



# 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.*

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Friday, November 20, 2020

7:30 AM

Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen  
Farm - Dairy Barn

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### CALL TO ORDER

*Chairperson James Mallon called the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Board meeting to order at 7:33 a.m. Michigan time via Zoom teleconference.*

### ROLL CALL

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

### Others Present:

*Patrick McKay, Museum Manager  
Cathy Fitzpatrick, Museum Program Coordinator  
Ken Elwert, Parks and Natural Resources Director  
Maria Willett, Chief Assistant to the Mayor*

*In accordance with the provisions of the Act 267 of the Public Acts of 1976, as amended, the Open Meetings Act, the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Board Members present announced the city and state where they were currently:*

*Chairperson Mallon attending from Rochester Hills, Michigan  
Vice Chairperson Wiggins attending from Big Rapids, Michigan  
Secretary Katharine Rogers attending from Rochester Hills, Michigan  
Dr. Steven Fite attending from Rochester, Michigan  
Stephanie Morita attending from Rochester Hills, Michigan  
Vern Pixley attending from Rochester, Michigan  
Dr. Heather Sellick attending from Rochester, Michigan  
Joe Snyder attending from Rochester Hills, Michigan*

## PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2020-0442 Approval of Minutes - Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Regular Meeting - August 21, 2020

**Attachments:** [082120 Museum Foundation Draft Minutes.pdf](#)  
[Resolution.pdf](#)

*The Approval of the August 21, 2020 minutes were postponed until the February 2021 meeting as the Board did not have an opportunity to review them prior to the meeting.*

**Postponed**

## MUSEUM UPDATE

**Pat McKay**, Museum Manager, provided a Museum Update to the Board. He reported that the Museum learned that it received a grant award of \$40,000 supporting cultural institutions from Oakland County and expressed thanks to Joe Snyder, Chief Financial Officer, for pursuing the COVID-related grant.

**Mr. Snyder** stated that these are CARES Act monies that are being distributed through Oakland County, and commented that he has been very aggressive in going after any and all CARES Act dollars. He pointed out that the Museum Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization, and as a non-profit it fit the requirements for the grant, which will offset operational costs at the Museum and assist with some of the Museum's general projects. He stated that he also submitted for several other grants that the Foundation would be eligible for. He mentioned that the Oakland County Board of Commissioners has approved over \$1 million of CARES Act reimbursements for the City for other activities.

### DAIRY BARN and EQUIPMENT BARN CONSTRUCTION UPDATES:

**Mr. McKay** encouraged members to visit the grounds to view the progress, noting that the Equipment Barn walls were up and the concrete was curing. He reported that Dairy Barn rafters were being removed and replaced - ten rafters at a time. He stated that work should be completed in late May, 2021. He commented that once the contractors began removing rafters the structural deficiencies of the barn were exposed.

**Vice Chairperson Wiggins** thanked Ms. Morita and Mr. Snyder along with the entire City's team for ensuring that funds were approved through Council to make it all happen.

**Mr. McKay** noted that there are still some exhibits that had not been installed and had been on their way to the City when the Dairy Barn was emptied out for construction. He explained that everything is currently in storage. He stated

*that the last component to the exhibits will be the mastodon bones, and commented that they are working on getting into Cranbrook to review their display cases and how the bones can be mounted inside a display case.*

*He reported that digitizing of the Museum's remaining newspaper archives is ongoing. He explained that the process began approximately three years ago with the oldest newspapers from 1872-1952 and now is moving on to digitize both paper and microfilm from 1952 to 1972. He stated that it will most likely be mid-next year when everything will be online.*

*He updated the Board on Museum programming, noting that the Model Train Exhibit will not be in place this year. He added that Santa's Visit has been cancelled as it falls during the current three-week shutdown period due to COVID-19. He noted that the decision was made to cancel the visit along with the Old Fashioned Christmas as it was determined that there would be no way to ensure safety. He stated that if things open back up, building tours would open up through the end of the year.*

*He reported that a search for an archival intern was progressing. He explained that the Museum is proud about its collaborations with the Rochester Downtown Development Authority and the Rochester Fire Department, and it approached the City of Rochester about collaborating on a financial basis. He stated that a three-year, \$10,000/year contract with the City of Rochester will help. He noted 96 applicants are being reviewed, and the goal will be to hire a college student in an archival program and have them on board in January.*

## **DRAFT FOR REVIEW 2021-2026 MUSEUM DIVISION PLAN**

***Mr. McKay** stated that the Board's input is being sought to chart the course for the Museum for the next five years. He noted that many of the goals of the last plan have been checked off, including the Schoolhouse, Calf Barn, new exhibits, PBS movie and more. He stated that the draft plan will be discussed at every Board meeting going forward.*

***Vice Chairperson Wiggins** commented that she thought the document was very well written and covers all of the goals moving forward. She stated that there is an important period when funds have been raised and projects completed where time now needs to be spent planning programming and exhibits in the new spaces.*

***Ms. Morita** questioned why the draft was produced in landscape format and stated that she had a hard time reading the document due to the format and small dense font used. She requested the document be reformatted from landscape to portrait for readability. She commented that both Rochester and Rochester Hills need to be recognized in the community demographics. Regarding the section encompassing public safety, she questioned whether the Rochester Fire Department should be listed as providing protection to the Museum grounds as they are physically located in Rochester.*

**Mr. McKay** responded that the Museum has an agreement with the City of Rochester for Rochester Hills to provide police and fire service for everything on the Museum grounds.

**Dr. Sellick** commented that it contained a very thorough summary of the history. She concurred that Rochester's demographics are important to include as well. Regarding archives and collections, she stated that it has always been important to ensure that there is proper staff to handle the archives, and questioned why the document did not include much reference to the Broomfield collection.

**Mr. McKay** responded that the plan reviews current staffing, and looks forward to what could be done with a full-time archivist. A bullet-point under that analysis encompassed pursuing acceptance of the Broomfield collection. He stated that this is one of the highest internal staff goals to consider for 2021.

He stated that no idea has fallen off the table for the plan, and mentioned one idea brought forward regarding rebuilding the Baptist church on the lot next to the Schoolhouse. He noted that the Museum recognizes the role that Baptist churches and women had in the community.

**Ms. Morita** cautioned that this idea should be vetted by the City Attorney to ensure that utilizing tax dollars to rebuild a church is not a violation of the anti-establishment clause of the First Amendment.

**Mr. McKay** pointed out that the Troy Historical Museum has acquired and moved a church to their grounds, and commented that the Museum would not be looking at it to use as a church. He stated that the first building built was the Schoolhouse and the next was the church. He commented that if it was not deemed to be a good idea, it would be tabled.

**Dr. Sellick** noted that under the Operations Plan component, it was mentioned to pursue self-assessments for the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) and the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). She questioned whether the Museum was looking to pursue accreditation again. She commented that there might have some positive financial benefits to accreditation.

**Mr. McKay** responded that the STEPS program (Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations) program through the AASLH is a self-assessment plan encompassing five different steps that might take as much as a year to get through. He commented that accreditation looks favorable on grant applications, and stated that it shows that the Museum is doing self-analysis, is honest and ethical, and following standards set both in the museum world and in Rochester Hills.

**Mr. Elwert** commented that he and Mr. McKay have discussed this at length, and noted that he has run an organization through national accreditation previously. He stated that it is a worthwhile process that takes some time. He noted that he is running this concurrently through for the Museum and the Department at the same time with City Council's and the Administration's blessing.

**Chairperson Mallon** questioned how the Museum compares to other city-owned museums and whether they are accredited.

**Mr. McKay** responded that they are not likely accredited. He noted that other accredited museums include the larger museums with more resources such as Mackinac and Detroit museums; and he mentioned that Cranbrook has been accredited, has not, and then has been accredited again. He commented that the Rochester Hills Museum would be the smallest to attain accreditation in Michigan.

**Mr. Elwert** responded that he took Independence Township through accreditation, and commented that while it is designed for larger entities, it would be a feather in the cap to have.

**Mr. Pixley** questioned whether pursuing accreditation is expensive.

**Mr. Elwert** responded that it is time-intensive, but not as expensive unless accreditors must be flown in. He commented that Independence Township staff came in every other Saturday for about a year to accomplish their accreditation.

**Dr. Sellick** noted that museum staffing and open hours was a major issue the last time accreditation was attempted.

**Mr. McKay** responded that he thinks that the draft plan addresses some of those concerns. He noted that at the time, much of the assessment dealt with archival administration and lack of space and evaluation of temperature and climate in all of the buildings. He pointed out that the Museum is now more cognizant of HVAC systems and security in the rooms. He added that staff are trying to address the concerns regarding the number of hours the facility is open.

**Mr. Elwert** requested the Board opine on pursuing accreditation.

**Dr. Fite** stated that it was an important and great idea. He noted that the Museum is in the midst of a rebuilding and renovation and questioned whether it might be best to wait until things are more established. He pointed out that the help of a professional fund raiser was enlisted for the Calf Barn and questioned whether this would be in the plan going forward. He commented that as a Board member he did not have a lot of time and scope to do the fund raising.

**Mr. McKay** responded that it is addressed in the plan and the Museum wants to start turning its attention to endowment-building. He suggested that the Museum needs to hire professional fund raisers.

**Chairperson Mallon** concurred, stating that if it could be done, it should be pursued. He agreed with the idea of accreditation, noting that there was an upside to becoming accredited.

**Ms. Morita** stated that she would prefer to read the entire plan prior to giving an opinion.

**Mr. Pixley** stated that he believes that accreditation is a good strategy, and the timing of pursuing it should be evaluated.

**Ms. Rogers** stated that accreditation is important and should be pursued at the Museum's discretion.

**Dr. Sellick** stated that the process was fascinating when it was undertaken seven or eight years ago, and the feedback that the accreditors provided was excellent. She commented that many of the things they gave feedback on have come to fruition; and if they had been in place seven or eight years ago, she did not have any question that the accreditation would have been received. She added that accreditation would be a plus in seeking grants for fund raising.

**Mr. Snyder** stated that he would agree with going forward with accreditation, pending a review of the timing.

**Vice Chairperson Wiggins** noted that she was on the fund raising staff at Cranbrook when they were doing recertification of their accreditation, and has also undertaken fund raising for the Flint Cultural Center. She stated that only five percent of the museums in the United States are accredited, and to be able to state that on grant applications is important.

**Ms. Willett** stated that she thought it was a good idea as the City likes to celebrate all of the awards and accreditations it receives.

**Mr. McKay** noted that the community comes to expect that of the City, and accreditation shows that it is using taxpayer and private dollars properly. He commented that the Museum will need everyone involved in the self-assessment next year.

**Mr. Elwert** requested the Board provide general comments on the draft plan.

**Ms. Morita** stated that she would like to give the plan another read once it is reformatted and would then provide comments.

**Mr. Pixley** stated that the draft plan addresses a lot of the places the Museum wants to go and is forward-looking. He commented that he likes the analysis of what can be done with part-time and full-time staffing. He stated that the demographic data was good and it is valid to bring in Rochester data as well. He pointed out that it should be a living and breathing document that will change over time.

**Ms. Rogers** stated that she concurs with everyone's thoughts.

**Mr. Snyder** mentioned the long-range conceptual plan on page 33 of the draft plan and questioned whether it was anticipated to construct another building where the current drive is, re-routing entry into the parking down Runyon.

**Mr. McKay** responded that the Big Barn and the Dairy Barn were connected.

*He mentioned that there were concerns expressed regarding directing more traffic down Runyon, and noted that the Museum is trying to address a need for more paved parking. He pointed out that the current use of the additional unpaved parking area is problematic when the frost is coming out of the ground.*

**Mr. Snyder** questioned whether the plan discussed creating a perpetual care trust and commented that he would like to be a part of that conversation.

**Mr. McKay** responded that the Museum must get serious about creating an endowment fund in the millions of dollars.

**Mr. Elwert** responded that a shift to programs and creation of an endowment fund is an important part of the plan.

**Chairperson Mallon** stated that he is supportive of the plan and would like to hear more in the future about raising an endowment fund.

**Ms. Rogers** questioned removal of a discussion regarding a name change.

**Mr. Elwert** responded that as the draft plan was going through final review, it was learned that a different process would govern any name change. He explained that name changes must first go through the City's Naming Committee and require more than the process originally stated.

**Dr. Sellick** stated that she would agree that the draft plan is well done. She mentioned that in the comparisons with other cities, Troy Schools had a significantly larger student visitation for their museum.

**Mr. McKay** responded that right now, the Museum has Kindergarten, first, second and third graders, with sporadic participation by middle school and above. He pointed out that over 170 school tours were cancelled since March. He commented that Troy's museum has a stronger relationship with their school system.

**Ms. Willett** noted that the Young Leaders group discussed a number of things, including that less than 30 percent of households have children. She commented that membership levels were discussed, and questions were raised as to how to make renewals automatic.

**Mr. McKay** added that the Young Leaders group also mentioned coming up with monthly donor programs at lower levels of \$5-10 a month.

**Vice Chairperson Wiggins** expressed her thanks to Mr. McKay and his staff for their efforts. She commented that she was excited to see a possible name change discussed, noting that when a change is made to highlight family history rather than a geographic location it would attract more donors in a larger area. She commented that she is excited that at some time in the future a push toward fund raising for the Big Barn would be undertaken, and mentioned that this would provide a lot of opportunities for fund raising for exhibits and naming opportunities in smaller spaces.

**Mr. Elwert** commented that this is an operations plan. He explained that the whole department is undertaking a five-year master plan focusing on capital and

*other programming issues. He stated that the Museum's plan will go into the main plan as an appendix and will be included at a later date for Council to review.*

*Dr. Fite questioned whether expanding parking would be undertaken keeping cognizant that the large field adjacent is a large walking park and exercise area for neighbors. He stated that this field should be kept intact.*

*Mr. McKay commented that the Museum wants to be able to keep a multi-purpose field and stated that people appreciate that large open space. He noted that he would work on revisions to the draft plan and send it out prior to the next meeting.*

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

*Ms. Willett reported that the Young Leaders group hosted an event at Fieldstone Winery and online regarding the History of Cider. She noted that approximately 20 people attended in person and 20 online, and \$435 was raised for the Museum.*

*Mr. McKay noted that Frank Cardimen provided a Veteran's program last Wednesday, November 11, 2020.*

*He noted that the Board would hold officer elections at the February meeting and expressed his appreciation for the Board's support during this trying year.*

*He mentioned that Stephen Taylor has committed \$15,000 in matching funds through the end of the year, also asking the Broomfield family to participate, and would like to challenge the Museum Foundation Board to participate as well. He suggested donations could be made online through the Community Foundation or by sending checks to the Museum. He expressed his thanks to those Board members who have already donated.*

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

*Mr. McKay explained that the upcoming events listed in the Agenda were on pause and it was hoped that some can be started up in December if restrictions are lifted.*

## **NEXT MEETING DATE**

*February 19, 2021*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Mallon adjourned the meeting at 8:49 a.m.*

*Minutes prepared by Mary Jo Pachla.*

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

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*James Mallon, Chairperson*