



Rochester Hills Minutes

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Rochester Hills Museum Foundation

*Bryan Barnett, Steven Fite, James Mallon, Stephanie Morita, Vern Pixley,
Katharine Rogers, Heather Sellick, Joe Snyder, Suzanne Wiggins;
Staff Advisor Pat McKay*

Foundation Mission: *The mission of the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation is to further the educational programs and purposes set forth by the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm.*

Museum Mission: *To enhance understanding of the past through interpreting, preserving and collecting the history of the greater Rochester area for present and future generations.*

Friday, August 20, 2021

7:30 AM

Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen
Farm - Dairy Barn

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson James Mallon called the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation meeting to order at 7:35 a.m., Michigan Time.

ROLL CALL

Present 6 - Steven Fite, James Mallon, Vern Pixley, Heather Sellick, Joe Snyder and Suzanne Wiggins
Absent 3 - Bryan Barnett, Stephanie Morita and Katharine Rogers

Others Present:

*Patrick McKay, Museum Manager
Cathy Fitzpatrick, Museum Program Coordinator
Maria Willett, Special Assistant to Mayor Barnett
Jillian Pixley, Rochester Hills Museum Young Leaders Circle*

Katharine Rogers and Stephanie Morita entered at 7:38 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2021-0353 Approval of Meeting Minutes - May 21, 2021

Attachments: [Draft Minutes 5-21-21 Museum Foundation.pdf](#)
[Minutes resolution.pdf](#)

A motion was made by Pixley, seconded by Wiggins, that this matter be Approved as Presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 6 - Fite, Mallon, Pixley, Heather Sellick, Snyder and Wiggins

Absent 3 - Barnett, Morita and Rogers

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation hereby approves the minutes of the May 21, 2021 Regular Meeting as presented.

(Katharine Rogers and Stephanie Morita entered at 7:38 a.m.)

Present 8 - Steven Fite, James Mallon, Stephanie Morita, Vern Pixley, Katharine Rogers, Heather Sellick, Joe Snyder and Suzanne Wiggins

Absent 1 - Bryan Barnett

MUSEUM UPDATE

Young Leaders Circle

Mr. McKay introduced Jillian Pixley, representing the Young Leaders Circle, currently serving as Chairperson. He noted that Cathy Fitzpatrick serves as the Museum staff liaison to the Young Leaders Circle.

Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that the Rochester Hills Museum Young Leaders Circle supports, fund raises and spreads the word about all the programs the Museum has to offer. She noted that Jillian Pixley has recently assumed the presidency of the organization. She mentioned that the Big Green Tractor Festival held last year has been transitioned into a Barns and Brews event for this year (set for September 18, 2021).

Ms. Pixley stated that she is a founding member of the Young Leaders Circle and is excited to be a part of the group and for the events that are coming up. She commented that it is a lively and fun group and encouraged the Museum Board members to join them at their meetings. She encouraged the members to attend the Barns and Brews event and mentioned some of the event highlights.

Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that the Museum schedules social meetings with the Young Leaders group two or three times a year, inviting the public out as well, to learn the history of the property and become the voice of the Museum. She commented that they are always looking for new avenues to connect with new generations.

Mr. McKay stated that the Museum finds frequently that the audience it touches the most are under the age of 10 or in the more senior population whose families are grown. The Museum seeks to connect with the middle age groups. He noted that the site can be a place to gather and enjoy. He commented that Ms. Willett has been instrumental in getting this group off the ground. He noted that the Museum's goal is to provide resources to help promote leadership, and he thanked the leadership group for their efforts. He suggested that if any board members had any ideas to throw out to the group, they should do so; and noted that if members of the Young Leaders Circle wanted to attend additional Museum Foundation meetings, they would be welcome. He commented that the Museum wants to be responsive to the community and its wants and needs.

Construction Update

Mr. McKay thanked the Board members for their efforts over the last long 18 months of the pandemic and construction. He noted that the Museum moved back into the Dairy Barn during the first week in July, new exhibits were installed and the new equipment barn and other barns have been cleaned and open to the public. He explained that paper exhibit information in the Bull Barn will be replaced with permanent signs created by the City's sign shop. He commented that the response since reopening has been overwhelming, with busy activities.

He stated that there are still contractors on site every day finishing up various items such as lighting. He mentioned the difficulties getting the temporary trailer out, commenting that they were able to very carefully remove it. He noted that it was tough getting the exhibits moved back into the Dairy Barn and credited Parks employees for helping transport these exhibits back. He commented that some pieces of the exhibits are still arriving, and everything should be back in place in mid-September.

He pointed out that the new generator was critical this past weekend when everyone in the area lost power, and allowed the Museum to host its scheduled events.

He stated that yesterday he was in contact with an individual from Preservation Magazine, from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He explained that they are interested in doing a story on the preservation that is going on because it is so rare in southeast Michigan, especially for agricultural buildings.

He asked if any of the members had any questions or comments on the construction.

Vice Chairperson Wiggins commented that the lightning rods installed look fabulous.

Mr. McKay stated that photographic proof was found that the lightning rods were in existence at one point. He commented that lightning rods on the Calf Barn that had been damaged were repaired, and he mentioned that all of the lightning rods are grounded. He noted that trees on the property have been hit by lightning several times over the years. He stated that all archival shelving is on wheels and that will help with disaster planning. He mentioned that last year Ms. Fitzpatrick and Ms. Lawrence assisted museums in Midland regarding disaster relief and brought back comments that during a disaster such as a flood, it was difficult to evacuate materials and exhibits fast enough. He stated that the Museum needs to be good stewards of the documents it possesses and to plan for their safety.

Museum Programs

Ms. Fitzpatrick reported on the upcoming Museum programs for September and October, noting that the Museum is going full-speed. She stated that the Museum maintained a good number of programs even throughout the Covid-19

pandemic, limiting sizes, and trying to have programs outdoors; and this fall's programs are going forward, keeping additional Covid plans in the background should they need to be implemented.

She discussed some of the highlights of upcoming programs including a new bike ride along the Clinton River Trail, in conjunction with the City's Outdoor Engagement, combining history and natural resources together. The Museum will host two programs, one on Global Warming with local Meteorologist Paul Gross, and then on the Polio Vaccine with Don Callihan. Both programs will be in person; however, the Museum has the ability to drop back to an online presentation if needed.

She reported that the Museum has a new relationship with the Rochester-Avon Historical Society, sort of a reconnection and alignment of common goals. She noted that they are housing their surrey in the Equipment Barn, and the Museum will host the organization's annual picnic. Furthermore, the Museum hosts the Society's Brown Bag Lunches in the Calf Barn, which are very popular. She noted that people are asked to preregister for most, if not all of the Museum events to keep a count of space needed.

She commented that the one event advance tickets are not necessary for is the Stone Wall Pumpkin Festival. Tickets can be purchased the day of the event only.

Mr. McKay commented that the Museum has a new written agreement with the Historical Society for its collaboration.

He encouraged Board members to contribute ideas for relevant topics that the Museum can present information on. He noted that global warming, international political issues, and the like are just some of the topics that the Museum can work toward providing relevant information through discussion and programming. He stated that while these are not typical topics for a local history Museum to present, the Museum can provide a place to have these conversations.

REVIEW OF MUSEUM DIVISION PLAN 2021-2026

Mr. McKay noted that the Museum Division Plan is a document that is available for review on Google Drive. He mentioned that the Membership Program was discussed, and it currently generates approximately \$15,000 per year. He commented that it has been in the 300-person range for some time, and the Museum's goal was to grow to 500 members by 2025. He reported that they were able to reach 400 members this past June, exceeding expectations. He commented that the new event registration system through Eventbrite allows the tracking of whether registrants are members, providing a way to send a personal invitation to anyone not a member after the events highlighting the benefits of Museum membership. He commented that 500 is not an unreasonable goal at this point, and noted that membership monies as they grow can make the difference when trying to raise matching monies for grants.

Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that membership renewals come in before the reminders go out, showing that not only is the Museum bringing in new members, it is retaining them. She noted that while attending some conferences she hears from others that their memberships are dropping off. The Museum's members want to support the Museum and see it not only as an exhibit space but as a community space as well.

Dr. Sellick questioned how business support has been.

Mr. McKay responded that businesses continue to support the Museum. He noted that for instance the Vintage Baseball Team takes a lot of staff time to coordinate that; and he stated that the agreement with the team was that they had to become a business member, which helps offset some of the Museum's cost to host them. He mentioned two firms that are a part of the Museum's Garden Walk this year, and commented that the Museum has had the good fortune to attract these businesses.

Dr. Sellick questioned whether the Museum was actively reaching out to businesses.

Mr. McKay responded that at some point the Museum could work with the Chamber more closely on business member recruitment. He noted that the Museum has had good success attracting sponsors for individual events, and stated that the Pumpkin Fest, Barns and Brews, and the Garden Walk has turned into additional business sponsorships. He commented that this is the first year for the Museum to get back into a programming focus. He mentioned that it was tough to recruit business membership last year as businesses were going through a lot. He explained that staff focus up to July 1 of this year was in moving back into the facilities.

He stated that he would continue to highlight the Division Plan on future agendas so that the Board can be apprised of the progress. He commented that the focus has been on capital projects for almost 30 years and a breather can finally be taken.

He noted that work on the parking lot has been delayed. He commented that while sealcoating hides a lot of the imperfections, the lots are falling apart as they are approaching 25 years old. He noted that as a part of the plan, reconfiguring the parking lots is being reviewed, along with restoring the drive in front of the farmhouse to a more original condition. He added that events held in January, February and March are difficult as the extra grassed area used for parking is too soft.

He commented that the addition of cameras to the complex has helped significantly from both a safety and security standpoint and also to help staff monitor events. The Farmhouse still needs to have cameras added. He mentioned that Council Member Morita was instrumental in stressing the need for security.

Mr. McKay noted that he and Ms. Fitzpatrick worked extensively on the Museum Plan over the past year and stressed that it is intended to be a working

document, backed up with sources, and resources and archival research. He noted that the same detail is put into developing the Division Plan as was put into the restoration of the Dairy Barn.

Mr. Snyder questioned whether the development of the Division Plan helps in the Museum's efforts to move along in the accreditation process.

Mr. McKay responded that it does. He commented that this fall, one of the recommendations from the accreditation review team was to begin a program called the Steps (Standard and Excellence Program for History Organizations) Program. He noted that a virtual conference is coming up that he and Ms. Fitzpatrick will attend, and as a part of that conference there will be a webinar on performing a self-assessment. He commented that the Museum has improved so many things that had been identified previously.

He explained that there are many steps to go through in the accreditation process; and he mentioned that one step was that the entire staff had to be CPR-certified, which was finally accomplished last Monday. He commented that there were so many things that had to be accomplished, and he noted that it makes the Museum focus on its complete operations.

Chairperson Mallon questioned whether the accreditation group would come out once the Museum finishes its self-evaluation.

Mr. McKay responded that once the Museum completes the assessment, it will jump back into the accreditation process.

Vice Chairperson Wiggins stated that the timing is good as the Museum is moving away from capital projects, as accreditation is time-consuming.

Mr. McKay stated that while there may not be funding directly attached to accreditation, it can be used positively in reference to approaching donors. He stressed that this would be the smallest accredited museum in Michigan.

Mr. Snyder questioned how many museums were accredited in Michigan.

Mr. McKay responded approximately 12.

Vice Chairperson Wiggins commented that only five percent of the Museums across the country are accredited, so it is a very prestigious certification to have.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. McKay stated that Rochester Hills has been fortunate that in its history it has had great leadership in elected office. He expressed his appreciation to outgoing Council Member Morita noting that her efforts will be realized for generations to come. He presented a watercolor painting to her and thanked her for her contributions to the Museum.

Ms. Morita offered some parting words, noting that this has been a labor of love. She commented that there has been a great difference from when she first began on the Museum Foundation Board to where the Museum is now. She commented that she advocated for the Museum to other Council Members. She stated that she did not know who would be stepping into her spot, but would hope that the Board would impress upon that Council Member the importance of continuing that line of communication with the other Council Members.

Mr. McKay stated that he has seen the site transform over the past year.

Ms. Morita stated that another change coming is during Council's Strategic Plan formulation, and explained that Council has directed that Parks have its own Strategic Plan. She noted that the City has an extensive parks system and Council wants to ensure that it has the funding to maintain and take care of the parks. She commented that the Museum Strategic Plan will probably get folded into the entire Parks Strategic Plan.

Vice Chairperson Wiggins stated that the Board appreciates what a great Board Member and cheerleader Ms. Morita has been. She commented that since her arrival on the Board, Ms. Morita has asked a lot of hard questions and had difficult conversations and took those needs to the Council Members.

Ms. Morita responded that it has been a labor of love.

Mr. McKay expressed his appreciation to Ms. Morita for her time and efforts.

He noted a listing of upcoming programs was provided at the bottom of the Agenda. He asked if he could rely on the Museum Foundation Board to help with the Stone Wall Pumpkin Festival, noting that it would be back to a little bit larger of an event than last year.

He commented that the Model Trains will be coming back this year after Thanksgiving.

Ms. Willett mentioned that Fall Festival was not included on the list of events. She explained that it is a chance for all of the City's employees and their families to visit the Museum. She commented that in the last few months the City has had 30 new employees, and this will be a chance for them to visit the Museum.

She welcomed the Board to attend the Mayor's State of the City Address this coming Wednesday, August 25, 2021 at Innovation Hills.

Dr. Sellick questioned whether the City's proposed budget included a request for an archivist.

Mr. McKay noted that many requests go in for staffing from all the departments. He explained that what was approved this year was additional programming staff, and the archivist request was deferred to next year. He commented that the Museum is one of many needs in the City. He mentioned that when COVID hit, many of the volunteers were not able to continue. He commented that the Museum was looking toward a tri-party funding for the Archivist

He explained that after meeting with the schools, it was determined that all their field trips would be scheduled for spring rather than spread out over the school year.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- November 19, 2021, 7:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Mallon adjourned the meeting at 8:47 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Mary Jo Pachla.

Minutes were approved as presented at the November 19, 2021 Regular Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Board Meeting.

James Mallon, Chairperson