

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS  
Minutes of the Art and Audience Committee Meeting  
Held, pursuant to due notice, Theater Level Conference Suite Room #1  
Thursday, 13 December 2012, 12:00 pm

Presiding: James W. McGlothlin, Co-Chair  
Secretary: Ms. Suzanne Broyles

There were present:

James W. McGlothlin, Co-Chair  
Karen C. Abramson  
Mary Anne Carlson  
Mrs. Whitt W. Clement  
John R. Curtis, Jr.  
Richard B. Gilliam  
Ms. Susan S. Goode  
Margaret N. Gottwald  
Ms. Nancy H. Gottwald  
Frederica P. Gray  
Terrell Luck Harrigan  
Dr. Elizabeth F. Harris  
Marlene A. Malek  
Charlotte M. Minor  
Satya Rangarajan  
Charles H. Seilheimer, Jr.  
Dr. Lindley T. Smith  
Thurston R. Moore, Ex-Officio  
Mrs. Suzanne T. Mastracco, Ex-Officio

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director  
Stephen D. Bonadies  
Ms. Suzanne Broyles  
Dr. Lee Anne Chesterfield  
W. Birch Douglass III  
Richard B. Gilliam  
Robin Nicholson  
Cameron O'Brion

Absent:

Thomas F. Farrell II, Co-Chair  
G. Moffett Cochran  
Michael M. Connors  
Mrs. Deborah H. Quillen

I. CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair, James W. McGlothlin, called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm and welcomed the group.

## II. MINUTES

**Motion:** proposed by Mrs. Mastracco and seconded by Mr. Cherry that the minutes of the last meeting of the Art and Audience Committee held on the 19th of September 2012 be approved as distributed on the 19th of November 2012. Motion carried.

## III. PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES – Stephen Bonadies

Robin Nicholson, Deputy Director for Art and Education, told the group that a team of VMFA staff and Project for Public Spaces have been studying the challenges of how people interact with our outdoor spaces. He added that there are many different ways to bring a variety of visitors to the museum to enjoy the outdoor spaces. He introduced Stephen Bonadies, Deputy Director for Collections and Facilities Management, who has been spearheading that project. Stephen Bonadies reminded the group that he has been working with Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a non-profit planning firm that specializes in engaging the community to create active public spaces such as Bryant Park in New York and Discovery Green in Houston. In late April PPS came to VMFA to gather input from community stakeholders and leaders from our surrounding neighborhoods as to what we can do differently to increase the vibrancy of our outdoor public spaces and to encourage greater public use throughout the day and each season of the year. The series of interviews concluded with a two and a half hour placemaking workshop for a larger audience. Twenty-eight people participated in stakeholder interviews and well over sixty attended for the public workshop.

After our successful beginning with the E. Claiborne and Lora Robins Sculpture Garden, the question is how our grounds can become an even more dynamic public asset that welcomes people, encourages them to linger, and ultimately piques their curiosity to check out what's inside and sample our most important asset, the permanent collection. He explained that our work with PPS is generously being funded through a grant from the Windsor Foundation.

Mr. Bonadies gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Placemaking* which showed some ideas for the grounds and asked the Committee for their input on ways we can improve upon engaging with our neighbors and soliciting their opinions.

He noted that the goals for the Project for Public Spaces are:

- Create a plan that builds VMFA as a destination
- Support partnerships with community stakeholders
- Develop a program of uses relevant to the Museum
- Identify short-term, lower cost improvements

Stephen Bonadies then revealed the placemaking methodology:

- Conduct focus group meetings and individual interviews with staff, key stakeholders, and community leaders
- Identify spaces for intervention
- Conduct community workshop to evaluate identified spaces and to brainstorm ideas for improvement
- Develop a concept plan and identify priorities
- Report back to participants

Mr. Bonadies identified 12 different areas of the museum's campus to investigate including the 1936 entrance, the entryway plaza, and the belvedere. He mentioned the possibility of creating a community park behind the Pelham Chapel. The shrubs on the corner of Sheppard and Grove are worn where people walk through them so this has become a point of neighborhood access that we need to be mindful of in future planning. Money for more outdoor sculptures with security is needed. He showed slides of some examples of what outside spaces could look like showing them with added canopies, more decking, additional shade and more seating. Committee members offered ideas and discussed options noting that more community involvement and awareness would be good.

He asked the group for their feedback on where they want to see the initial focus as these areas will be done incrementally. Mr. Bonadies remarked that he appreciated the input from the Committee at today's meeting.

#### IV. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm by Co-Chair, James W. McGlothlin.

Suzanne Broyles  
Secretary of the Museum