

ANACORTES MUSEUM ADVISORY BOARD & COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE
MEETING – October 5, 2020 – MINUTES

The meeting was conducted by Microsoft Teams online. Participating were Gib Moore, Libby Walgamott, Dana Webb, Lewis Jones, Kay Reinhardt and Deane Brazas. Museum Director, Bret Lunsford guided the meeting. A voting quorum was fulfilled.

COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

With the collections curator's advisement, the listed donations were accepted with all of her noted exceptions circulated beforehand. The committee voted All In Favor.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Bret had circulated an agenda of topics he would be touching on beforehand.

- Linda Yerby as helped format an individualized 'mural placement agreement' that can be used to aid each of the Bill Mitchell mural sponsors in understanding the terms by which the City now owns and will conserve the murals collection; including their sponsored piece.
- Staff and City are seeking advisement on conservation techniques for the murals collection. They will take some time to arrive at the best as well as most feasible protocols.
- The murals project is a hot topic locally and there is a wellspring of obvious excitement showing support by the community. The Museum Foundation will likely be adding a board member with a connection to Bill Mitchell; his sister-in-law Vicki. How It Works and Mark Michell, one of Bill's brothers, have formatted a coloring book of Bill's various artworks that is selling at the local farmers market and here at the Carnegie Gallery, with some of the proceeds going to the mural project costs. The Museum Foundation therefore plays a role in booking that income accordingly. A few thousand dollars has already been raised.
- The Museum's own marketing methods including a QR code, Walking Tour brochure and an upcoming podcast all have mural project information for the community and visitors. A local professional in the film industry has proposed releasing a video about Bill Mitchell.
- The Museum's recommendation to the City is to set aside \$5K yearly for mural project costs. This has been met with general support of mayor and council. This is a baseline projection for the 'at minimum' cost of best practices preservation of the murals, and represents a start point as the project begins.
- Phased opening of the Carnegie Gallery has gone well thus far. The plan is to continue maintaining 'one bubble at a time' tours with a party in its timed bubble entering at one point and exiting at another. Now that practice will be applied over at the Maritime Heritage Center beginning a few days hence. (Though not on the *W.T. PRESTON*, which won't be open). As we are starting October, the MHC will be open more days of the week, not just weekends. Some staff are already working there, so manning the site is not an additional use of their time.
- The projected City budget discussions with mayor and council have trended toward a consensus that all city-wide departments should expect to hold costs in a

- continuation of last year's allowances and not expect to add ambitious projects. This 'hold the line' approach shouldn't be painful to maintain. The museum annual budget is just over \$400,000 with personnel being the most significant cost with one full time director, and 9 part time employees making up the staff.
- The production of A-Town Is Our Town magazine is now being taken up by the City staff itself. How It Works, who produces the magazine, has their own staff staggering occupancy at their shop, with some working only from home.
 - The topic of the steam train now was discussed at length. Bret has done as he promised, a thorough look into the past timelines for all kinds of efforts on behalf of the train being interpreted here in town. He had a lot to share with the refresher course he had himself; going over Museum Foundation board minutes from past years as well as the Advisory Board/Collections Committee board minutes. In a nutshell Bret wished to point out that in the past 90% of discussions and actions taken were the Museum Foundation's, not the Advisory Board's. He thought himself as incoming director, that he wanted a shift to having the Advisory Board be more informed about the ins and outs of different plans for the train. These would include possible funding from a number of quarters; either the City or non-profit groups or possible buyers. The donor family's input and expressed decisions that have of late been more clearly at the forefront were also important, in Bret's opinion, for the Advisory Board to discuss. Unfortunately, but not entirely unexpectedly, there has been a little flurry of both local print media and personal social media opinion and judging being exchanged. This is sowing confusion. Bret is hoping to help dispel confusion by uploading to the museum's website a FAQ timeline that gives a succinct narrative of what has transpired with the donation of the train over time. He'd like to show a concise, neutral and informative set of facts around the train, its founding and operations, its storage and its founder/donor family's perspective on the train today.
 - Bret wanted us to know that he had not yet set the Advisory Board letter with his cover letter on to the mayor and council. They had also postponed making any further moves and he thought it wise to again take this before the Advisory Board and discuss it further. As the group went back over what Bret had just laid out for historical context, it felt like a good moment to authorize the release of the letters to the City.

***Action taken:* A motion was made by Libby 'to authorize Bret to send to the city both letters showing the advisory board's recommendation stated in the letters'. It was seconded by Dana. The motion passed AIF.**

- Bret said that the city council's agenda for October would include discussion about the train. That meeting is tentatively scheduled for the last Monday evening in October.
- One other tangent in these train discussions is of the fault lines opening up within the community. A misstep has led to some consequences. A commitment of funding for the train project staying in Anacortes was alluded to using out of date documents of the Museum Foundation to suggest current designations. Without naming particular actors here for these minutes, the Advisory Board did strongly feel that such activity could impact a non-profit's status in good standing not only

where community perception is concerned but within the IRS designation itself.
The board wished to state in these minutes it has strong objection to this activity.

ADJOURNMENT

All items of business having been discussed, the meeting was adjourned. AIF.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Reinhardt