

ROGERS HISTORICAL MUSEUM COMMISSION Meeting Minutes

9/3/2020

Attending: Sherry Ashley, Serena Barnett, Sandy Chalmers, John Ford, Jerry Hiett, Nancy Swearingen, Mike Whitmore

The meeting was called to order virtually on ZOOM at 4:05.

Jerry moved and Mike seconded the motion to approve the minutes from our last meeting (June 4, 2020); the motion carried.

Sherry Ashley, Executive Director of the Foundation, reported on the great response received from the 700 appeal letters mailed the end of July, which raised \$5275, and the Dickerson memorial total is now \$1160. The Foundation Board voted to contribute \$9000 to the repairs and painting project at the Hawkins House. An additional \$1000 received from the Dickerson memorial donations will also be used towards the project.

Serena delivered the Museum Operations report, as follows:

- The Mayor would like the Museum to re-open on a limited basis by the end of September. Serena is working out the details, including reduced hours and a cleaning schedule. The main gallery and exhibits in the Trammel gallery will be available for the public to view, but the Children's Gallery, Hawkins House, and Research Library will NOT open during this time.
- Serena was notified by letter that the Museum was named a beneficiary in Kathleen Dickerson's Trust, and will be receiving 20% of her estate. A CD account is already in place from a previous donation, so this will be added to that account.
- Steve Ab will start work on painting the Hawkins House in mid-September.
- Education: The Museum education staff will not be allowed in school classrooms due to COVID 19, so they are working hard to prepare virtual lessons and videos of the most used/requested topics for teachers to access. The Kid's Craft Corner is continuing monthly in a virtual format. Next month, the program will coincide with the virtual Halloween Parade sponsored by Downtown Inc., and will focus on making masks. Ghost Walks will also be offered virtually on ZOOM. And, an original play has been written to commemorate the 140th birthday of Rogers next year, thanks to Monte Harris. The Arkansas Arts Academy will partner with the Museum to produce the play sometime next year.
- Exhibits: Two new virtual exhibits are available, Personal Computers and Influential Women of Arkansas. Ongoing updates and item rotation to the main gallery continue: The Barn display is finished, and the White River exhibit is expanding to include more of the post-dam period. The Beaver Lake Dam will be giving some items to the Museum for display.
- Collections: The City Council did approve the De-accession list, and an auction will eventually be scheduled. More of the collection is now available online, with 3000 records and 4000 images available. Over 51,000 items have been catalogued.
- Performance report: Despite the Museum being closed for over 5 months, interest and exposure has remained high, as evidenced by over 60,000 views on Facebook and Instagram. Jerry noted that emails seem to have slowed down, and Serena concurred and promised they will start back up soon.

- Budget: Serena is in the process of hiring a marketing coordinator in the next few months, and will be meeting with the Mayor on September 27 to review the proposed budget for next year. After some discussion, we agreed to call a special meeting on September 17 so Serena can present the proposed budget to the Commission.

Collections Acquisition...several items have been donated in the past three months. For the record, Jerry clarified that Madison County falls within the area prioritized for accepting donations to our collection. He moved and Mike seconded a motion to accept the collections report; the motion passed.

Sandy Chalmers, President of the Friends of Rogers Historical Museum, reported that her group has not been meeting, but that people have continued to show great support for the Museum by not only renewing their memberships but also by raising the level of their membership contribution.

We discussed the process and timeline for filling the vacancy on the Commission Board left by Kathleen's death, and agreed that the next Commissioner should have an interest in the Museum and in history, and possibly represent a younger demographic group. Possible candidates might be educators who have used the museum as a resource; downtown merchants or property owners with an interest in keeping downtown vital; or "frequent flyers" who have volunteered or visited the museum often. We decided that when we ZOOM meet in two week on September 17th to review the Budget, we will each bring a name or two to put before the group as possible candidates.

Jerry informed us that Kathleen's grandchildren are willing to give the Museum some of her household items, particularly her glass collections, which are of significant value. He will supervise the retrieval of these items from the home over the next few weeks.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm

Minutes submitted by Nancy Swearingen