



Rochester Hills

Minutes - Draft

Rochester Hills Museum Foundation

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*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, February 16, 2018

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 7:32 a.m.*

ROLL CALL

Present 6 - Steven Fite, James Mallon, Stephanie Morita, Vern Pixley, Joe Snyder and
Suzanne Wiggins

Absent 3 - Bryan Barnett, Katharine Rogers and Heather Sellick

Others Present:

*Pat McKay, Museum Manager
Ken Elwert, Parks and Natural Resources Director
Michele Dunham, Education and Program Coordinator
Samantha Lawrence, Museum Archivist
Maria Willett, Chief Assistant to the Mayor*

Jason Jay Stevens and Meghan Sullivan, Flutter and Wow

(Katharine Rogers entered at 7:36 a.m.)

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2018-0043 Approval of Minutes - November 17, 2017 Rochester Hills Museum Foundation
Meeting

Attachments: [111717 Museum Foundation Board Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)
[Resolution.pdf](#)

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

Aye 6 - Fite, Mallon, Morita, Pixley, Snyder and Wiggins

Absent 3 - Barnett, Rogers and Sellick

Resolved, that the Minutes of the November 17, 2017 Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Meeting are approved as presented.

Katharine Rogers entered at 7:36 a.m.

Present 7 - Steven Fite, James Mallon, Stephanie Morita, Vern Pixley, Katharine Rogers, Joe Snyder and Suzanne Wiggins

Absent 2 - Bryan Barnett and Heather Sellick

MUSEUM UPDATE

- **Exhibit Design Update:**

Pat McKay noted that the main focus of the meeting today is on the Exhibit Design Project. He explained that a request for proposal was issued last January with the bulk of the work to date beginning last summer. He commented that the PBS Movie generated much interest in the Museum by individuals who wanted to know more about the story of the family members. He stated that the Museum has undertaken a balancing act between telling the story of the Taylor-Van Hoosen family and featuring highlights of local history. He noted that once the PBS Movie was released, it became fairly apparent that more needs to be told of the remarkable story of the family.

He pointed out that the Museum's current exhibits are 20 years old and were constructed prior to the technology age of iPhones or touchscreen computers. He also mentioned that the Museum Store takes up a large footprint in the building, and the store does not generate the revenue to justify that amount of space. Furthermore, it was noted that the reception desk is relatively imposing and Museum Staff do not feel that the silos are being used as effectively as they could be. He stated that space within the existing walls is being adapted.

He explained that Flutter and Wow, a design and fabrication firm out of Ann Arbor, was selected for the exhibit design work; and he stated that Museum Staff have been delighted to be working with Jason Jay Stevens and Meghan Sullivan on the project. Stevens and Sullivan reviewed visitor surveys and attended events to observe what the Museum's typical audience is, how people move through the building, and how much time they spend in order to come up with opportunities to tell the Museum's stories in an accurate, fun and engaging way. He commented that Stevens observed the Museum's need to relocate wedding ceremonies indoors on rainy days and how exhibit areas need to be used as multi-purpose

space for various events. He stressed that this is a preliminary design phase, and noted that the next phase will entail more detail and fabrication.

Mr. Stevens stated that there are so many different stories and themes of national or even world importance to be told that weave their way through this particular site. He commented that they have found the story of the four women incredibly inspiring; and he stated that every Michigan and perhaps every American school child should know at a minimum the name of Bertha Van Hoosen.

He highlighted the focus of the museum redesign, and noted the following:

- The exhibits should appeal to people of all ages and all learning styles, including those who learn by reading, listening and doing.
- The exhibits should exemplify some of the themes running through the stories, including science, economics, agriculture and fashion.
- The proposal includes the removal of the store, and the log cabin room to create more floor space.
- Nothing is proposed to be bolted to the floor and there are not many other alterations proposed.
- The reception desk design will be redesigned to adequately serve incoming visitors and still manage some of the gift shop items that will be for sale.
- The entrance gallery will include a Holstein cow fabricated in fiberglass.

Mr. McKay noted that doors, windows, floors and original walls will not be altered as the building is a Nationally Registered Historic Building. The gift shop and log cabin room were installed as a part of adaptive reuse renovations back in 2001.

Mr. Stevens stated that while conflicts often exist between museum exhibits and event spaces, the contemporary museum design process attempts to embrace a museum as an event space. He continued with highlights of the proposed design, including the following:

- It is becoming much more the norm to identify and create spaces where selfies can be taken. He stressed that selfies and wedding photos taken in the Van Hoosen Museum and posted to friends on social media can create curiosity and interest in the Museum.
- A history section will include a display of artifacts from the collection that relate to the pioneers in the region.
- Design transferability will incorporate period-appropriate furniture styles in many of the exhibits.
- Activities will encourage children to begin telling stories about what is happening, including the possibility of a landscape area depicting the natural environment prior to European or American settlement, allowing an overlay of the different stages of suburban development.
- The Detroit Urban Railway will be featured to link the Van Hoosen Farm with the network of other local historical sites in Southeast Michigan.
- As the Museum is an event space, exhibit panels will be movable.
- Exhibits will feature information about the individual family members.

- Exhibits will be interactive and hands-on areas will be incorporated. Electronic quiz boards with changeable topics are proposed.
- In order to increase visitorship of families, a kiddie version of the At the Sign of the Black and White Cow store will be an interactive similar to that which was incorporated into the Hands On Museum in Ann Arbor.
- A community talk-back board will feature a place for post-it notes heralding community discourse for a variety of topics beyond history. A community timeline will allow people to pencil-in their own events along the timeline on notes that can be changed out.
- The digitized newspapers will be placed on display.
- The story of Native Americans will be told as they were a part of history before the Taylor and Van Hoosen families settled in the area.

Mr. McKay noted that Michele Dunham handles educational programs for the Museum and is pleased with the proposed exhibits and how they can incorporate school curriculum. She noted that at \$5 entry each, thousands of students feed the Museum's revenue stream. Samantha Lawrence, Museum Archivist, knows the fascinating history of the area and has been working to review thousands of images and boxes of clothing to select those to highlight.

Vice Chairperson Wiggins noted that the new exhibits will bring people back more and more to the Museum.

Mr. McKay pointed out that the design will create exhibit space as well as provide flexible areas available when the building is used for an indoor ceremony. Exhibits must be portable enough to be moved to allow the space to accommodate roughly 100. He noted that the spaces can be adjusted to vary the story told as well.

He explained that the goal of this phase of the project was to begin holding space, and the next phase will be to design the labels and begin writing the words to capture the story.

A question was raised as to whether there would be space for visitors to view the PBS Movie.

Mr. McKay responded that one of the silos shows the movie now and will not change. He commented that as the movie is over 50 minutes long, it is hard to squeeze in a viewing during a visit.

Mr. Elwert questioned whether there might be a way to develop a condensed version of the movie.

Mr. McKay responded that perhaps the trailers could be used to entice someone to purchase the movie. He commented that some people do stay to watch the entire film.

Mr. Stevens commented that many museums have an introductory video. He noted that this video will allow the user to decide how long they sit and watch the film, which he stated actually encourages viewers to sit longer as they feel that they are in control.

Mr. McKay commented that the Hall of Fame plaques will be moved into the round silo with the video production. He stated that this will make that room very engaging.

Vice Chairperson Wiggins questioned whether there will be a retail area.

Mr. Stevens responded that there will be; however, the area will be reduced from the current space.

Mr. Elwert stated that there will be a place where small items, books and videos will be on display; however, it will not be a large retail place.

Mr. McKay mentioned that it may be a cart on wheels that could move to different locations based on whatever event is going on. He stated that the current retail area is not generating the revenue to support the space it is occupying. He noted that there is the video, biographies and autobiographies, along with some historical society publications. He added that there may be some global merchandise that will be included; however, our merchandise inventory will be reduced.

He mentioned that the Garden Club asked for a wish list and he stated that he asked them to purchase the display cow. He noted that the Club purchased the fiberglass cow that is in the Children's Garden. He commented that having the cow there will make an amazing impression as people enter the building. He stated that it does not matter why people come to the Museum, whether to learn about history or attend a wedding or event, they will learn something about the story and our innovative community.

Vice Chairperson Wiggins commented that the presentation has been very exciting and she is interested in hearing more as the project progresses.

Mr. Pixley questioned what the next step would be in the exhibit project process.

Mr. McKay responded that the next phase would be to determine cost and fund raising needs, and a timeframe determined as to how long the project should take to complete. He noted that the design phase will take several months before fabrication can begin.

Mr. Elwert stated that the intention is to keep Flutter and Wow engaged throughout the process with work continuing on some of the phases even if they cannot be completed initially.

Mr. McKay noted that the results of a survey was included in the packet brought to the Board today in which visitors were asked whether the exhibits should focus on featuring local history or tell more stories on the families. He stated that the answer was that both topics need to be included to tell the story to both families who have been here for a long time and those newcomers to the area.

BROOMFIELD LEADERSHIP EVENT

Mr. McKay expressed his appreciation to the Board Members for their assistance with the Broomfield Leadership Event at the Emagine Theater in November. He mentioned that the Mayor's Office helped by getting the word out to boost attendance. He stated that between the Broomfield event and the end of the year appeal for contributions, around \$17,000 was received. He noted that the search will begin for next year's speaker, and he commented that a Thursday night in November appears to be a good timeframe for this event.

He stated that the month of December is busy, as the Museum features the train exhibit and Sunday hours over the holiday. He commented that it will be fantastic to feature new exhibits for visitors during those days.

He mentioned that approximately \$7,000 in sponsorship dollars has been received, with Genisys Credit Union and Rochester Avon Recreation Authority sponsoring some things. In addition, State Farm has allocated \$800 to pass out ice cream during Wet and Wild Wednesdays.

- Equipment Barn Update:

Mr. McKay reported that approximately \$107,000 in fund raising is still needed for the Equipment Barn project, and it is estimated that the Museum Exhibit Design could near that in fund raising requirements as well. He pointed out that these two large projects will need to be included in fund raising efforts. He mentioned that approximately \$67,000 is committed to the Equipment Barn, with approximately \$81,000 in unallocated or membership money that could be available.

Mr. Elwert stated that Flutter and Wow were encouraging the Museum to commit to move forward with the exhibit project. He commented that while the intent is to keep Flutter and Wow engaged at some level, the Museum is not ready for a full commitment without a final number or range for the cost of the exhibits.

Mr. Pixley questioned whether there was a sense of what the estimate would be for the Exhibits.

Mr. Elwert responded that he expected it to be in the range of \$100,000 to \$125,000.

Mr. McKay noted that \$20,000 has been invested in the project through Community Foundation funds thus far, so the intent is to keep the project moving. He commented that he is reluctant to take years to complete the project as there will be noticeable gaps in the exhibits during the work.

Vice Chairperson Wiggins suggested that the \$81,000 in membership funds be allocated toward the exhibits as it is unrestricted operating money meant to do those types of projects. She commented that the Equipment Barn is a capital campaign and she would like to see the Board work harder in securing

specific donor monies for that project. She noted that this allocation would allow the Museum to continue to move forward on the exhibits with \$81,000 in funding.

Mr. McKay commented that that a good strategy might be to launch a capital campaign in the spring for the Equipment Barn.

Mr. Elwert stated that perhaps it would be best to consider securing another \$50,000 for the exhibits and complete that project rather than trying to do both projects at the same time.

Mr. McKay noted that the Museum has exhibit design approval from City Council for \$75,000 and would have to go back for any amount over that.

Vice Chairperson Wiggins mentioned that she, Mr. McKay, and Chairperson Mallon spoke during their last meeting about having an event where friends of Board Members could be personally invited to view the documentary and walk the grounds, allowing for a more personal interaction. Another possibility would be to have a fund raiser that would help raise money for the Equipment Barn possibly when the new exhibits were coming online as a sneak peek before they open to the public.

Mr. McKay pointed out that March of 2019 is the Museum's 40th Birthday; as 40 years ago it was established as a gift from Michigan State University. He commented that the Museum would like to take this anniversary as a good deadline to introduce new exhibits and unveil a polished look.

Mr. Snyder questioned how long the project would take if the money were available and allocated.

Mr. McKay responded that it was possible to be completed by the end of the year; however, things would have to move quickly. He stated that around July or August funds would have to be available to move into fabrication.

Vice President Wiggins commented that the City is holding a \$10,000 one-time gift from a utility at the Foundation that may be available for use. She noted that the funds have not been allocated to anything else. She stated that the Museum should discuss the use of these funds when it has a full board available, as these funds have been sitting there for five years.

Mr. McKay stated that he would have more definitive numbers to present at the May Board Meeting.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

2018-0044 Nomination and Election of Chairperson for 2018

Attachments: [Resolution.pdf](#)

Vice Chairperson Wiggins nominated James Mallon to continue as Chairperson. She noted that he is dedicated and attends every meeting, does an excellent job in leading the meetings, and sits on other committees of the

Foundation Board.

A motion was made by Wiggins, seconded by Fite, that James Mallon be Appointed as Chairperson for 2018. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 7 - Fite, Mallon, Morita, Pixley, Rogers, Snyder and Wiggins

Absent 2 - Barnett and Sellick

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation appoints James Mallon as Chairperson for 2018.

2018-0045 Nomination and Election of Vice Chairperson for 2018

Attachments: [Resolution.pdf](#)

Chairperson Mallon *nominated Suzanne Wiggins to continue as Vice Chairperson for 2018.*

A motion was made by Mallon, seconded by Rogers, that Suzanne Wiggins be Appointed. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 7 - Fite, Mallon, Morita, Pixley, Rogers, Snyder and Wiggins

Absent 2 - Barnett and Sellick

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation appoints Suzanne Wiggins as Vice Chairperson for 2018.

2018-0046 Nomination and Election of Secretary for 2018

Attachments: [Resolution.pdf](#)

Vice Chairperson Wiggins *nominated Katharine Rogers to continue as Secretary for 2018. She thanked her for her commitment to the Museum as a whole and to the Foundation Board.*

A motion was made by Wiggins, seconded by Pixley, that Katharine Rogers be Appointed. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 7 - Fite, Mallon, Morita, Pixley, Rogers, Snyder and Wiggins

Absent 2 - Barnett and Sellick

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation appoints Katharine Rogers as Secretary for 2018.

2017 ROCHESTER HILLS MUSEUM ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. McKay *noted that as the Museum buildings were gifted by Michigan State University (MSU), an annual report is required. He explained that some of the MSU colleges have Oakland County chapters and are invited to hold meetings at the Museum. He noted that the annual report shows that the Museum can make an impact in the community, and highlights all the activities that have occurred over the past year.*

2018-0104 Motion to Accept the 2017 Rochester Hills Museum Annual Report

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

Aye 7 - Fite, Mallon, Morita, Pixley, Rogers, Snyder and Wiggins

Absent 2 - Barnett and Sellick

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation hereby accepts the 2017 Rochester Hills Museum Annual Report as presented.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Meeting is set for Friday, May 18, 2018 at 7:30 a.m.

Upcoming Museum Events

Mr. McKay noted that the Museum will host Founders Day on March 11, 2018, and will be inducting three new members into the Hall of Fame:

- Max Mallon, father of Chairperson James Mallon
- Roy Rewold
- Eva Woodward Parker, whose father and brother are already in the Hall of Fame.

He noted that Founders Day will include entertainment by pianist Bob Milne. He commented that whenever a public event is held at the Museum, he asks for a moment to address attendees about the Museum.

Other listed events include:

February

- *Friday Nights Film Festival*

March

- *Founders Day - March 11*
- *Sap to Syrup Pancake Breakfast - March 17*
- *Every Thursday night in March - Women's History*
- *Every Friday night in March - Cabin Fever Lecture Series*

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Mallon adjourned the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Mary Jo Pachla.

Minutes were approved as presented/amended at the _____ 2018 Regular Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Meeting.

James Mallon, Chairperson