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

THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS  
Minutes of the Strategic Planning Retreat  
Friday, 1 November 2013, 12:00 pm  
Claiborne Robertson Room

Presiding: William A. Royall, Jr.  
Secretary: Ms. Suzanne Broyles

There were present:

Trustees

William A. Royall, Jr., President

Martin J. Barrington  
James C. Cherry  
Margaret Irby Clement  
W. Birch Douglass III  
Richard B. Gilliam  
Susan S. Goode  
Dr. Monroe E. Harris, Jr.  
Ivan P. Jecklin  
Mrs. Jane Joel Knox  
H. Eugene Lockhart  
Steven A. Markel  
Thurston R. Moore  
Dr. Claude G. Perkins  
Satya Rangarajan  
Dr. Lindley T. Smith  
John R. Staelin

Foundation Directors

Benjamin W. Rawles III, President  
Ms. Kelly B. Armstrong, Vice-President  
Anne Battle  
John R. Curtis, Jr.  
Dr. Mary Ann Frable  
Frederica P. Gray  
Ms. Eva Teig Hardy  
H. Hiter Harris III  
Keith R. Kisse  
James W. Klaus  
Andrew M. Lewis Ph.D  
Charlotte M. Minor  
Dr. Paul S. Monroe  
Marshall N. Morton  
Stanley J. Olander, Jr.  
Mary Gray Shockey  
Mark B. Sisisky  
L. Ray Ashworth  
Dr. Herbert A. Claiborne, Jr.  
Mr. Charles L. Reed, Jr.

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director  
Stephen D. Bonadies  
Ms. Suzanne Broyles

Dr. Lee Anne Chesterfield  
 Ms. Rachel Crocker Ford  
 Ms. Katie Fessler  
 Ms. Laura Keller  
 Ms. Anne Kenny-Urban  
 Larry Langford  
 Ms. Susan Nelson  
 Robin Nicholson  
 Cameron O'Brion  
 Ms. Jayne Shaw  
 Ms. Fern Spencer

Absent:

Karen C. Abramson  
 Mary Anne Carlson  
 Mrs. Louise B. Cochrane  
 Michael M. Connors  
 Thomas F. Farrell II  
 Cynthia Kerr Fralin  
 Margaret N. Gottwald (Meg)  
 John H. Hager  
 Terrell Luck Harrigan  
 Dr. Elizabeth F. Harris  
 John A. Luke, Jr.  
 Marlene A. Malek  
 James W. McGlothlin  
 Michael J. Schewel  
 Charles H. Seilheimer, Jr.  
 Dr. Shantaram K. Talegaonkar

## I. INTRODUCTION

Board of Trustees President, William A. Royall III called the retreat to order at 12:00 pm and welcomed both Boards. He stated that the retreat objective is to bring VMFA leadership onto the same page in embracing key strategic opportunities and challenges to achieve the organization's 2020 plan and long-term vision. Mr. Royall explained that Marty Barrington oversees our strategic plan implementation that is communicated to trustees quarterly through the strategic plan dashboard. President Royall thanked Mr. Barrington for chairing the Strategic Plan Task Force comprised of Mike Connors, Susan Goode, Thurston Moore, Satya Rangarajan and Ben Rawles.

Director Alex Nyerges thanked the Strategic Plan Task Force members for their service and said we are here to create a vision for the 2020 plan. He thanked Katie Fessler of Altria and Lee Anne Chesterfield, Director of Museum Planning. He introduced the consultants from TDC, Susan Nelson, Rachel Crocker Ford and Larry Langford and thanked them for coming.

Susan Nelson explained that the goal of the retreat is to provide an opportunity for the boards to discuss how best to build on the organization's successes so that it continues to evolve and grow sustainable over the next five years. The desired outcome of the retreat is to reach consensus on a list of issues and opportunities that the board feels should be evaluated during the process of creating VMFA's FY 2016 to 2020 strategic plan. Ms.

Nelson provided observations on the current strategic plan strategies and the FY14 initiatives and key VMFA historical trends. She concluded that we have successfully transformed on many levels so the new plan will build on a solid foundation. She said VMFA has the opportunity to leverage momentum in important areas.

## II. PLANNING METHODOLOGY

Susan Nelson explained that TDC begins with gathering leaders' views of the most important goals and strategies to pursue for long term success. They then identify consensus amongst the ideas to create a "planning hypothesis" – a positive description of the organization's future state. During planning, they will gather and analyze the information required to confirm or adjust the planning hypothesis. This becomes the platform on which the new five-year plan is built.

## III. THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

TDC said the board retreat is a critical early step in the planning process. While the Trustee Strategic Plan Task Force is charged with process oversight, board members who are not part of the Task Force will be asked to participate in other ways. TDC divides the planning process into six distinct phases that will be executed between October 2013 and January 2015. Below are the phases.

**Phase 1:** Getting started. Define strategic questions and working planning hypothesis through iterative conversations with Task Force, staff, and board.

**Phase 2:** Internal current state. Conduct internal current state research and share with staff planning team and Task Force.

**Phase 3:** External current state. Conduct external current state research and share with staff planning team and Task Force.

**Phase 4:** Iterative planning sessions & financial modeling/operating implications.

**Phase 5:** Draft plan and iterate with staff, Task Force, and board

**Phase 6:** Final plan – Finalize edits and prepare document and presentation materials for plan distribution.

## IV. RETREAT BREAKOUT GROUPS

The consultants had everyone break up into groups to focus on identifying – as opposed to attempting to plan for – possible directions for VMFA's future. The goal was to articulate the information the planning group will need to refine and choose among these paths. Each group had a facilitator and a recorder and was asked to answer a set of questions to be considered in the session and then share the key points from their breakout group discussion. The following questions were discussed in each group.

**Reputation and brand:** What do you think VMFA's reputation and brand should be? Who needs to know about VMFA, and what should they know?

**Institutional aspirations:** In your view, in order to build on its foundation of success, what should VMFA's aspirations be for the next five years? Depending on what you think is most important, you might think about answering this question in terms of exhibitions; programs;

partnerships; collections; scholarship; fundraising; attendance; visitor demographics and geography; or digital engagement.

**Sustainability:** In your view, what are the critical drivers of sustainability for the museum?

**Supporting research and analysis:** What kind of data, analysis, and research will the Task Force need to evaluate the ideas the group has just articulated?

The board members reassembled and presented the ideas from their groups one by one. Mr. Langford mentioned that all ideas are good ideas at this stage as we are not making decisions yet. Some of the key points brought forward are listed here.

- The 2020 plan needs to align with our goal to be a leading destination for art lovers.
- Have a well defined, sustainable product for our customers
- Improve our acquisitions strategy
- Generate our own blockbuster show from our permanent collection
- Increase Trustee access and connections with curators
- Become more of a welcoming place for the next generation of visitors
- Be more Virginia focused and partner with VCU more
- Promote the VMFA's "Wow Factor" more and don't be a secret
- Do not tell everyone we are a Top Ten museum, let others proclaim that
- Make our program offerings more well known, explain that we are a destination for young families and young adults
- Make sure our donor base is happy and have Trustees cultivate potential donors
- Hold more programs for those with mental and physical disabilities
- More endowments for programming vs. bricks and mortar
- Become more of a tourist attraction, not just in Virginia, but nationally and internationally
- Don't lose focus on Virginia artists and/or exhibitions
- Develop a strategic plan for Northern Virginia
- Develop a national presence for our exhibitions and scholarship
- Focus on money to build staff, employees are very important, attracting, keeping, and developing staff should be a priority

Larry Langford led the group in a discussion on what was missing from the list of key points reported. Some mentioned a capital campaign or "the why" people should care. He mentioned that we care, but everyone outside needs to know "the why."

## V. CONCLUSION

President Royall thanked the boards for their impressive attendance today and for participating in the discussions. He thanked Susan, Larry and Rachel from TDC, and the museum staff. Mr. Royall remarked that we are off to a good start on the 2020 Strategic Plan. The meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm.

Suzanne Broyles  
Secretary of the Museum