

Board of Trustees - Museum Division (Monday, September 11, 2023)

1. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Establish Quorum: 8:45 a.m.
- B. Moment of Silence
- C. Pledge of Allegiance

2. ROLL CALL

A. Roll Call

- Present: Catherine Bowes, Laura Friess, Karla Langhus, Lilyanne Ohanesian, Robin Finnacom, Conner Wolfe, Michael Brown, Michael Blackwell
- Absent: Lynn Fitrell
- For Museum Division: Karen Stone

B. Approval of Minutes from July 17, 2023 Meeting

- Motion by Catherine Bowes
- Seconded by Michael Brown
- Approved unanimously

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. Museum Division & Friends Updates - Karen Stone:

- The division has been very busy and will continue to be in the autumn:
 - July Activities & Happenings
 - Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival 2023 was successful with only the final cruise on Sunday needing to be cancelled due to the weather
 - Outdoor Adventures at Piney Point was sold out this year as usual
 - Friends Fundraising Coordinator submitted letter of resignation, effective this fall
 - August Activities & Happenings
 - Lighthouse Weekend at Piney Point Lighthouse Museum (254) and Children's Day at St. Clement's Island Museum (502) were both very successful
 - Old Jail Museum had record attendance during the Wharf celebration featuring the "World's Largest Rubber Duck" (Nearly 1200 visitors in 3 days)
 - Museum Division Manager served as American Alliance of Museums (AAM) Peer Reviewer for Virginia Museum of History & Culture
 - Museum Division Manager was chosen to attend the first St. Mary's County Government Leadership Academy at College of Southern Maryland (CSM)
 - Community Conversations with St. Mary's County Mediation Center postponed to September 24, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.
 - St. Clement's Island Museum Art Kids classes finished for the season
 - Anchor received on loan from the State of Maryland for display at Piney Point Lighthouse Museum about what happens to things underwater (part of U-1105 exhibit)
 - St. Clement's Island Water Taxi was put out of commission temporarily with engine issues
 - September Activities & Happenings
 - Old Jail Museum open for extra hours as usual for Leonardtown First Fridays
 - Drayden African American Schoolhouse Open House is the 2nd last of the season
 - 2nd Saturdays at St. Clement's Island Museum
 - The Friends of St. Clement's Island & Piney Point Museums decided that a fundraiser coordinator position will go to 25 hours per week, and a second 10 hour per week office coordinator position will also be hired

B. St. Clement's Island Museum Building Plans Updates - Karen Stone

- Moving forward on plans, preparing to bid out the project

C. Department of Recreation & Parks Update - Karen Stone

- Some personnel changes in the division in order to increase programming capacity

D. Bylaws Committee - Michael Blackwell

- Robin Finnacom moves to accept with changes in format
- Karla Langhus seconds
- Approved unanimously

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. St. Mary's County Budget

- St. Mary's County Budget: Karen will look at some staffing changes, including making the Education Specialist work with K-12 more formally, rather than working as much on Friends responsibility. A letter of support for this change may be requested from the Board.
- Michael Brown suggests that African American and Native American history does not have the same amount of coverage and have their story told as fully and positively as European history, with too much emphasis on enslavement or injustice. There is not much that is inspiring. This led to a wide-ranging conversation, with many ideas coming forward as brainstorming. Karen notes that the Piscataway are telling their story in the new St. Clement's Island Museum. Otherwise, except for the Drayden African American Schoolhouse, there is not as much opportunity for permanent displays in the specifically themed museum sites. Programming can and should be done with a mission focus. Michael Brown suggests that more promotion of Drayden would increase the attendance. Robin Finnacom suggests that a larger parking lot, outdoor displays and portable facilities would help. Karen adds that the Museum Division has been talking with local landowners to try to expand the site to allow for parking. Carla Langhus suggests that transportation is an issue to bring people to all the sites, but we should do a better job telling the story more actively. Karen suggests that the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) Interpretive Center is owned by the County and the Unified Committee for Afro American Contributions (UCAC) has an MOU to meet there, but to begin telling the story it must be open regularly in a way it is currently not. Could the Museum Division partner on a cultural event, hosting at one of its sites? How do we make it an open public museum, since it is more central and already has more in it that can tell the story well? Board actions: Look at and add to the Strategic Plan; bring the idea forward and listen at Community Conversation to see if potential suggestions for action come forward. A letter to the Commissioners asking for greater attention to diversity on the budget will be drafted.

B. Recruitment

- Board members should encourage others to apply for the two vacant positions. Conner Wolfe asks what skills would be considered useful. Karen Stone answers that we don't need museum experts but could use people with strong business and community connections

5. ADJOURN

A. Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting: **November 6, 2023**

B. Upcoming Events

- September 13: SOMD National Heritage Area Management Plan Public Meeting
- September 16: Retrofest on the Potomac at Piney Point Lighthouse Museum
- September 19 : Underground Railroad Proclamation
- September 26: U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) and the Battle of New Market Heights
- September 26: 9:00 a.m. Proclamation at Commissioners Meeting
- September 26: 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. USCT Interpretive Center Open House
- September 26: 6:30 p.m. Book Lecture at Lexington Park Library
- September 21-24: Museums Booth at St. Mary's County Fair
- September 23: Museum Booth at RiverFest at Historic St. Mary's City
- September 24: Community Conversations with Mediation Center & Museum Division at USCT Interpretive Center
- September 30: Pilgrimage at St. Clement's Island Museum
- September 30: Museum Booth at Blessing of the Fleet at Historic St. Mary's City
- October 6: Old Jail Museum open extended hours during Leonardtown First Friday
- October 7: Drayden African American Schoolhouse Final Open House of 2023
- October 7-8: Museum Booth at Southern Maryland Heritage Festival at Sotterley
- October 8: Museum Booth at PRIDE Festival at Lexington Manor Passive Park
- October 13: Museum Booth at St. Mary's County Health Fair
- October 14: 2nd Saturdays at U.S. Colored Troops Interpretive Center
- October 21-22: Museum Booth at U.S. Oyster Festival
- November 1: Just Society Maryland Emancipation Day Event at the Old Jail Museum

- November 15: Preservation Maryland Pop-Up Office at Old Jail Museum

C. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn by Michael Brown
- Seconded by Carla Langhus
- Adjourned at 9:45 a.m.