

Date: _____ Approved: _____

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Minutes of the Resources and Visitor Experience Committee Meeting
Theater Level Conference Room #1
Tuesday, 17 June 2014, 8:30am

There were present:

Margaret Irby Clement, Co-Chair
Thurston R. Moore, Co-Chair
Karen C. Abramson
W. Birch Douglass III
Margaret N. Gottwald
Terrell Luck Harrigan
Dr. Elizabeth Forsyth Harris
Pamela C. Reynolds
Charles H. Seilheimer Jr.
Mary Gray Shockey
Dr. Lindley T. Smith
Shantaram Talegonkar

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director
Austin Anderson
Dr. Lee Anne Chesterfield
Claudia Keenan
Jayne Shaw

Absent:

William A. Royall, Jr.
Anne L. Battle
Mary Anne Carlson
Cynthia Kerr Fralin
Dr. Monroe E. Harris, Jr.
Barbara Noble Howard
H. Eugene Lockhart
Dr. Claude G. Perkins

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meg Clement and Thurston Moore, called the meeting to order at 8:42 am and welcomed the members of the Resources and Visitor Experience Committee. Ms. Clement regretfully added this would be Mr. Moore's last meeting, as he will be rotating off the board soon.

II. MINUTES

Motion: proposed by Meg Clement, and seconded by W. Birch Douglass III that the minutes of the last meeting of the Resources and Visitor Experience

Committee held on the 20th of March be approved as distributed. Motion carried.

III. DIVISION OVERVIEW

Claudia Keenan, the Executive Director of the Foundation and Deputy Director for Resources and Visitor Experience, said she wanted to begin with an overview of where the institution currently stands and follow with a two-year trajectory for this committee. She hopes these meetings will be a dialogue, emphasizing feedback is imperative for success.

Ms. Keenan believes there is a great deal of opportunity to improve the museum's customer service, as she feels it is currently fragmented. It would be beneficial to institutionalize mandatory customer service training along all front lines, having VMFA curators talk about the collection to the group at large and develop a strategic service philosophy. W. Birch Douglass III stated that he believes trustees should undergo the same training, since they are also representatives of the museum. The board members continued to discuss ways of improving and implementing new customer service policies.

Fundraising was the next topic of discussion, and Ms. Keenan said she is very impressed with the museum's fundraising professionals. She would like to add 3 new positions in FY2015, including another major gifts officer. She then expressed the need to show donors how their money is being used at the museum, and a desire for more prospect research. Additionally, she would like to raise more endowment dollars to then be used at the discretion of leadership.

The Deputy Director then discussed the museum's marketing and communication department. She asserted VMFA has been good at selling exhibitions but is lacking broad marketing and branding, adding there is no real budget designated for that purpose. Charles H. Seilheimer Jr. commented on obtaining a portion of the market share and promoting a solid slogan like VMFA's, "it's your art." Additionally, since the museum is open 365 days a year and free to the public, there are many ways to brand and build awareness. Meg Gottwald highlighted events like Fine Arts and Flowers as well as Jazz Café, which showcase the versatility of the museum and reiterate there are other things to do at VMFA. Dr. Lindley Smith suggested putting brochures in freshman introductory packets at surrounding universities so college students are more aware of what the museum has to offer. The deputy director said she will rely on careful research, and the museum will be strategic about money invested in marketing.

Lastly, Ms. Keenan addressed the goal of audience development and outreach, ultimately getting more visitors in who will become members and then potentially donors. She feels that over time, this area will fall under marketing or becomes its own greater entity. Claudia asked for any additional thoughts and said she looks forward to meeting with the trustees aside from the quarterly meetings. Karen Abramson said they would be happy to help Claudia in any way.

IV. REPORTS

Jayne Shaw, Director of Development, told the committee that unrestricted dollar goals are greatly influenced by exhibition attendance predictions, and our numbers show steady growth. The museum has maintained its high membership numbers. *Forbidden City* has been an excellent fundraising opportunity, and donors are pleased to be involved. She noted that additional money has been raised for *Posing Beauty* as well. Unrestricted increases can be seen especially at Commonwealth Society and the Friends level. Next year, the museum is budgeting for a 9% increase in unrestricted giving in support of operations. They have also budgeted to increase the restricted giving 84% for exhibitions, ARTshare, and education. Ms. Keenan feels there is more potential to raise money from foundations as well as individuals by updating the museum's existing technology. Other fundraising opportunities include conservation, education programs, curatorial research and development, endowed/named positions, programs and space, and deferred support.

V. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 am by Meg Clement.

Austin Anderson
Administrative Assistant, Director's Office