

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Minutes of the Campaign Committee Meeting
Tuesday, September 21, 2021, 4:00pm
Claiborne Robertson Room

There were present:

Monroe Harris, Co-Chair
John Staelin, Co-Chair
Jay Adams
Kelly Armstrong
Joanne Blakemore *videoconference*
Joan Brock *videoconference*
Cindy Conner *videoconference*
Birch Douglass
Anne Edwards *videoconference*
Martha Glasser *videoconference*
Nancy Huber *videoconference*
Peter Huber *videoconference*
Ukay Jackson
Jim Klaus
Aubrey Layne
Joey Smith
Sherrill Smith

Absent:

Jill Harris, Co-Chair
Elizabeth Locke, Co-Chair
Tiff Armstrong
Mary Frediani
David Goode
Susan Goode
Meg Gottwald
Hiter Harris
Jil Harris
Charlie Johnson
Fran McGlothlin
Jim McGlothlin
Hubert Phipps
Celia Rafalko
Pam Royall
Michael Schewel
Don Shockey
Mary Shockey
Jennifer Sisk

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director and Chief Executive Officer
Kay Baker
Stephen Bonadies

Caprice Bragg
Jasmonn Coleman
Stephanie Cooperstein
Charlotte Couch
Kristine Craig
Naomi Crown
Bonnie Devlin, Washburn and McGoldrick
Maya Erhardt
Tom Gutenberger
Sarah Hendricks
Karen McGill
Jennifer Merritt
Caroline Nichols
Cindy Norwood, Office of the Attorney General
Jay Olander, VMFA Foundation President
Katie Payne
Michael Taylor
Steffi West

I. WELCOME

Co-Chair John Staelin welcomed everyone to the meeting both in-person and those joining virtually. He shared an overview of the agenda, upcoming cultivation events and announced that fundraising for the campaign reached \$191 million by August 31.

II. MUSEUM UPDATE

Mr. Alex Nyerges, Director and Chief Executive Officer, reported that attendance has continued to increase to pre-pandemic rates, with current visitation standing at 104,149. Recent exhibitions, including *Virginia Arcadia: The Natural Bridge in American Art* and *The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse* surpassed attendance goals with 62,127 visitors and 54,122 visitors, respectively. Mr. Nyerges noted that *The Dirty South* exhibition received positive reviews from *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times*. He encouraged board members to attend the upcoming exhibitions, *Ansel Adams: Compositions in Nature* and *Man Ray: The Paris Years*. Mr. Nyerges provided a brief update on the Monument Avenue Project.

III. CAMPAIGN/ADVANCEMENT UPDATE

Chief Development Officer and Deputy Director for Advancement Tom Gutenberger reported that total gifts and commitments for FY21 ended at \$14.5 million (against a \$7.4 million goal) as of June 30, 2021. Fundraising for *The Dirty South* exhibition exceeded its goal with \$1,133,397 in gifts, the most funds ever raised for an in-house curated exhibition. Notwithstanding this success however, total membership was down approximately 19% as anticipated due to declines in the general and Circle membership categories. It is increasing however, in the current fiscal year. Mr. Gutenberger noted that there is a correlation between membership and exhibition attendance, which was significantly lower in FY21 due to the pandemic.

Total gifts and commitments to the \$365 Million Campaign stand at \$191 million or 52% of its goal. Of these funds, \$66 million is from private support. Support from the Commonwealth of Virginia is \$125 million in a 2:1 match. Mr. Gutenberger reiterated the campaign schedule with the 3-year leadership phase ending in June of 2022, and the 4-year public phase launching in the fall of that year.

IV. BUILDING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Dr. Michael Taylor, Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Art and Education, reminded the Committee that SmithGroup was the architecture firm selected through the request for proposal process. He provided an overview of work that has taken place since mid-June, including program validation discussions with 70 internal VMFA stakeholders. Dr. Taylor concluded his report by describing the project timeline.

V. CAMPAIGN CONSULTANT REPORT

Mr. Gutenberger introduced Campaign Consultant Bonnie Devlin from Washburn & McGoldrick. Ms. Devlin spoke of industry changes in giving during 2018, 2019, and 2020 noting that despite a downward trend in fundraising in the arts and culture sector overall, VMFA donors remain supportive of the museum. She then described various best practices for campaign leaders including thanking new donors, hosting events, and making commitments.

VI. NEXT STEPS

Dr. Monroe Harris asked members to work with assigned liaisons on strategy for their region or focus area. He also noted that all committee members will be approached about their campaign gift soon, if they have not already.

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