

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Minutes of the External Affairs Committee
Wednesday, June 17, 2020, 9:00am
Video Conference

There were present:

Ken Johnson, Chair
Carol Ann Bischoff
Cindy Conner
Janet Geldzahler
Martha Glasser
Meg Gottwald
Sara O'Keefe
Michele Petersen
Pam Reynolds
Pam Royal
Charlie Whitaker
Monroe Harris, Ex-Officio
Jim Klaus, Foundation Co-President
Ukay Jackson, Foundation Liaison

Absent:

Karen Abramson
Gil Bland
Marland Buckner
Ankit Desai
Ken Dye
Bill Royall
Lilo Ukrop, Foundation Co-President
Cindy Norwood

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director
Kay Baker
Caprice Bragg
Chris Buford
Stephanie Cooperstein
Kristine Craig
Maya Erhardt
Katie Payne
Tom Gutenberger, Liaison
Jan Hatchette, Liaison
Thomas Lunsford
Hossein Sadid
Michael Taylor
Kimberly Wilson

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ken Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:00am and welcomed the committee.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public comment.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: proposed by Ms. Martha Glasser and seconded by Ms. Meg Gottwald to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2019 meeting of the External Affairs Committee as distributed. Motion carried.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Ms. Jan Hatchette, Deputy Director for Communications, reported on the COVID-19 communication plan to various museum constituencies. She reviewed the messaging and virtual content updates to the VMFA website, as well as social media that reached over 40,000 people across the different platforms. She discussed the development of “Bringing the Art to You”, an online weekly newsletter that features virtual tours, collection information, videos, and member art and photo challenges.

Ms. Hatchette continued with an update on the success of the *Working Together: Louis Draper and the Kamoinge Workshop* exhibition, which was extended through October 18, 2020, and the excitement and preparation surrounding the upcoming *Treasures of Ancient Egypt: Sunken Cities* exhibition scheduled to open to members on July 1, 2020 and to the general public on July 4, 2020. She shared the promotional video for Sunken Cities.

When asked about COVID-19 protocols and messaging, Ms. Hatchette noted that the VMFA website has an entire page devoted to COVID-19 protocols and information. Outside advertisements will be researched to determine if and how they can be updated with COVID-19 reopening protocols.

V. ADVANCEMENT & MEMBERSHIP REPORT

There was no report due to technical issues. A report will be made at the Full Board of Trustees meeting.

VI. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

Ms. Katie Payne, Director of Government Relations, gave an update on the legislative session, anticipated special session, and the status of the budget. She noted that a budget was passed by the legislature on March 7, 2020. It included general fund support for VMFA, however, budgeted monies are temporarily suspended for state agencies. The

legislature will reconvene in August or September 2020 for a special session to revisit the budget after revenue reports are available.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

At the request of Chair Ken Johnson, Mr. Alex Nyerges, Museum Director, was asked to share an update on the protests. Mr. Nyerges stated that the museum's response to peaceful protests was communicated to the Boards, members, posted on all digital platforms, and sent to the media. The overwhelming response was positive, however there were negative responses.

Additionally, Mr. Nyerges discussed recent accusations in social media and shared data about VMFA's compensation practices, data, and on other demographic information about VMFA employees.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:58am.

Recorded by: Thomas R. Lunsford
Executive Administrator to the Chief Strategy Officer and Deputy Director for
Strategic Planning, Government and Board Relations