

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Transcription of the Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 20, 2020, 1:00pm
Video Conference

Meeting called to order at 1:03pm.

Andy Lewis: I'd like to welcome you all and thank you for spending time with us today. I'm hoping in reviewing the materials that most everyone feels like I do that this plan is extremely important in meeting many of its goals for the next five years. [Pauses for technological adjustments]. Perhaps everyone could put him or herself on mute. I'm going to ask in a minute for Kay Baker just to review with us how to utilize this app to mute and unmute and so forth. All I was saying was I think this is extremely important. I appreciate everyone for giving their time and I'm hopeful that we will be able to create a document that will be as helpful in the next five years as the existing one has been for the past five years. I also want to welcome a member of the public who is here, Andrea Quilici. We appreciate you joining us. Caprice, do you want to take the roll?

Caprice Bragg: Yes, happy to do the roll call.

Roll call of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting taken by Caprice Bragg. Full attendance listed in the meeting minutes.

Caprice Bragg: We are going to be recording and transcribing everything. Alright I think that is our roll call. We are joined by Deb Love of the Attorney General's Office. Thank you.

Andy Lewis: Thank you, Caprice. As Caprice mentioned, we will be recording and making a transcript of this meeting which will be posted after the meeting. A few housekeeping items. We'd like you to remain mute except during the roll call, which is now done, and discussions. When you speak, please say your name. If you experience any difficulties, email Kay Baker or Caprice Bragg to help you in troubleshooting but maybe to avoid that Kay, can you just quickly take us around the screen so we know what to do?

Kay Baker: Absolutely. So basically, as some of you I think may have experienced Webex before, if you look to the top right corner of your screen there should, if you're on the computer now, we've learned if you're on the iPad, it's a little different, but there should be two white buttons. If you click on the first one that's got the four squares you can do your screen option. If you play around with that you can see if you want to have just one person talking or if you want to have several, you can choose that option. If you go to the bottom of the screen and kind of hover your mouse there there's some options to the left. There's a microphone that you can mute or unmute yourself by clicking that. The same with the camera next to it, that's your video so that can have your background shown for everyone or not. Then there is a little chat bubble there too. It looks like a little quotation cartoon bubble. If you want, you can also just click on that and you can text me off line if you have any questions or concerns about anything. That'll just be between you and me if you need some help with WebEx. Does anybody have any questions or suggestions?

Andy Lewis: All right. Thank you, Kay. Again, I know Caprice mentioned this, but in accordance with requirements of virtual meetings we offered to public comment period but there were no

requests for public comment so we will just proceed. Alex, we'd like to hear a couple words from you.

Alex Nyerges: Everybody's been enjoying this rather unique summer? I think one of the best decisions we made with respect to strategic planning was to not push to approve it in May and June at our board meetings because it's allowed us time, obviously, to look at what's happened in the world in general obviously, but specifically with the art museum. We're open. We opened the first of July to our members. We opened the fourth of July to the public. We're seeing about 35% of what we would normally see for attendance. I have to tell you in my calls with other art museum directors, the largest art museums in North America, the 15 of us get together every Wednesday at lunchtime and everybody that's open is experiencing somewhere between 25 and 35% of their normal attendance. Part of it is the limitations that institutions have put, most of it is that people are just afraid to come out. Our attendance has been decent but it's important that we've had this time to then work within the confines of this strategic plan to look forward and make sure that we've addressed some of these question marks in terms of what happens between now and 2025. I also want to commend Andy and this committee for continuing to do what it's doing and to both boards. I'll tell you a quick tale because on calls with both AAMD, our art museum association, but SEAMD, which is the Southeastern art museum association, I've been shocked, appalled and concerned and expressed my concern at the number of our colleagues who because of the pandemic and being closed and all the economic pressures that that's brought, have either abandoned strategic planning, postponed strategic planning for a year or done something else. What I've done every time that's come up as to implore my colleagues to not only don't do that but to dig deeper on the strategic plan because now's the time to be charting the path forward and being able to look at what it is that we should and shouldn't do over the next five years. So it's an important time for us and kudos to all of you for doing the hard work because this is where strategic planning pays off. That's why we're actually in pretty decent shape, especially compared to the rest of our colleagues, who if you read any of the art journals and news releases about The Met, MoMA, San Francisco and so many other institutions, the few, Houston and a couple of others including Virginia, are among the few that are actually not just treading water but keeping our heads above water and moving forward. So we're in good shape. We could certainly be in better shape but we're not in the dire straits so many of our colleagues are. I will say most of it's about planning, having a plan that you can make work, following the plan and being judicious about it so. On that note we have been so fortunate to have Caprice Bragg be our Deputy Director in charge of government relations, board relations but particularly in charge of strategic planning. It is the most important work that we do. You know her training as a lawyer has prepared her well for this kind of strategic thinking. She's got lots of background so she's done a fabulous job of keeping this moving forward, making changes where we need to make them. So Caprice, thanks for getting us where we are. I'm going to turn it over to you.

Caprice Bragg: Thank you Alex. I am really pleased to introduce you to our partners in this endeavor but I want to do that very quickly with a short story. When I joined VMFA over a year and a half ago, one of the first meetings I have is with Marty Barrington. He's a former Trustee and Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee that put the 2020 plan in place that we are still using today and we would say, is wildly successful. But when I asked him what I should know, the very first thing he said is, "TDC. Contact TDC, they're the best in the nation." So that's a ringing endorsement from Marty Barrington. With that I'm very pleased to introduce you to three partners who you see on this call: Susan Nelson, who's the Executive Vice President of TDC; Rachel Crocker Ford is Vice President of TD; Sam Linden, Project Manager. I wanted you to know if you haven't worked with them, they're delightful. We're in for great session. TDC is located in Boston but they've been in the

consulting arena for over 50 years. Their clients include many, many museums, some of whom are our AAMD partners around the country but plenty of other organizations. With that, I think I'm turning it over to Rachel to get us started. Thank you.

Rachel Crocker: So great feedback. Some of you I think we've had contact within the last strategic plan and others are new. Many of you probably spoke to me and lead up to this kickoff meeting for the interview process. It's great to have a chance to be together as a group. I know it's been a little tricky trying to figure out how to do that all in ways that are both effective and compliant with all the requirements that we need to meet. I believe you received the deck for this meeting has a pre-read that you can peruse prior to us getting together. I'm going to use that to structure our conversation. So I'm going to share my screen now and because I rehearsed it, it's going to work perfectly. I just did that and everyone's going to tell me, "I can see the cover slide, right?" Yes? Okay. Good, I see lots of nodding. Excellent. Alright. I'm going to take a quick second to talk about our agenda for the meeting. So this is the first time we're getting together as a committee. We just did the first part which is who are we, welcome, and getting to know each other. I'm going to spend a little time walking through process. So what is this product that we're doing? How are we going about the work? And take your questions about that. And we're going to spend the bulk of the meeting talking about what we've found so far, as far as the stakeholder responses to the hypothesis, which was our way of launching the process you should all be familiar with. Then the main bulk of the generative discussion is to hear your thoughts and reactions to what our findings tell us are really the core issues for planning. And we'll spend a little bit of time getting you up to speed with what's going to come, what's next on the docket. That's how we're going to proceed.

Alright, so process and roles. So we generally proceed with strategic planning in four broad phases. The first phase, the kick off, gets us oriented. What we did with this organization because we've had the opportunity to work with you before and you have so many substantive ideas, but how you want to proceed is lead off the hypothesis, which is a theory of where we think what the plan if someone told us right now, make your plan, this is our best sense of what that is, holes and all. Then we go into current state analysis phase where we gather input and thoughts from stakeholders around the hypothesis and the organization more broadly. Then also look at data that helps us understand where the organization sits today against the ideas in that hypothesis. That's where we are right now. So we're somewhere between the gathering input and the analyzing data parts of the current state analysis. Next we'll move into planning and implications. So what does that mean? We'll have to answer the questions. We have the data and information. We know what we think is important. We think we know where we want to go, but really when it gets down to it, how are we going to resolve the open questions that we have to address in our plan in order to feel like we have a path forward? And then the counterpoint to that, as those of you have been through this before and Hossein can tell you, we always look at the financial proof in the pudding. So what does the business planning and implications of that look like? What does the money tell us? It might indicate how we are going to move forward, in what order, and where are the potential roadblocks, pitfalls, scenarios. How's that going to look? I think that's going to be particularly important to do in a kind of scenario-based way considering how much unknown there is around the just particular moment in time for where we're starting. Then finally, we put everything together. We get another opportunity to hear from folks. We put everything together, we hear people's thoughts and we go through the process of actually approving the strategic plan. So that's conceptually how we proceed.

So within those phases are different people and groups of people who have a responsibility for moving the process forward. We want to identify who those different groups are, what their roles

are. So I have participants here and facilitators. So the participants are doing the work of creating the plan. They have different responsibilities within that process. So the senior leadership team we've already been working with pretty extensively, is leading the generative part of the work. So they're going to be generating and reviewing analysis that we're doing to understand the currency. As they started with the hypothesis and will continue to do throughout the process, propose strategy and propose what they think the financial implications of that strategy are going to look like. The committee, that's this group comprised of members of both boards, will review all of that work, have the opportunity to see that work at each stage, provide input, provide feedback and that will be incorporated by the senior leadership team and subsequent drafts and subsequent conversations. The VMFA managers and staff will have an opportunity to provide input and feedback at each stage. They already had an opportunity to look at the full hypothesis which is the same document that members of the committee saw prior to their interviews. We'll be particularly asking those folks to weigh in as subject matter experts and give us more detailed information about what needs to be considered from their vantage point. Finally, we will be asking members, visitors, partners, others who we work with who do the work of the institution, to tell us their perspective about what's happening right now at the VMFA. When we come to the back part where we talk about the research we'll get a better idea of how we're asking those people to put their voice into the mix. So those are the people who are going to participate and actually create this plan, move it forward. Then there are two critical facilitator roles. One is us as the outside consultant, the TDC team. So we're going to shepherd the process, work with Caprice to figure out the details of the next steps, document things, conduct analysis, and generally keep everything moving along. Hopefully serve in a role of not actually working there so being that third party who can leverage our expertise having a broad set of museum clients to help give some external context in point of view of what we've seen at other institutions. Then Caprice, is our lead a facilitator, as Alex said at the VMFA who's going to make sure not just the plan, but also the process, is successful. So each of these groups has a role and each of the stages that I just described. That kind of comes to the end of just framing out process and what roles and responsibilities are. I wanted to pause and see if anyone had any questions about how we're going to, what process we're going to pursue and how we're going to move forward. If you do, you'll need to unmute yourself first. Denise, did you have a question?

Denise Keane: I was curious at the timeframe. At some point, are you going share some sort of a blueprint of what the timeframe will look like?

Rachel Crocker: Yes. We need to drill down into a more detailed timeline. I know the marker that I'm working with right now is that plan needs to be approved by January. In my mind it's January 1. It might be slightly softer than that but we know when that date is. Caprice and I need to drill down into just putting some dates on milestones within the process. But absolutely that is something we need. We've been kind of trying to bob and weave but we need to land now because we have to hit that date.

Denise Keane: Okay, thank you.

Rachel Crocker: Add anything else, Caprice, about the time line? No? Okay, great. Thanks.

Alex Nyerges: I was going add to Denise's question that the goal of the time line is to have the plan in front of the Foundation and the Trustee Boards in November and December.

Rachel Crocker: Good everybody hear Alex then? I was having some feedback. Okay, I'm going move on to this response to hypothesis part. The first thing I want to do is just remind us of this methodology because it's a little bit different than how you might have experienced strategic planning going in the past. So we started right up front with a pretty detailed theory of what this plan might look like. The purpose of using this hypothesis is to document our current beliefs of what the strategic plan should have and then use that as something that's going to continually be updated throughout the processes. So it's our touchstone. It allows us to start off with some real substance rather than really open-ended when we started the inquiry in the beginning. The particular hypothesis that was developed by the senior leadership team had a couple of important characteristics. There were the core assumption that this is kind of part, the sequel to the current plan. We want this current trajectory. We weren't seeking a fundamental break in the strategic direction of the institution. This hypothesis identified goals around visitor experience, education, and statewide initiatives, reputation, and where we want that to be. And then the organizational section, what is everything we need to build inside this organization, a financial model to make all this happen. Then it specified within each draft goal what are the real core areas that we need to look into? Where, what direction do we think we're going? In early stage, what are we smelling around financial and organizational implications, if that's the direction we're going to pursue. That will get much more detailed as we move forward but we captured our initial thinking in the hypothesis on those obvious [indescribable].

Alright, so that's what the hypothesis is. So what we did together feedback on that hypothesis was, I guess they would call it, a three-stakeholder group approach. We did one-on-one interviews with members of each board. We did one-on-one interviews with the senior leadership team that's represented here and some others who have some critical subject matter leadership roles. Caprice did focus groups with, I would say everyone. She went around the organization, had many meetings in groups and this hypothesis document was shared with everyone. So there is from the beginning, we're right out there with our thinking so nothing is in the wings. What do we, how do we approach getting that information? First we ask people about clarifying questions. Did anything in here that makes sense? Which could absolutely be the case as we're starting out. Are we talking to ourselves or there's jargon in here? What? If there's something doesn't even make sense and you can't respond? Then we ask people to say what felt right to you? What's on track? What's important? What's motivating? What's good and strong in here? Then what concerns do you have? What feels like, "Ew this feels dissonant. I don't, there's something missing. These is vague. These things don't make sense together. I have these concerns." Then finally because life is complicated and hard we actually layered in this question around COVID-19 in asking people to tell us about now that you're looking at the world through this lens, are you thinking about the museum right now? Does it change your thinking about the future direction? Does it change you're thinking about the appropriateness of strategic planning? So roughly speaking, this is the structure that we used to gather people's, to structure people's reactions to that hypothesis. So just so we all understand who was interviewed, you had the chance to look at this ahead of time. We did 20 interviews with members of the boards and these are the staff leaders that we talked to. So it's everyone on this call, as well as Jeffrey Allison who a heads up statewide, Celeste Fetta who heads up Education, and Valerie Cassel Oliver, who is our Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art and critically important to the strategy in the curatorial area. So these are the folks when I'm sharing with you the findings, these are the people who said the things that I'm about to tell you about.

So I'm going to go through these slides and kind of embroider a little bit from my findings. You saw the slides ahead of time and I'm going to add a couple of critical points as it seems important.

The first thing was we asked people is if we should even be doing planning. People are very clear that they felt we should be doing planning, particularly because we're making short-term decisions right now that may have implications for how we're going to be able to be positioned long-term. We really want that vision in place so that we can be gut checking the short-term decisions to make sure it's keeping us on track rather than taking us further away of where we ultimately want to be. People emphasized, as others did in the lead up to this call, that the strategic plan itself is something that's very powerful inside this organization. So it's something that you've been using as a touchstone that's guiding decision-making and it's important to have something in place in the sense that we're kind of coming to a close really gives people a sense of urgency that we need that structure back in place. Board members talked to us about making sure that the board has time for input, that staff leaders talked about making sure we engage mid-level staff and communities. So we talked a little bit upfront about how we're going engage those stakeholder groups. So bottom line, strategic planning still felt like a priority to folks. So as I said before, the first thing we asked is does this even make sense to you?

Where are your concerns or lack of clarity? So people said generally and the board that this felt comprehensive. It felt coherent. There was some checking of us around using direct language and less jargon. Caprice will comment on that later as far as the staff on what they said. So that's something that we take in here about being more explanatory and the words that we use as we continue to develop this document. Only one thing was something that really came up repeatedly as, "What does this mean?" which was this phrase: curator led, visitor centric. So I have some verbatims. People said to me, "It needs to be clearly defined because it means different things to different people." It must be important because it came up several times. So while some folks were saying I need clarity on that, both board members and staff members felt like, "But I really like that." So there's some kind of some of people don't understand what it is, yet many people were attracted to this phrase. Staff leaders liked it because it felt important that it centers curatorial expertise and it makes room for other voices. Board members also like that it highlights the role of curators here. So it felt attractive but some people were like, "I don't know what it is." So that seems like the biggest thing that needed some more work as far as clarity. Then as a more procedural thing for us to bear in mind moving forward, some people felt like the goal architecture was not quite there yet. So it's something we're going need to revise as we move forward.

So the premise and the scope, I said in the beginning, we think that the strategic plan is part two of the last strategic plan. But do people agree? People did agree. They were really clear that they felt the last plan was very strong. We've made a lot of progress and they thought of this hypothesis as the right, logical steps. No moonshot. So that's a quote. Probably one of you said that and people echoed that in different ways. So I think it's important to emphasize that the view of the hypothesis as it sits is it is right. I didn't hear words like, "It's super exciting," which is fine. What we heard was like, "Okay, good. This is the roadmap. I'm seeing this. It's the existing plan, the right adjustments." Staff leaders felt the same way, kind of pulls it forward the things that are incomplete that are critical. They really wanted to talk about timeframe. So that was top of mind for the staff leaders. How long is this really going to take for us to accomplish? Board members, as far as like a caution point, said, "This feels right to me but at the same time I don't have necessarily definitive information about exactly where we are on the last plan." I have a quote that we need to face the reality of where we are and what we failed on and look at data in order to really make this hypothesis something sharper that gives us a roadmap we need. Which I think we acknowledge in our next phase, which is all that doing the current state analysis and getting those facts on the ground. Then the last point that people shared, as far as the premise of this hypothesis kind of related to the next

logical next steps, is “Should we have a bigger vision that's something more fundamentally different? Should we think about our planning process through this lens of setting forward a concept like we are going to be, rather than a museum, we're going to think of ourselves as a public square or we want to be seen as a comprehensive platform for the creative community. Sort of offering this idea of do we want a longer term, bigger, wider future vision to compliment or put this five to ten-year plan in the context of? A few people sort of raised this as a thought exercise. So that's what we heard as far as the kind of general premise and scope of what's in the hypothesis. Within this hypothesis there were two themes that...

Denise Keane: This is Denise. I'm trying to ask something. Thank you. Maybe we're going to get to this but I know that at least in the interview that you and I had, which was very good, it was really before what I would call the important focus of the social justice issues that have occupied our focus as of late. Make sure that the processes that we followed in the input was either included that in some way or will be tweaked in an appropriate point in time to make sure that we bring that perspective to this process.

Rachel Crocker: Yes, absolutely. I think we'll talk , some of that a little more as we get to how people responded to the diversity, equity inclusion kind of narrative that was already present in the hypothesis. Then, as we move forward on the current state research, we're going to talk about what we think we need to put on the ground as far as facts on the ground in order to move that forward. So absolutely. It was, we kind of got these interviews, we wrote the hypothesis before the pandemic. We did the interviews during the pandemic and then we caught the tail end of our social justice [indescribable]. So we definitely can talk more about making sure that we're responsive and that the plan includes how we're putting our arms around that as well.

Denise Keane: I'm sorry, just one other thing because that maybe goes to some of the focus groups because, I'm throwing this out, I'm not proposing it, there could be a scenario where we even solicited the input of people below mid-management if we're really talking about a strategic planning on the [indescribable] of social justice it might change some of the inputs.

Rachel Crocker: Yes, that's right. If we're going to stay ahead of time, and we can talk about this at the research phase what we really think we need. Caprice has already started talking to us about some interviews with community or surveys of community partners who have been a really a big part of the community outreach strategy done so far. So we do need to put some stakes in the ground and let's make sure that our plan feels like we have all of that covered as far as getting the right input, not just so far, but going forward.

Alex Nyerges: Rachel, Denise brings up a really important point. I just want to make sure that everybody knows about the BeWell Committee that's formed across the staff. It's dozens of employees from every department at every level and they had a primary task of getting the protocols and things ready for us to open properly and safely. But then they've also then taken on the task of surveying staff about a variety of issues. Of course, all of the issues, like the VMFA Reform and the things of social justice, are part of that surveying process and part of the conversation. They're going to continue and that obviously, is helping to inform from so many different parts of our 700+ employee base, in forming this strategic plan. So again, I go back to the comment I made before which is, it's a good thing we decided to delay because of the pandemic and closing because the reality is that we didn't anticipate this other wave of challenges. This has helped, allows us then to

make sure those things are included in everything we're focused in on the 2025 plan. We're obviously doing a lot of things already, so.

Rachel Crocker: Great. Thank you, Alex, for clarifying that about the committee. So we're going to start talking now actually specifically about this topic. There are two basic things that we have in the hypothesis that visit everywhere and all the goals need to respond to these topics. One is technology. So technology is the first thing that most people want to talk about as something that they feel is a challenge. Most board members felt this is the top challenge. Most staff leaders said this is something pressing. People said, "Right now we don't have enough content on what the problem statement is and what success looks like." So we really need to push that in planning. People often brought up distance learning as a great example. Like that is something that despite yourselves you push forward and it's a point of pride but it still feels like technology issues stop it from being as good as it could be. Board members also talked about ways in which the museum is not using technology to enhance the visitor experience. Staff talked about internal challenges, internal inefficiencies. This is something that's very top of mind for folks and that the pandemic has kind of laid bare as it is an issue as we tried to transition to work from home it was complicated. Without that kind of technology, backbone, this new environment that suggest not just using technology to go across the state or to do distance learning, but even to connect with people right in your backyard. Really not well positioned to do that, as well positioned as we should be. That was something that the pandemic made that particular weakness worse. People really talked about this is not the first time we talked about technology, that we've really spin our wheels on this when we really haven't moved quickly. There have been so many verbatims on characterizing how we talk about it endlessly but it just doesn't move forward. In particular, members of the Board acknowledge that it is going to be expensive and we just have to face that reality. So not only is it an issue and the pandemic makes it worse, but we can't delay anymore. We're frustrated. We've been frustrated. We've all been frustrated. We know it's expensive and we have to just face that directly.

So that was one piece in terms of people's thinking around technology and response. Then this is the theme around diversity, equity, and inclusion. People were very supportive and proud of the work that the museum has done so far to be inclusive within the community and across the [indecipherable]. They see this as a thematic issue across the plan and particularly pointed to the focus on African and African American art, the *Rumors of War* project, growing leadership diversity and growing state-wide engagement as things that you've been moving forward as an institution on this front. Many members of the staff team felt the hypothesis at this stage does not have enough detail yet about what it's really going to take to do this work around DEI and specifically said we need a separate plan. That plan would help us to define success, would help us support decision making moving forward, would provide accountability and would likely include guidance around hiring practices, pay equity, staff training, visitor facing processes. It relates something comprehensive and comments on what leadership is going to look like. So staff was really clear that we need to get very specific within this area in order to really have the success that we think that we want. So I think that's kind of the main themes around the DEI thematic response.

The next section I'm going try to move through reasonably quickly. So we had, there's four goals, there's topics under each goal. They identify the things that people brought up and wanted to discuss in detail within this smart art. I'm going to give those a little bit of a narrative around what people had to say on these topics. So, starting under the on-campus goal, we had a directive within the hypothesis that we want to continue stay on track with engagement in the African American community and that we may consider adding another focus area. There was universal agreement we

stay on track with the work that's been done, the multi-prong approach around African American art that includes the collection, exhibitions, scholarship, education, marketing, special projects, that it needs to be something comprehensive and that should continue. When we ask people about the notion of additional groups, their general response was like, "Yeah, I think we could think about another focus area." There really isn't consensus at this point what that focus area could look like, although they often mentioned [undecipherable]. They're more comfortable with this idea of reflecting the state as a broad mandate. So that was the kind of feedback around key populations, stay on track, maybe add another one, not sure which one.

People really wanted to emphasize that engaging young professionals seems like it's something important. So when we look ahead to how, where we're going focus on success for a population basis, that seems important because of members and donor pipeline building. Brand perception and target. So this is something that people used to talk broadly about the notion of branding and communications. So far as staff leaders go, they agreed we need rebranding. They were positive that there should be rebranding but they want to talk about this much more conceptually about where are we actually with our current brand perception. Do we actually have consensus around what we want our brand to look like on each stage locally, statewide, nationally, internationally? How would we pay for that? So all kinds of concerns, although acknowledgement that it needs to work harder. Then kind of using that leverage point to talk about communications and messaging sort of more broadly and how that should be reflected in the plan based on the fact that this is something that, branding and communications, is consistently relevant to achieving each of these goals. Some folks suggested that might be something actually more thematic than something that belongs in any specific goal.

Those of you on the board also wanted to talk about branding and communications across all these different levels, local, statewide, within the museum field. You talked about how important it is to tell your, for the museum to tell its story in each context to demonstrate that your current, your irrelevant, that you're making impact. So that, I think, that this is something people acknowledge is important and wanted to make a broader charge within the plan, what is currently reflected in the hypothesis. Visitor experience, board members talked about continual, continuous improvement on visitor experience as something that's very important. They wanted to emphasize that making sure that the broader array of offerings, that it's more than just gallery-based experiences and that notion that has been part of the mindset here needs to continue to be important. What's top of mind for folks? Technology is an important factor in people's minds in order to make the visitor experience stronger. There was also some discussion about this in the context of COVID-19 and what implications that has for visitor experience. People speculated a little bit about, "Well, do we need smaller format and virtual experiences in the next few years? Do we need to think differently about the galleries because we have all this square footage and people can spread out?" They wanted to really reflect on whether it's something that's so campus-driven in the context of COVID. Do we need to balance more of the virtual experience with the onsite, in-person, visitor experience within this plan? That's what folks had to say about that.

Then as far as tourists visiting, we posited in the hypothesis that this might be something that you're riper for. Richmond has changed since we did the last plan and people were generally in agreement that that's true; particularly in coronavirus, there may be potential for more local tourism that wouldn't have existed in non-pandemic times. So that's feedback around on-campus, statewide. This after technology and DEI was the next thing, the most important thing that people raised, very important to folks to really make sure we have strong emphasis on this. I think one of the quotes I

have here, “We're state funded with everyone's taxes. We cannot let that slip.” It captures the attitude of folks who participated in interviews. Board members talked about needing to be more creative about who we're trying to reach and having more clarity around that and really understanding where we are, what's our impact then, who we're serving and how are we telling that story. Rural areas were very much top of mind when it comes to statewide service. Interviewees wanted more understanding about what has actually been happening around region impact. Staff leaders talked about we made progress, this is critically important but they're funding is temporary so that's an area of concern since we don't have permanent funding for Artmobile, distance learning yet. Staff members also talked about thinking about having a goal around the quality of statewide service that if it were aspirationally seeded would be having the same level of quality off-site as on-site. There were some concerns people raised about how some of the work is done across the state that made them feel like maybe that we weren't there yet as far as some things that use reproductions, that collection stays generally at home and doesn't get out there, et cetera. So there's some desire to look at where we are in quality with those things and feel like, determine if that fits our aspiration.

Education. Again, I would say like very close behind statewide as a critical component of the plan. Need to continue to push that, made tons of progress in the last plan. Especially important for reaching marginalized and non-local communities, especially important during COVID. Distance learning is a big piece, has been successful. Again, connected to the technology.

For goal three and our reputation, we asked people to talk about if it is still important to be a first-tier museum. Is that something we set in the last plan, we said it was a 2025 goal. You still agree? People said yes. They talked about where do we want to lead. They said we want to lead and the things that we want to be excellent at and that includes being a statewide museum, everyone being inclusive, being a place that has expertise in conservation, being a place that has expertise in African and African American art, being a place that has an incredible collection. Folks said to us that there was not enough emphasis on the curatorial talent and the folks we have here as something that can actually establish our reputation so that we need to be more explicit about that. And staff wants to be more explicit about the role exhibitions and driving that reputation. For collections, everyone, staff and board interviews, talked about wanting the collection to reflect the population of the state and feeling like the African American and African art collection emphasis is a very important aspect of that and continuing to stay on track with that. There really isn't agreement about if we were to choose an additional priority area of what that would be or how specific we want to get. Board members specifically said they want the plan to have clarity on the areas that the museum plans to lead in or own. If we're going to continue the strategy of making fewer and more meaningful acquisitions that hypothesis should say that. So if it doesn't specify that now, that should be in there. Exhibitions and galleries. I think the main thing people want to talk about is how are we thinking about having big emotional experiences or experiential components to our exhibitions, how are we continuing to push that forward. What are the things that we can do that would really attract attention as far as projects. *Rumors of War* came up a lot as far as an example of something that felt like a project that could get that kind of attention. Conservation frequently came up. I somehow left it off this grid. I don't know why. And making sure that that's woven throughout the things that we're doing and it's front and center as we pursue reputation at the national level.

The final thing I want to talk about is the expansion. So the expansion has a clear case that aligns to the plan and the direction of this institution. A lot has changed since that plan was put into place. Folks acknowledge that it's hard to know when we're going to be able to do that because we don't

know when we'll be able to put our hands on that money. They also talked about being concerned about pursuing a large facility expansion at a moment where we might have a significant economic downturn, a tight, steep budget. They talked about how much we need technology solutions. All of that kind of leading up to we need the strategic plan to be compelling even if the expansion is delayed, was people's general take. So they love those ideas but we might have to, we need to face the fact that it might not happen right away. And we still need to have a compelling plan.

The last thing I'll report out on is the final goal around all the things that create the structure to make this plan possible, organization and finance. As far as finance and fundraising, this was a very much COVID-based discussion that people had, acknowledging that we're going to have more uncertainty. There's just things we don't know. State funding can change. Private donor confidence can change. Earned revenue is going to change. This is all going to be disruptions that they felt like they were short-term but it's going to be something that we don't quite know how much cutback we're going to have to do before we can feel like we're really rebuilding and moving forward again. And that's just going to be the state of life for awhile. We're going to be kind of figuring that out. That's the world that Hossein is living in, doing all the scenario analysis. That's going to be where we are but we still want to be generally trying to push towards this long-term direction. Staff diversity and compensation. So this was the lens that people really wanted to laser on human resources. It often came up as concerns around the part-time positions that the museum has relied on traditionally, even though that number has gone down. Since we've had the protests and the social justice conversation has become the national conversation, people talked about this as a racial equity issue. They, people really wanted this plan to include strategies for reducing reliance on part-time employees and increasing the number of employees of color throughout the museum. That was very clear. Pay equity, part-time comp positions and racial equity within staff was much on the minds of folk as they reacted to what they thought needed to be included in the plan. Finally, as far as governance, the main thing that members of the board talked about was continuing to prioritize diversity and understanding that as this institution itself shows a wider range of people, that this is a place for them, that they can actually be a part of, that that will happen more naturally rather than just kind of going out, which is different from going out and kind of working your network to find folks you can bring in, making it more compelling to be a place where people of color would want to engage in board service. It's going to lead you more naturally towards a more diverse board. So that's the meat of the hypothesis, the main things that folks shared.

Jim Klaus: Can I ask a question, Rachel? It might be for Alex more, but I think in the last strategic plan we talked about the focus areas within the collection in terms of growing African American but do we state that in the strategic plan last time or should we state this time that our goal is still to be a comprehensive art museum? In other words, we're not, by having an area that we want to build, it doesn't mean we're ignoring other areas of the collection.

Rachel Crocker: Yeah.

Jim Klaus: I don't think it ever says that as being a goal. I mean, sort of a baseline goal that yes, we have areas that we want to grow in and we want to emphasize. For example, over the last five years, in terms of the *Progress* painting that we got and other great additions to the collection that didn't have anything to do with but were part of our goal of being a comprehensive art museum. I feel like that was missing from the last strategic plan. It sort of seemed like here's the specialty areas but it seems like maybe we don't want to say this, but it seems like we should, that still baseline we want to

be a comprehensive art museum. We're not ignoring any area even though we're emphasizing something? Does that make sense, Alex?

Alex Nyerges: Your point makes total sense. Our mission is to be a comprehensive museum. Our collecting plan supports that and I'll go back and look and Michael will do the same but we can obviously tweak whatever the language is in there. Quite frankly, I don't have it in front of me so I don't remember how we said what we said but clearly if you also look and track this since we approved that plan five years ago, the vast majority, three quarters of all the artwork we acquire isn't African or African American. Obviously then supports what your point is, which is a good one.

Michael Taylor: Yeah, Jim I can add to that. So we basically, boldly said we would commit one third of our acquisition funds to African and African American art. That really was the starting point for Valerie coming here and the whole plan on folding to the point now where we have field leadership in that area but Alex is right, we are still a comprehensive art museum. We still made huge acquisitions in every area, more than 200 works of Native American art and that will continue. But the pillars of what we're doing, the strategy is going to remain on African and African American art.

Jim Klaus: I don't have a problem with the collecting areas. I just feel like, and maybe I'm wrong and you'll go back and look, but I feel like if you read the last strategic plan which we executed on perfectly, I don't have any problem with any of it, except it just seems like it doesn't mention it. There are very few comprehensive art museums in this country so I think it's an important thing to state. I'm not saying to change anything about your goals or what you're doing to the next five years, but I think that by making sure that it is said overtly it's going to also help people who are interested in other areas of art and making sure that they know that you're still interested in European, you're interested in Native American, and you're interested in all the different areas that we have, contemporary art, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. I just think it needs to be in there. I don't think it's changing anything that you're doing but I think it's important.

Michael Taylor: Yeah, absolutely.

Rachel Crocker: Thanks, Jim. I mention in the larger document that I shared with the senior management team when we were debriefing interviews, we specifically talked about this issue to affirm the comprehensive nature, particularly because I think maybe it was you who said, if it's not in the plan it doesn't get attention. So we want to make sure it's in the plan so it gets attention. All that, curators who might want to come work here see that it gets communications, support, and all those things.

So moving on to just wrap up the section, we talked to people about, "Okay, so if this is our goal, this hypothesis is everything we think we want to achieve sitting here today, can we do it?" And folks were very confident that this museum can do this. They said, "We're in the best position we've ever been in. We hit the last nine out of the park. We feel really good." They felt very good about Alex's leadership. The strength of this team, that it's new, there are new dynamic people, more racial diversity in leadership. The thing that people wanted to emphasize which is an important part of both the plan and how we're going to execute the plan, is that we need to commit to targets and metrics and report out against them in order to manage and monitor how we're doing. We're pretty direct about feeling like the culture of the institution is a little bit of a bias towards good news. So sometimes we kind of adjust the mark rather than talking about how we missed the mark. That's not going to serve us and we need to be more rigorous around targets and metrics. So we can do it! We

need this other habit about how we do our work to make it stronger. Staff leaders, they were also extremely confident and feeling very proud of how much work has been done, progress has been made but then they talked about operational concerns. We've got technology issues. We have process issues. We have functions that don't have clear ownership. Sometimes we have issues around transparency and how we do dollars. You got to continue to work on all the operational components to get stronger, but we can do it. So that, I think, actually leads me to the place where I would hand off to Caprice. But before I do that, I just want to ask, I went through a lot of stuff pretty quickly and I was working from a longer document. Is there anything that I shared that you have questions about, needs clarification or some more context or detail?

Denise Keane: I just had, and maybe it's a question and maybe I'm raising it at the wrong time but it kind of very much builds on what you've been saying. But what we're talking about this plan having to live on COVID and social justice. I think there's another theme there which are behavioral changes. So I don't know where we're going get to the point where some museums are like looking at the issue I am here to exhibit. Others are looking at it from the perspective of I am here to be a driver. I am not suggesting that we should be anything other than what we are, but I wonder if there should not be a place or a place holder where we can come back and say this is a lens by which we judge what we do. So that in the course of time we can decide. Maybe this falls more explicitly in the exhibition area, but I think we should know which of those paths we are going down and how our vision of whether it's the exhibition or the way it's curated sort of check those boxes.

Rachel Crocker: Michael, did you have any, did you want to respond to that at all from the exhibition perspective?

Michael Taylor: Yes, I'm kind of mulling it over. I'm not sure I totally understand the question.

Denise Keane: I think it's more a or maybe it's more, it is a question in that are we going to, as we go forward, take into account some of the behavioral changes and the expectations of our audiences because some people are going there to see the art that we, the amazing art that we have. Some people are going there for what I would call an experience, a driving experience. It's just a different way of looking at what decisions we make as it relates to either what we collect or how we exhibit. So is this kind of a lens that maybe you just do it implicitly, Michael, and it's not something that's always...

Michael Taylor: Denise, it's a great question. Obviously it's one of the biggest questions we face which is why there isn't an easy answer because we're right in the middle of this pandemic. Four years ago we were driving full tilt towards having as many interactive devices as possible to capture this new generation of visitors that wanted that kind of please touch experience. Obviously now during COVID that thinking is as totally reversed. As I was thinking through what you were saying on the exhibition side, COVID really does make us think about those as someone said earlier, like bigger spaces, more open spaces, not having tight corridors. I think it will have a lasting impact on design. In terms of content, that, I think, is unclear right now. I mean we're really monitoring *Sunken Cities* and how visitors engage with it. We're very lucky to have that exhibition right now. It, as Alex has said many times, we have 35% attendance and that's largely due to that. But I think the jury is still out about what does COVID-19 mean in 2025. But certainly we're thinking about it every day, for sure. It's a difficult one to answer.

Rachel Crocker: It's something that lots of organizations right now are wrestling with is their behavior changes or things that we need to adapt for this moment. How many of those are durable once the world kind of comes back to something that feels more familiar? Are we going to have some insights around things that even in a non-COVID world would be something we would retain? So several people talked to me in my interviews about the curator virtual events and how amazing they were. So that feels like a thing that might have some life. Then there are other things that people don't want once it's not COVID. They don't want to be wearing those masks. No one's going to be voluntarily wearing a mask. You know, like new behavior. So it gets very tricky. What's temporary? What's permanent? What are we learning?

Michael Taylor: Well I think another key thing for all of us to think about is we've tended to look at this as kind of this U-shape that there's going to be a vaccine and everything will go back to normal. But it might be a flatter shape than that and it might be that not everyone takes the vaccine. So yeah, I think it's just such a hard question to answer during the middle of this. We have to keep thinking about this and keep observing our visitors, how they're behaving, and what they expect of us. Certainly digital content, I think, it is here to stay. You know Rachel, you mentioned earlier distance learning. Thank goodness we made that investment when we did. We are getting calls every day from other museums saying, "How do you do that? We need to do that" and VMFA got ahead of that curve.

Alex Nyerges: Rachel, let me let me jump in for one quick second on this question because I think that one of the reasons we're faring well despite the COVID virus, despite the social justice issues, especially here in Richmond, is the fact that we have been and always will be a place for all folks. We value accessibility and we value relevance. So although we have the outward manifestations for example, of what an art museum is, exhibition, our permanent collection, galleries and then we have all the ancillary kinds of programming, whether it's our Thursday Night Jazz, our Friday Nights or Wednesday Member Days and all of the other things, those are just ways that support us as, going back to what Jim noted, a comprehensive institution that's relevant to everybody, that is accessible for everybody, and essentially acts as a community gathering place, not just for Richmond and Central Virginia, but for all Virginians. Then when we go out on the road we're doing exactly that, for example with the Artmobile and with our programming. So in essence to answer Denise's question a little bit differently, we are doing that, that's how we were created when you look at the enabling legislation and serving all Virginians. So in reality one of the reasons we can deal with all of these challenges which we would not have expected, is that those things are valuable and more importantly, they're valued by the people.

Lilo Ukrop: Alex, I agree but I think we heard in the hypothesis that we're not doing the statewide well enough and we aren't a comprehensive statewide museum. I think we can do it better, right?

Alex Nyerges: Oh we can do everything better. You know, when we look at statewide compared to where it was five years ago, certainly ten years ago, we're light years ahead with distance learning, with the expanded exhibition program that Michael's brought to the front. Then, of course, there's the Artmobile. We continue to add and layer more on and I have to say that if you look at where this institution was prior to, for example, the opening of the McGlothlin Wing when it came to statewide, in fact, when I arrived statewide was virtually dead except for what Jeffrey did. There just wasn't that much happening. So can we do more? Absolutely. Do we want to do more? You bet.

Michael Taylor: And some of that is storytelling. Stephen Bonadies does so much work behind the scenes with the 25 statewide museum partners we have, helping them with their accreditation, helping them with their conservation. But no one really knows that story. I think that's something that we have to do better in terms of getting information like that out. You're right, we can do better but we are doing a heck of a lot. We have really changed the landscape on how we send exhibitions out. We now are using the Evans Court as like a feeder system where the exhibitions then travel around the state. We're also going to survey, we have more than a 1,000 statewide partners, we're going to survey them and find out what can we do more because we can always do better for sure.

Rachel Crocker: Great, any other questions or clarifications? Or shall I hand it to Caprice to tell you the staff perspective? You're up, Caprice. Here you go!

Caprice Bragg: Alright. You'll find that there's an amazing amount of continuity between the staff, many elements of the staff's perspective with the board and leadership perspective. Very quickly, I met with every representative of every division and every department across the museum. There were over 14 meetings. Nicely they took place at a period of time which also took into account COVID and the social justice movement. So you'll see that flavor just a little bit of the responses that you receive from staff. Same approach was used where the hypothesis was shared in advance. A couple of quick things. Mentioned the consistency. I would say that the primary difference, if any, is really about degree. The staff feel, was in a position to stress with nuance certain elements that that they wanted that required a bit more emphasis. It was from the perspective of both pride and engagement, but also from the perspective of understanding the operational opportunities and challenges. A couple of quick things I would say, the staff was, I think in many respects relieved that there is continuity with the last plan. I'm feeling like they articulated feeling like the work had been done but it's not yet finished. So there's an exclamation point which is required on some elements of that work and they look forward to the next five years to amplify some of those points.

The third bullet point I think came up before the social justice movement started but became emphasized and that is as we think about the language. I think this is consistent with what we heard in the board and leadership interviews, that the language around the strategic plan should be direct, should resonate with this moment in history, and that part of what we're seeing, particularly in the social media space, is and, it relates to what Michael said about storytelling. That people don't always read all of the subsequent pages of a strategic plan. We have a plan. It's posted on our website and we have work, which is reflective of a commitment, for example to DEI, in our collection, in our exhibitions, but that people don't always read all the way to the end to understand that. So as we build this plan and as we roll it out to the board, the staff, and the community that we be thoughtful about the language that we use. You see at the bottom bullet point. They're very curious: what does curator-led, visitor-centric signal? What does it mean? I think we all sort of came to a place in the respective conversations where we'll just acknowledge this is something that we can clarify in the plan itself.

If I go to the next slide, consistency with technology, I think I just want to note two things. It is fair to say that technology came up in every conversation and I had a lot of them. Then people followed up. I think that is reflective of the passion that people have for the work but also understanding that what technology meant when we drafted the initial hypothesis got amplified and exposed a bit during COVID because we needed it in different ways and to connect with people. While there have been some investments in education, just to borrow one, people are very excited about that. Moving forward the staff articulated a need for an integrated technology plan that when I say

integrated, I mean connected across the organization in ways that are both fiscally, makes sense fiscally and also resonates with what our ambitious goals are and our vision would be for the future. But also, I think, an acknowledgement that we operate within the context of a state agency and Vita. We've all heard that but that there is still an opportunity for leadership, technological leadership, irrespective of the VITA relationship.

A couple of other quick things is that there is opportunity, and I say recurring topics, but opportunity for an interpretive strategy. This relates very, very directly about taking it and implementing it and integrating it across the institution to enhance that visitor experience. So if we're going to be curator-led and visitor-centric, what are the opportunities to support that across everything that we do? Communications has already come up. I think the staff articulated a perception of it as an opportunity for enhancements to internal and external communication on all levels. There was going to the third bullet point and I want to be very thoughtful about our time, there was an acknowledgement that we have a comprehensive collection. That is important. There was also excitement about the priority, sustaining the priority around African American and African artwork. It also explored the possibility of enhancing that with more works by women and also Latinx. And then finally a bullet point that reflects the importance of human capital by making sure that the staff, so the way the goals are structured currently is staff falls in that fourth bucket. Some of the focus groups noted that the importance of our human capital should be integrated throughout each theme, infer that but not explicit. I think there was a call to be far more explicit in the plan itself. Finally, I would say the connection to community and this really was very specific in response to the social justice. There were comments that acknowledge that we have a long-standing relationship with many community partners. We want to make certain that that is, the staff wanted to be certain, that that was sustained in the next plan. These [indecipherable] also were helpful in terms of, in forming this plan. Yes, I just wanted to ask if there were any questions. Great, thanks.

Rachel Crocker: Great. Alright, so we put out this hypothesis. We asked for everyone's thoughts. We heard people's thoughts and the objective at this stage is to say, "What does that tell us about where we really need to dig deep?" The essential open questions of this planning process, lots of little things we're going to need to tie out that are already in there that pretty much people were like, "Yep, that's pretty good." Then there were some things that are more complex. We already debriefed this with the senior leadership team and [indecipherable] these finding when we posed the question, "What are those planning topics?" You've read in the pre-read and I'm going to go through quickly the senior leadership team's initial thinking on that.

There is this slide, the strategic one, and then there's the organizational one in the next slide. So topic one, curator led, visitor-centric. The plan should answer these questions about how we define this, what it implies for exhibition, programming, interpretation and visitor services. It should clearly show how community voices and other disciplinary perspectives have a role in that concept, that philosophy. The plan should really specify about brand and communications, what the VMFA wants to be known for at all its levels, community, tourists. statewide partners, residents, more broadly across the nation. Doesn't say this now but subsequent conversation has revealed national and international reputation. The plan should specifically articulate what we want to be known for within the field and how, what is the strategy needed to grow the reputation. What do we want to be known for and how we're going to ensure that we're known for that, which has a communications element to it. Diversity, equity, and inclusion, the plan should respond to and demonstrate what the goals are internally, externally, how we want to talk about it within the field, what we believe a truly

diverse and inclusive VMFA would look like and how we're going to communicate that. These are the things that we really need to resolve from a strategy level.

Then as far as the organizational components and how we execute that, the plan should show what our top priorities are and how we're going to fund them. So if we're going to have scarce resources, you need to have some conversation about what goes first, what comes second and how the campaign aligns to those things. Technology, the plan needs to describe what sufficient technological capacity is going to look like in all the arenas, on campus, education, internal operations and what we're going to actually need to do to achieve this. I'm going back up to finance. How much is it going to cost? The last piece that we discussed at the senior leadership team level that the plan needs to do and we need to start work on in the actual planning part of this process is specifying how the VMFA is going to use data more actively to assess performance and informed decision making. So it's one of the last things I talked about in terms of how well positioned to execute and really make a plan for becoming a more learning-oriented institution. So I think this comes back to what Denise and Michael were talking about as far as your response to COVID. Really what we're saying is we don't know yet but we certainly need to be paying attention, we need to be learning and we need to have those abilities to gather data and respond. That's something that we need to chart out in the plan, how we're going to develop that capability and we need to ask ourselves how we're going to do it. It has been a challenge.

So those are kind of the areas that senior leadership team felt like were the meaty work of planning. Now we want to pose to the group basically two things. Does that feel right to you with everything you know and everything you've heard about what others feel? If it doesn't, is that because there's some kind of reason that we already know that or it doesn't really matter or there's something that you think is more important that we might have missed? We want to open this up to members of the board to respond to what they feel like are the senior leadership's view of what they really, really need to, the planning agenda, what we're going to be digging into and planning? So if those things feel on track, like that feels like from what you've heard those are the things that the planning groups need to work on, is there anything that you felt like it should be on that list of stuff that needs to get really resolved that we didn't put on the list?

Lilo Ukrop: The only question I have, it came up early on in your conversation about were we aspirational enough. Is this a long enough view? I mean, obviously our first plan was awesome and we're just fine tuning it and tweaking and adjusting given the current environment we're in right now. But are there enough big ideas, kind of hairy, audacious ideas that people can get excited around?

Rachel Crocker: How do others respond to that question of Lilo's? Are there enough big ideas here?

Alex Nyerges: Rachel, could I suggest you take the slide screen down? That way we can see each other. I think it'll be easier to talk.

Rachel Crocker: Yes, sorry. I can't experience what you're experiencing.

Alex Nyerges: Yes, all I see is, there you go.

Rachel Crocker: I think, Lilo, that what your question is “Are there enough big ideas?” Another way of looking at that is does it need to have bigger ideas? Is that something that's kind of, we think is necessary to make this plan, to make a plan successful?

Lynette Allston: Lynette here. My feeling is that we evolved and that in the coming few years there are things that are going come forward in thought that we want to add into the way we do things. Maybe this is the bigger, the bigger idea is still to come. Maybe there's things because of the times and what we're going through right now that we cannot address at this point but we need to be open to looking at how we adjust going forward. So maybe this is a part of the plan that becomes very organic. It just changes with how we move forward.

Rachel Crocker: I think that flexibility is going to be something that's going happen anyway because COVID has made things unknowable to some degree. Other thoughts about things that we need to really resolve in planning that are on the list and those are right and not on the list?

Jim Klaus: It seems to me that it really is a continuation of the last strategic plan. I don't know that there's a new focus area. We talked about maybe adding one but I like what you said. I don't think it's part of the plan but maybe it was when you were in your preamble and you were talking about this exact issue. I think you use the example of do we want to be the central town square of the art community in Richmond or something like that. Maybe that could be an area for discussion as part of finalizing this plan in terms of all the ones we have, or it seems like ones that are very well established, and maybe there could be some discussion around a vision for the place in the museum within the community. Maybe that there would lead to a more big, hairy audacious goal that would be just sort of some feedback. But I think where we are now is definitely a continuation of where we were and maybe there could be some discussion over the next few months about the role that could help with Lilo's comments about are we pushing far enough. I don't know that; I don't think we have an answer today but maybe it could be a discussion point.

Rachel Crocker: Yep, that makes sense. If we articulated that in a pithy kind of way, what would that lead to as far as further out ideas that we might start to think about, research, explore. Any other thoughts about what you really feel like the planning process needs to dig into based on what you heard? Monroe? Ken? Folks we haven't heard from? Andy?

Monroe Harris: Hey everybody. Thank you again for getting together and putting it together. I agree with Jim that it is a continuation; however, the theme of being a central town square, I think, first of all, we are that. I think that's part of what we do but we could expand on it. I think that will be a good focal point, one good area that we should pursue in addition to everything else we're looking at. I would like to push that forward.

Rachel Crocker: Okay. Andy, were you trying to add something earlier because I saw your microphone going off and on?

Ken Johnson: This is Ken. One of the things that was talked about maybe an hour ago was as we are surveying our various stakeholders we kind of brushed by the opportunity or the comprehensive research into what the community stakeholders want with our museum. That's one of the things I'm most excited about. As Monroe says we are that town center but we can be a better one, that arts town center. We could be a better one if we actually did an extensive survey of the folks who come to the museum, those who don't come to the museum, those who hang out the park but never come

inside, those who are neighbors who may not spend any time with the museum and of course the other constituent organizations, partners, and would-be partners. So I think that's one of the things I'm most excited to make sure we do or to hear about is what do people say they want us to be. It seems we've done a great job at all levels of management and in some lower than management. We've talked to staff extensively. We've talked to board members but I think we ought to do with more with the folks in the community.

Rachel Crocker: Great. So that segways us into next steps unless anyone has anything else they want to add to insights or things that the research so far has made them think.

Andy Lewis: Rachel, you asked me if I had anything to add. I can't really add anything substantive to what was already said. I do think that perhaps it lacks excitement but I don't remember really the last plan being exciting but it did produce what it seems to me to be significant progress in the museum. Maybe what you need is somebody clever to create a single overarching description of what these four or five goals represent. That is, if it is a town square then we're going be the town square and here are the major goals we're going to accomplish to do that. Maybe that could be more exciting than the session of bullet points we looked at.

Rachel Crocker: Yes, the singular goal that kind of uses metaphor to weave all these ideas together. I think that corresponds to what Caprice was saying in the beginning is kind of getting the idea of the vision and what we're going put behind it right up front as important. That all makes sense. So I'm going to share my screen again because I want to discuss next steps and some of that's going get to some of the research that we started to think about. So there's basically two next steps. We're going to update the board in September and after I go over this I'll ask you, Caprice, to just talk a little about what that will look like. But as far as process goes, now that we have done the hypothesis, we've heard from folks and we understand at a more detailed level where do we really need to dig in to put some data on the ground. This is just a very quick list of the activities we started to initiate around research. So as far as defining curator lead and visitor-centric, we've initiated a process by which Michael has put together a concept and we're going to start to test that with staff so that we can get some collective feedback about where we are and what we really need to land around that.

Visitor experience and engagement. So this comes to some of the survey work. We've initiated a quick member survey and we're working in the process of doing a visitor survey, at least, that we have a list of email addresses to get some basic data around visitor experience, how often people come, why did they come, are they happy. There has been some visitor research activities. We can surface some of that information and use that to inform our planning. Around diversity and inclusivity, that same survey instrument is going to gather some basic demographic data about members and people who come and how they see the institution from the perspective of being an inclusive institution. We're going look at visitor services data and visitor research again from this lens because some information that's been gathered. We're going do some survey work with community partners that Michael referenced.

Communications and brand. Same survey instrument is going to ask for a basic sense of these folks what is the current brand perception? We're going to ask staff leaders to say if we think we know what we want the brand to be, how do we describe that? Can we get a hypothesis of that desired brand? And we're going to be putting together a snapshot of what's happening with marketing communications across all the levels so we can see how well aligned we are and where we might

need to make some investments, give Jan some money and help. Education and statewide. We're going to put together a snapshot about participation. Who does what? Where did they live? What do we know about the demographics? What do we know about the partners, to the extent we have intermediaries, if they're satisfied with that work and what suggestions they might have. Human Resources. We're going to compile available data so it might not be everything we'd want but there is some available data, employee demographics, satisfaction, where the part-time positions are, compensation, benchmarks, just getting a snapshot around that. I think there's some other work that's happening through some other consultants that may be able to inform our understanding about where we are on human resources.

Business model and fundraising. We're going to put together a basic current state, where are we right now, what are the different scenarios we're kind of tracking as far as we move forward, where the campaign thinking and how does that align or not align with the direction that starts emerging from this plan, some understanding about donors and numbers and their behavior in terms of contributions. Finally, as far as technology, on the internal side speaking back to folks saying we talk about this a lot but it doesn't move. There have been different efforts to really get our arms around what's happening with internal technology. We're going to revisit that data, some of which we surfaced, some of which a power user group inside the museum surfaced and put that back out in front of folks and find out how much we know about exactly what the challenges are if this were the data. Maybe nothing has changed or maybe not a lot has changed but we got to have a baseline to work from. So this is the set of research activities that we are planning to execute to get our arms around where we're starting from so that we can actually start to dig into some of these questions that we said need a more detailed, thoughtful articulation within the plan. It gets to, Ken, some of what you're suggesting in that it contemplates member and visitor surveys. Then I think we should take your guidance back that you would actually open that aperture more widely and say neighbors, folks who we might not have their email address but they're around, what are the other kinds of ways we can actually get some insight from the community in a broader sense. It is complicated right now because of COVID, normally we could do intercept testing. We just grab people but no one wants to you to approach them in a public place right now and ask question. So we need to think about where our options are for getting some of that information. I think we're consistently hearing from staff, from you on the board, from others that we need to open that aperture a little bit wider in terms of getting input from about what the museum is and where they might imagine they would like to see it go. So any other thoughts as far as data or information that you'd imagine we'd want to put into the mix in order to answer those planning questions and you don't see reflected in this in this list?

Okay. I'm not hearing that. So the last phase is just, Caprice, to just let folks know the board meeting in September that there's going to be an update and how we imagine that might work so that they are aware of that.

Caprice Bragg: What we'd like to do with both the Trustee level, the full board meeting for the Trustees and also for the Foundation, is we will have a time where we are inviting some feedback from the boards on some of the high-level points here. We will circulate a revised hypothesis that has been updated to reflect the feedback that we've received thus far and then facilitate a conversation at the board meetings around feedback. Then we will subsequently have some opportunities for input as well. But what we'd like to do is make sure that along the way we have some milestones where we are engaging that feedback. We will include in the pre-read that goes to

the board with a process has been so that we don't spend as much time on process as much as that we're still working out the details. But do know that that will happen at both meetings in September.

Andy Lewis: Thank you, Caprice. I take it, Caprice, this committee is not expected to meet again before the board meeting. Is that true?

Caprice Bragg: Actually that is if you would like Andy. The board, this committee, can meet again before the board meeting. We had not contemplated that but we're happy to convene if that's the desire.

Andy Lewis: When would you expect to have the revised hypothesis available?

Caprice Bragg: You know, I think, Rachel and I have not worked on our details yet but certainly by the end of the first week in September.

Andy Lewis: Well, I wasn't sure that we'd need to meet up, I don't see any need to but maybe after we see the revised hypothesis we might want to get together.

Rachel Crocker: Yeah, we can certainly take comment on that. I mean to the extent that it reflects what you heard and happy to do that before it goes out the larger group.

Caprice Bragg: Happy to do that.

Andy Lewis: Alright. I appreciate that. Are there any other questions for this meeting Is there any other business folks would like to take up at this point? If not, can I have a motion to, somebody wave his hand or her hand to adjourn. If there's no objection, I don't think we need a vote but we'll consider the meeting adjourned. Thank you very much for your time and your help.

Rachel Crocker: Thank you all. It was great to see you.

Meeting adjourned at 2:39pm.

Transcribed by: Kay Baker
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