

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Draft Minutes of the Virtual Listening Session of the
Board of Trustees
Monday, December 14, 2020, 4:00pm

There were present:

Monroe Harris, President
Carol Ann Bischoff
Joan Brock
Marland Buckner
Edie Cabaniss
Cindy Conner
Betty Crutcher
Ken Dye
Anne Edwards
Janet Geldzahler
Martha Glasser
Meg Gottwald
Jil Harris
Ken Johnson
Andy Lewis
Steve Markel
Sara O'Keefe
Suzy Palmer
Tom Papa
Michele Peterson
Hubert Phipps
Pam Royal
Charlie Whitaker
Michel Zajur

Absent:

Gilbert Bland
Ankit Desai
Jeff Humber
David Goode
Satya Rangarajan
Pam Reynolds
Rupa Tak
Ashlin Wilbanks

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges
Kay Baker
Candy Banks
Stephen Bonadies
Caprice Bragg

Cammy Carleton, Council President
Stephanie Cooperstein
Rachel Crocker Ford, TDC
Jan Hatchette
Jennifer Martin, TDC
Susan Nelson, TDC
Cindy Norwood, Office of the Attorney General
Hossein Sadid
Michael Taylor
Kimberly Wilson

I. CALL TO ORDER

Director and CEO Alex Nyerges welcomed the group and began the session at 4:02pm.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ms. Caprice Bragg, Chief Strategy Officer and Deputy Director for Strategic Planning, Government and Board Relations acknowledged that there were no requests for public comments.

III. 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN DRAFT DISCUSSION

Mr. Nyerges thanked the attendees for participating in today's discussion. He gave the board an overview of the draft strategic plan noting that it carries over many themes from the 2020 strategic plan. He said that the largest change is a focused strategy around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA.) Mr. Nyerges said that although VMFA has strived for many years to be a diverse, inclusive, and accessible institution it was important to state that explicitly in the 2025 plan. Ms. Bragg noted some information about the meeting and introduced Rachel Crocker Ford of TDC.

a. Current State 2020

Ms. Crocker Ford initiated the presentation by reviewing the background of the draft plan, a copy of which was distributed in advance. She said that there was a consensus that the 2025 Strategic Plan should build upon the work of the 2020 Plan, and respond to major external changes. She opened up the floor for a discussion on questions concerning the current state. Mr. Charlie Whitaker asked for clarification on the reputational study that was referenced in the draft and how the senior management team planned to measure VMFA's international reputation. Ms. Crocker Ford noted that quantitative and qualitative methods were used to conduct the reputational study. Mr. Michael Taylor, Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Art and Education, said that the goal of an international reputation is linked to VMFA exhibitions traveling outside of the U.S. and that VMFA aspires to represent the United States at the Venice Biennale in the next five years. Ms. Janet Geldzahler inquired about employee understanding of VMFA's DEIA efforts. Ms. Bragg noted that it became apparent over the summer that there is a lack of information among employees about VMFA's efforts. As an example she cited that very few knew about the conversion of part-time positions into full-time positions

over the last five years. She said that a goal of the new strategic plan is to share this information.

b. Vision, Goal, Strategies

Ms. Bragg introduced the vision for the 2025 Strategic Plan draft: VMFA strives to be a vibrant, inclusive museum on and off campus for all Virginians with a goal of being not only a state level asset, but also global. This vision is woven throughout the plan's goals and strategies. She then welcomed various members of the senior leadership team to offer comments on specific strategies including 1) DEIA; 2) curator-led, visitor-centered experiences; 3) art and education across the Commonwealth; 4) a national leadership reputation in the museum field, and 5) organizational capacity to achieve the plan.

Ms. Crocker Ford asked the Board if it had any clarifying questions concerning the vision, goal, and strategies. Mr. Ken Dye inquired about VMFA's approach to technological shortcomings as the need for technological capacity will only grow with time. He also encouraged senior staff to consider adding the hiring of a Chief Information Technology Officer to the plan's goals. Ms. Meg Gottwald inquired about the goal of acquiring African and African American art in relation to deaccessioning. Mr. Taylor noted that these are two very separate action items stating that the goal is not to deaccession African art in order to acquire more. Rather, the goal is to review the provenance of the entire collection and deaccession where necessary. This led to a discussion of a goal of installing dual language gallery labels.

c. Plan Priorities

The Board was then divided into three groups in order to have smaller discussions surrounding their top priorities for the 2025 Plan. These sessions were led by Ms. Bragg, Ms. Crocker Ford, and Ms. Susan Nelson of TDC. During these discussions, board members shared comments about various aspects of the draft strategic plan including technology, post-COVID visitor engagement, DEIA in membership, activating the museum as a community space, and the implementation of a business plan.

d. Next Steps

Ms. Bragg concluded the discussion by outlining the next steps for the 2025 Strategic Plan draft. The Board should expect to receive a final draft of the plan prior to the January 13 full meeting of the Board of Trustees.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the listening session was ended at 5:21pm.

Recorded by: Stephanie Cooperstein
Executive Administrator to the Chief Strategy Officer and Deputy Director for
Strategic Planning, Government and Board Relations