



Rochester Hills Minutes - Draft

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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 16, 2019

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 7:30 a.m. Michigan Time.

ROLL CALL

Present 8 - Bryan Barnett, Steven Fite, James Mallon, Stephanie Morita, Vern Pixley, Katharine Rogers, Joe Snyder and Suzanne Wiggins
Absent 1 - Heather Sellick

Others Present:

*Ken Elwert, Parks and Natural Resources Director
Michele Dunham, Museum Program Coordinator
Jenna Raschke, Event Coordinator
Maria Willett, Chief Assistant to the Mayor*

*Dr. Heather Sellick provided prior notice that she would be unable to attend.
Pat McKay, Museum Manager, was out of town and unable to attend.*

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2019-0365 Approval of Minutes - Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Meeting - May 17, 2019

Attachments: [051719 Museum Foundation Draft Minutes.pdf](#)
[Minutes Resolution.pdf](#)

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

Aye 8 - Barnett, Fite, Mallon, Morita, Pixley, Rogers, Snyder and Wiggins

Absent 1 - Heather Sellick

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Board approves the minutes of the Regular Meeting held May 17, 2019 as presented.

MUSEUM UPDATE

- Rochester Hills Museum Young Leaders Circle

Maria Willett reported on the activities of the Rochester Hills Museum Young Leaders Circle, and noted that there is much enthusiasm in the group for a focus on both fund raising and helping to raise awareness of the Museum in general. She commented that each time the group meets, the members learn a little more about the Museum.

- New Exhibits

Michele Dunham noted that members were provided with a timeline for the final phase of the exhibits. She stated that there are still a few more things that need to be completed. She mentioned that the Native American Exhibit in the silo will highlight what attracted the pioneers to the area, and she commented that Eric Hemenway from the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians will be consulting on the exhibit. She noted that Mr. Hemenway will be speaking during the Cabin Fever series on Friday, March 27, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

- Dairy Barn Building - Structural Issues

Ken Elwert updated the Board on structural concerns encountered at the Dairy Barn Building. He explained that a wall removal during the exhibit project led to the discovery that a significant number of trusses have structural issues. He stated that both the Museum's architectural firm, H2A and Jackie Hoist, and Hubbell Roth and Clark, the City's engineering firm, both reviewed the concerns and gave evaluations. It was determined that to be on the safe side, the Dairy Barn Building would not be opened during high wind and snow load times. The City's insurance company and Mr. Snyder, as risk manager for the City, not knowing the structure of the trusses as the building was constructed long ago before wood was graded, determined that the entire top structure should be replaced and operations in the building be shut down until the work can be undertaken. He stated that staff are monitoring the weather conditions, and stressed that the building is not at an impending risk of collapse.

He explained that most of the programs that the Museum undertakes will still run; however, there will be changes in the way things are done. He stated that staff will be moved to an office area in the Farmhouse, and school tours beginning in October will be modified with the Museum acquiring a portable building for exhibits and school activities.

Mayor Barnett stated that while this is not the news that the Board would want to hear, the City is erring on the side of caution and will do what it takes to bring the

building to the condition where the community can enjoy it for the next 90 years. He added that the City has reviewed its internal policies to ensure that its older structures will be getting regular checks. He mentioned that while it is a maintenance issue, similar to a road project, it is better to do a full closure and get the work done as quickly as possible.

Mr. Snyder stated that the architect will meet with the construction manager and develop a rough cost.

Ms. Morita questioned whether the remaining exhibits in Phase IV will be installed, as they will have to be removed.

Mr. Elwert responded that the installation will be documented to determine how they are being installed in order to be able to reinstall them after the work is complete. He mentioned that the silo may not be affected.

Mayor Barnett stated that adjustments and prioritizing will be undertaken, and he stressed that the Museum's changes in the school program will be undertaken to ensure that the curriculum criteria of the schools is met. He commented that the rest of the campus will function normally.

Mr. Elwert stated that key exhibits will be moved to the portable building and will be open to the public. Other items will be moved to a secure location and climate-controlled space.

Mr. Snyder commented that the intent is to complete design and architectural drawings this year to ensure that the project can be undertaken after the first of the year as soon as the snow is gone. He added that hopefully economies of scale can be realized as the Equipment Barn can move ahead at the same time.

- Big Green Tractor Beer Fest

Mr. Elwert reported that details of the upcoming event are being worked out and the Museum is excited to have the Young Leaders Circle involved in this fund raising event.

The event will be held on September 28, 2019 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and will feature craft beer, food from Crank's Catering, and a DJ. Vintage tractors will be a part of the event.

Mayor Barnett commented that this is an exciting event that will engage more of the community and expose an entirely new group to the Museum. He thanked Ms. Willett and the Young Leaders Circle for getting the event off the ground.

- Michele Dunham Retirement

Mr. Elwert noted that Ms. Dunham is retiring on August 23, 2019. While the City is saddened, they are excited for her. He also noted that Ms. Dunham

expressed that she is willing to stay with the City on a part-time temporary basis during the transition and training of a replacement. He explained that while final paperwork is still in the works, Ms. Dunham's replacement is slated to begin work on September 9, 2019. He mentioned that there were 186 applicants for the position, with five very strong candidates interviewed with varied backgrounds including farm history, interpretive history, and connections with schools and education. He stressed that the individual slated to begin work has a great personality and enthusiasm for engaging people.

***Ms. Dunham** offered some parting comments, noting that she will not say goodbye, because she will be back.*

The Board gave their best wishes to Ms. Dunham.

EQUIPMENT BARN - Ken Elwert and Joe Snyder

***Mr. Elwert** reported that the Museum is ready to start the site planning process with the City of Rochester. He noted that a \$100,000 grant has been applied for which, if obtained, would leave \$40,000 targeted for fund raising. He stressed that the Museum will be looking for the Board's help for reaching out to those who would consider helping out to complete the fund raising for the Barn. He stated that hopefully the Museum will learn in the next two months whether it has been successful in receiving the grant.*

***Mr. Pixley** questioned what expectations were for in the success of the fund raising event.*

***Mr. Elwert** responded that fund raising events typically do not reach capacity for approximately three years. He stated that from a fiscal standpoint, raising \$5,000 would be considered successful. He mentioned that the Museum is hoping to get a sponsorship as well for the event.*

***Ms. Morita** questioned who would represent the City at Rochester's Planning Commission on September 4, and whether the Board should consider attending in support.*

***Mr. Elwert** responded that he, Mr. McKay, and a representative from H2A Architects would attend and it would not likely be necessary for any Board Members to attend. He stated that an official statement of Council's support will be requested if necessary. He mentioned that Mr. McKay has been in conversation on the Equipment Barn with Rochester's Building Official, Nik Banda.*

BROOMFIELD LEADERSHIP EVENT

***Chairperson Mallon** reported that after discussion with Mr. McKay it was thought that there would most likely not be a Broomfield event this fall because of the Dairy Barn issues and activities that will be going on.*

***Mr. Elwert** commented that with the staff transitions and new locations for school tours, the capacity of the Museum staff was not likely to be able to support the event this year.*

Vice Chairperson Wiggins commented that in the past, the event also was held in conjunction with the donor dinner; and she commented that a donor appreciation event could be held to coincide with a re-opening to help fuel bringing the public back.

BRAINSTORMING AND DISCUSSION

Mr. Elwert noted that taking five minutes or so at each meeting to discuss Museum goals would hopefully provide some direction and ideas that have not been previously thought of. He mentioned that younger audiences have been engaged, budget discussions held, and operational adjustments considered. He encouraged Board members to throw out ideas for discussion.

Mr. Pixley commented that engagement of the youth group will be a game-changer for the Museum. He added that the Museum will benefit from not only their fund raising activities but from increased community perception.

Mr. Elwert noted that the Museum is looking for a social connection. He mentioned trending activities such as canning and the younger audiences that activities such as this are attracting. He commented that the Museum is grateful to have Ms. Willett and Ms. Raschke to help guide the Museum into these new areas.

Mayor Barnett mentioned that the Sign of the Black and White Cow is for sale, which is unusual as that parcel has not turned over to new owners in a number of years. He noted that when an adjacent property comes up for sale, it is not unusual for the City to pause and have a conversation of what it might wish to do with its Museum campus plans over time. He stated that while there has been no substantive City discussion about acquiring the property, there has been much coverage on the story of the home.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- Friday, November 15, 2019, 7:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Mallon adjourned the meeting at 8:25 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Mary Jo Pachla.

Minutes were approved as presented at the November 15, 2019 Regular Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Board Meeting.

James Mallon, Chairperson