

Date: _____

Approved: _____

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Minutes of the Resources and Visitor Experience Committee
Thursday, 19 March 2015, 8:30 am
Theater Level Conference Room #1

There were present:

Margaret Irby Clement, Chair
Karen C. Abramson
Anne L. Battle
W. Birch Douglass III
Terrell Luck Harrigan
Dr. Elizabeth Forsyth Harris
Dr. Monroe E. Harris, Jr.
Barbara Noble Howard
H. Eugene Lockhart
Dr. Claude G. Perkins
Michele Petersen
Pamela C. Reynolds
Charles H. Seilheimer Jr.
Dr. Lindley T. Smith
Dr. Shantaram Talegaonkar

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director
Rachel Burgess
Claudia Keenan
Rebecca Morrison
Patricia Van Tuyle

Absent:

William A. Royall, Jr., President
Tyler Bishop
Mary Anne Carlson
Cynthia Kerr Fralin
Margaret N. Gottwald
Mary Gray Shockey

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meg Clement, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:38am.

II. MINUTES

Motion: proposed by Ms. Abramson, and seconded by Mr. Seilheimer, to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2014 Resources & Visitor Experience Committee as distributed. Motion carried.

III. SOUTHEASTERN INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH, INC. (SIR) PRESENTATION

Claudia Keenan, Deputy Director of Resources & Visitor Experience and Executive Director of VMFA Foundation, introduced Rachel Burgess, Vice President and Director of Research Operations at Southeastern Institute of Research, Inc. (SIR)

In Fall 2014, Ms. Burgess, Ms. Keenan and her staff coordinated a random digit call center survey targeting non- and low-visitor populations in the Richmond metropolitan area. Ms. Keenan noted that data gathered from the aforementioned survey will support VMFA's strategic goal of improving visitor experience.

Ms. Burgess indicated that the survey aimed to better understand VMFA's prospective visitor by identifying the population's general attitude towards visitation and membership. One quarter of respondents agreed to participate in a VMFA research panel in the future.

While more than half of survey participants reported a very positive perception of VMFA, with half likely to visit in the future, Ms. Burgess explained that survey findings showed many are not familiar with a variety of the Museum's offerings, in particular within the permanent collections.

Respondents noted that ease of parking, availability of guided tours, quality of visiting exhibitions, and variety among pieces in the permanent collection strongly affect their engagement with VMFA. Ms. Keenan informed the committee of her division's plans to address these concerns with improved parking signage and increased focus on marketing, outside of exhibitions and ticket sales.

In closing, Ms. Burgess listed the following actionable objectives:

1. Increase focus on encouraging repeat visitor and growing membership numbers;
2. Build VMFA's positive reputation by creating stronger emotional connection and familiarity among all audiences;
3. Continue to focus marketing efforts on special exhibitions while also promoting other opportunities at VMFA, such as appeal of outdoor spaces;
4. Merge VMFA's institutional branding with its special promotional campaigns in order to increase familiarity;
5. Refine the VMFA brand and use it to direct the visitor experience as a whole.

IV. ECONOMIC IMPACT SURVEY

Ms. Keenan announced that, since VMFA's 2010 reopening, museum operations have visibly impacted local economy in a positive manner.

V. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Clement informed the committee of Director of Marketing and Communications Bob Tarren's resignation. She also welcomed Jayson Walton as a new full-time digital

strategist. In this role, Mr. Walton will support many initiatives, including ARTshare and research data analysis.

Ms. Keenan shared that she anticipates approximately 75,000 visitors to *Flowers*, and the exhibition has raised \$520k against a goal of \$195k. She added that VMFA has about 34,000 members to date.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:57 am by Ms. Clement.

Recorded by Rebecca L. Morrison
Assistant for Trustee Board Relations and Museum Planning