overall	MYCO	HB	MSCM	McCelvey
YTD 2015-2016	22,975	9,236	5,419	7,819	501
YTD 2014-2015	20,427	7,169	5,475	6,940	843
Change from Previous Year	+2,548	+2,067	-56	+879	-342
% Change from Previous Year	+12.47%	+28.83%	-1.02%	+12.67%	-40.57%
Avg. of last 3 yrs.	18,689	6,782	5,417	5,897	593
Change from Avg.	+4,286	+2,454	+2	+1,922	-92
% Change from Avg.	+22.93%	+36.18%	+0.04%	+32.59%	-15.51%

September On-Site Visitation Comparisons

September 2015	6,731	2,618	2,017	1,848	248
September 2014	3,769	1,161	1,256	1,277	75
Sept. Increase from previous year	+2,962	+1,457	+761	+571	+173
% Sept. Increase from previous year	+78.59%	+125.50%	+60.59%	+44.71%	230.67%

Membership through September

The total number of members on September 30th (1,322) remains up from this time in 2014-15 (1,142) with a 16% increase despite a slight drop of six members from August. The year-to-date total for income from General Membership (\$18,263.5) is up 35% over last year at this time. Membership income from all three categories (General, Donor, and Corporate) is also still up by 27% at \$21,353.

Thousand-Year Flood

On October 3rd, we closed Historic Brattonsville due to the numerous warnings and the threat of unprecedented heavy rains and thunderstorms. The danger of falling debris and potential for trees to overturn would have created a legitimate threat to our visitors. While we did lose some limbs and the power went out briefly, there was no significant damage to the site. The more serious weather-related problems in Columbia, however, did have an adverse impact on visitation as approximately 450 students were unable to come up for their scheduled field trips during the following week due to the flooding and school closings. We are currently working to reschedule them later in the school year.

Late September Events

At the time of my last report we were still finalizing visitation numbers for some of our September events. "Family Night at the Museum" (MYCO) had a total of 654, "Piedmont Pottery Festival" (HB) actually ended up with 280, "Take a Child Outside" (MYCO) had 192, and the Hinson Girls concert at McCelvey had 150 in attendance.

Spirits and Stories

Spirits and Stories: Brattonsville by Twilight was presented at Historic Brattonsville on October 17th. The main event featured a walking tour in which history and legends about our region's past are shared through various dramatizations. A host of children's activities served as a popular prelude during the daylight hours. The attendance total of 694 was down from last year's 824 but was still well ahead of the average of the previous three years (509).

Civil War

Our annual Civil War reenactment was hosted at Historic Brattonsville over the past weekend. We offer this event each year in conjunction with the 6th South Carolina Regiment of reenactors. We are still awaiting final numbers but the total attendance appears to be down from last year. We were encouraged by the increase in the number of reenactors this year as the number of soldiers on the battlefield doubled over last year's dwindling count. We also hosted a special day for schools in conjunction with the event on Friday with over 250 students in attendance.

Boo-seum

This past Sunday, we offered a special opportunity at the Main Street Children's Museum through our annual "Boo-seum" program. The event gave pre-school aged kids a chance to dress in costume and join in stories, activities, and a costume parade. Although the event was free with admission, reservations were required because of space limitations. We had 63 people in attendance including a mix of members and non-members. Although we were booked to the capacity of one hundred, we did have several no-shows.

Spooky Science Saturday

This past weekend the Museum of York County hosted “Spooky Science Saturday”. This event was a unique way to subtly expose children to scientific principles and the natural world using “not-too-scary” themes. We had 170 visitors attend this first-time offering. It was especially popular with our members.

Only Owls after Hours

In less than two weeks we will open our newest exhibition in the Springs Gallery: “Only Owls”. This travelling exhibit featuring art inspired by these fascinating creatures was created by the Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin. Our exhibits team will be adding a component focusing on the Owls of the Carolina Piedmont using specimens from our collections. “Carolina Landscapes – Paintings by Al Beyer” will be on exhibition in the Nature Nook Gallery concurrently with “Only Owls”. Both exhibitions will remain up through February 28th. “Only Owls – After Hours”, a special opening event for the exhibits will be held on November 10th from 5:00 to 8:00 at the museum. Food will be available for purchase so please make plans to attend.

Foundation for the Carolinas

The first meeting of the CHC Capital Projects Fund Advisory Board was held on October 20th at the Foundation for the Carolinas (FFTC) offices in Charlotte. The purpose of this board is to advise the FFTC on the investment and grant distribution of the \$8 million fund established to support the capital projects of the Culture and Heritage Museums. Much of the meeting was introductory and focused on the purpose of the fund and the role of the advisory committee. The committee voted to support an investment strategy that split the funds between Moderate Growth Investments and Conservative Growth Investments. There was good consensus on this strategy although there was some disagreement on the nuances. The Culture and Heritage Museums submitted our grant request for \$939,000 for Phase I of the Historic Brattonville Interpretive Plan as approved by the Commission in June. Because some of the advisory board members had not had a chance to review the proposal and related documents, the committee will reconvene in the near future to vote on a recommendation. The Foundation for the Carolinas is “supportive of funding the application subject to the review by the Advisory Board and any contingencies or conditions established.” FFTC is trying to set up a meeting by conference call for the week of November 2nd.

McCelvey Center

One of the Strategic Initiatives identified in our Institutional Plan is to “Define the future role of the McCelvey School in advancing the mission of the Culture and Heritage Museums” (Strategic Initiative IV-B). The next step is to develop a plan for the building. As part of that plan we need to seek community input as identified in the action steps. In the coming weeks we will be reaching out to community partners that may have an interest in the future use of the building. Already preliminary conversations have been started with key individuals. I would like to begin discussion at the Commission level as an integral part of the planning process at the November meeting. Optimally, a plan would be ready for commission consideration by early spring.

Satisfaction Surveys

We have piloted our satisfaction surveys at HB and MYCO. Preliminary returns are favorable but we still need a larger sample size before doing analysis. We also have received a respectable number of responses on our last two events at Historic Brattonville that exceeded preliminary expectations. We will begin formal analysis on both the quantitative and qualitative data in November.

Grants

This week, we received a check from the Friends of Historic Brattonsville for \$6,750 for much-needed video equipment upgrades in the orientation room at Historic Brattonsville and to produce a new site-wide orientation video. We also received a check from the All-state Foundation for \$1,000 in honor of long-time volunteer and All-state representative Blake Crook. Mr. Crook has been a strong supporter for our educational efforts in the field of Astronomy and the funds will be used to purchase items related to the field.

Once again, I thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

(submitted electronically)

Carey L. Tilley
Executive Director