

Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors

Dec 4, 2019

Board members present: William Browne Jr., board chair; Steve Anderson; Gary Anderson; Andrew Briggs; Linda Conti; Andy Dahlem; Greg Pemberton; Alice Schloss; Roland Shelton; Judy Singleton; Gregg Summerville.

Via phone: Nancy Jordan; Kathy Roudebush; Robin Winston; and Liz Witte

Others present: Cathy Ferree, ISMHS president and CEO; Susannah Koerber, chief curator and research officer; Nora Woodman, chief development officer; Krishna Heyward, chief financial officer; Amy Ahlersmeyer, chief marketing officer; Charlie Shock, concierge and volunteer manager; Mark Ruschman, senior curator of art and history; Josh Bain, legislative assistant; and Cam Clark, director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order at 12:33 p.m.

Collections pieces

Mark Ruschman presented two new additions to the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites collection. The two new paintings came to the collection through donation from direct descendants of T.C. Steele.

The first painting is an undated self-portrait by T.C. Steele. Ruschman said photographs of Steele date the painting to 1886 or 1887 when the Hoosier artist was about 40 years old and had recently returned from his studies in Munich. The painting is a formal portrait as Steele was known as a superb portrait painter before his focus switched to his better known Brown County landscapes. The painting documents Steele's life as a mid-life artist, Ruschman said, and the museum system is thrilled to add it to the collection.

The second painting created by T.C. Steele is of his son, Rembrandt. The portrait indicates the painting was completed in 1901 when Rembrandt would have been age 31. Rembrandt – like his father – studied art, but his focus was arts and crafts. Rembrandt was known for his stain glass pieces throughout the state.

Ruschman said the donors visited T.C. Steele State Historic Site just before the site reopened with new updates this summer. Following their tour and visit, the couple decided the portraits should come into the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites collection so that the museum system can share the paintings with the public and add to the Steele story. Ruschman noted both paintings aren't usually the type of Steele paintings that can be found in the art market as these pieces are usually held by family members and stays within the family.

Both pieces will be shown at the site in the future with T.C. Steele's portrait most likely being shown in the House of the Singing Winds while Rembrandt's portrait will most likely be shown in Steele's Large Studio.

Consent agenda

The consent agenda was unanimously approved by the board.

Audit and Finance

Krishna Heyward presented the balance sheet for the first quarter of FY20. She noted the museum system currently stands with a net position of about \$1.7 million less than last year, but she noted a lot of that has to do with timing. The museum system recently had payouts on major projects and a change in the pension plan, so there is no major concern with the balance sheet. She believes the museum system is returning back to a normal operating position.

Revenues on income statement are currently running under budget by about \$343,000. General admissions and food commissions are down, but those are expected to catch up during Celebration Crossing. Marketing funds are being saved for the upcoming FIX exhibit, and it is believed the opening of FIX will help bring those admission dollars back.

Heyward also noted catering events have seen a decrease in headcounts, with smaller weddings seeming to be a trend. Parties during the holiday season should help to regain some of that. Marketing is also attempting to help remedy the issue by creating additional pushes for facility rentals and food services.

Donor restricted funds currently set at \$5.54 million.

Heyward noted the museum system has always had good attendance during Celebration Crossing and the system is excited for FIX's opening at the end of January, as attendance can be slow from January to March.

After a motion and second to approve the financial report, board members unanimously approved the report.

Investments

Gary Anderson presented the FY20 First Quarter Investments report during the meeting, and noted some investments are currently under active management, and the museum also has private equity.

Anderson talked to the board about the division of the museum's investments, noting there could be a future discussion about how much of the investments should be actively managed versus how much should be passively managed.

Anderson noted that in investments there are some things that can be controlled, while some cannot. Asset allocations can be controlled, he said, as can the advisors for the investments. Anderson noted there had been some succession issues with the advisors and now could be a good time to rethink that relationship.

He did note the investments have had respectable numbers throughout the first quarter, but the museum may continue to face advisor issues in the future.

Strategic Plan

Amy Ahlersmeyer provided an update to the museum system's strategic planning. She noted a draft of the final plan had been sent to board members in pre-reads.

This strategic plan will guide the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites through the next three years, although the plan will be continually revisited. Ahlersmeyer said the strategic plan won't be a laborious document and will be nimble enough to be revisited by both staff and the board so that it stays fresh and relevant.

Ahlersmeyer said guidelines from the American Alliance of Museums and TopNonprofits.org were used throughout this process and that the process of creating the strategic plan has been just as important as the plan. Strategic planning feedback from staff at all 12 locations have been received through focus groups, online surveys, all-staff meetings. Board members provided feedback through personal meetings, phone calls, emails and board meetings. Museum members, visitors, corporate partners and educators also gave feedback through surveys, focus groups, and roundtables.

The new mission statement is: To serve as a catalyst for informal lifelong learning that connects the stories of real people, places and things.

The mission statement is meant to clarify and articulate the museum system's focus. It was approved by board members during the last board meeting. It signifies the differentiator for the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites from other museums in the Indianapolis area and the state. Staff agreed informal lifelong learning accurately reflects what we do every day.

The new vision statement is: Be the leader in informal lifelong learning that is recognized, sought-after and celebrated regionally, nationally and globally.

The vision statement, which also was approved during the previous board meeting, should be aspirational but achievable.

New values are: Inclusion, integrity, stewardship and transparency.

Ahlersmeyer noted the museum system's last strategic plan did not have values, but the museum system does have a history of values, or beliefs that guide behaviors and work. The values also were approved during the September board meeting.

The museum system's audiences are identified as multiple generations served by the diverse collection, exhibits and programs, including families with children of all ages, K-12 school groups and adults.

Ahlersmeyer also discussed strategic priorities that are included in the strategic plan. Strategic priorities include:

1. Engage and serve an expanded and diverse audience through transformative experiences: Collections. Exhibits. Programs.
 - a. This will be achieved through stakeholder research, planning and community partnerships.
2. Translate/transform our historic sites from buildings/tours to experiences/legacies
 - a. This will be achieved through planning, visitation research, and by developing new experiences and programs targeted at attracting new and returning audiences to each site.
3. Brand awareness and reputation management
 - a. This will be achieved through planning, technology (including a new website), and brand signage or creating consistent signage across all 12 museum locations under the ISMHS brand.
4. Sustainability (product and financial)
 - a. This will be achieved through research, earned income (retail operations, facility rentals, program and event fees and membership sales), and contributed income
5. Organization culture
 - a. This will be achieved through staff professional development (offering mentoring, industry and professional conferences and other training to all staff), staff retention, and on-boarding – including development and implementation of effective staff orientation and on-boarding program.

Next steps of the strategic planning process includes: a vote on the strategic plan by board members during the Dec. 4 board meeting, a presentation of the strategic plan during the all-staff meeting on Jan. 15, develop and design a strategic plan collateral piece for distribution in January and February 2020, posting the strategic plan to the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites website by Jan. 31, 2020, work within team meetings to incorporate strategic priorities into division/development plans – including developing timelines – from January through March 2020.

Following a motion to approve and second, board members unanimously approved the strategic plan.

FIX: Heartbreak and Hope Inside Our Opioid Crisis – Marketing and Communication Plan

Ahlersmeyer presented the marketing and communication plan to board members for the upcoming exhibit, “FIX: Heartbreak and Hope Inside Our Opioid Crisis.” This media mix will be a bit different due to the departure from the traditional museum content. This exhibit features longer-form content and will enable a more thorough explanation. The target audience will continue to be museum attendees, but also community opinion leaders.

Paid advertising will include messaging on WFYI-FM public radio’s Morning Edition, All Things Considered and mid-day programming, broadcast radio and digital audio ads, plus ads in the Indianapolis Star, Indiana Business Journal and Facebook promoted posts.

The FIX webpage has already launched and has had more engagement than any other thing we’ve done. Ahlersmeyer said this shows an obvious need for this type of experience in a museum.

A public relations and communication push began with the Oct. 30 announcement of the upcoming exhibit through a news release, blog post and social media. Efforts have also included reaching out to long-lead media, as well as local, regional and national media. Media coverage will extend throughout the run of the exhibit.

A media preview day will be held on Jan. 31, 2020 with Gov. Eric Holcomb in attendance. Board members are also invited to attend, and more information will be released closed to the date.

Ahlersmeyer also noted coverage of FIX has gone out to hundreds of news outlets throughout the country after a story that appeared in the Indianapolis Business Journal was picked up by the Associated Press wire. An op-ed piece has been sent to AAM and Cathy will appear on a future episode of Inside Indiana Business too.

President's Report

Cathy Ferree presented the dashboard. She noted the dashboard shows primarily green with some yellow indicators. Attendance is slightly below budget, but school group visits continue to increase. She noted the museum system took a close look at school group visits last year, as well as ways to communicate with schools and continue to do so. Member attendance continues to be ahead of budget. Ferree said that marker shows that the museum experiences are interesting and drawing members back again and again.

The employee engagement survey, which is collected once per year, is 12 points above where the museum system was last year.

Ferree introduced Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites' Chief Development Officer Nora Woodman. Woodman was hired since the previous board meeting. Woodman thanked board members for their engagement and said she was thrilled to come aboard the museum system team. She also told board members that she will be looking to connect with as many of the board members as possible in the coming weeks either in person or by phone.

Ferree also provided an update to site Friends groups. Friends groups at Gene Stratton-Porter and Levi and Catharine Coffin state historic sites have not yet signed the MOU agreement, but the Friends of T.C. Steele have signed at this point.

Ferree also provided board members with a few upcoming dates to note, including the Board/Staff/Volunteer Breakfast from 8:30 to 10 a.m. on Dec. 18. Also, a legislative opening with Chief Justice Loretta Rush for "FIX: Heartbreak and Hope Inside Our Opioid Crisis" will be held at 5 p.m. on Jan. 29, 2020. The public opening of the exhibit will be held at 9 a.m. on Jan. 31, 2020.

The Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites Board of Directors entered into executive session at 2:09 p.m.