

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Transcription of the External Affairs Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 13, 2021, 9:45am
Video Conference

Meeting called to order at 9:45am.

Full attendance listed in the meeting minutes.

Kenneth Johnson: Welcome everybody. I am glad to see all of your wonderful faces. We have had a most interesting week. This is the museum's External Affairs Committee and I want to get started. Before we go into any other stuff, do we have anybody that has public comments? Are there any comments from the public at all?

Caprice Bragg: No, we do not.

Kenneth Johnson: Okay, I know that that is a requirement from the state that we offer folks an opportunity to speak during our meeting from the public. There are none, so moving forward I want to remind you that this call is being recorded and will be available on the museum's website. The next thing I guess since we have no public comments is to ask if there is a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. I will also ask when you approve the motion that you would state your name for the folks that are recording the minutes. Is there a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting?

Pamela Royal: This is Pamela Royal, so move.

Kenneth Johnson: Thank you, Pam. Is there a second?

Pamela Reynolds: Pam Reynolds, second.

Kenneth Johnson: Thank you all so much. All in favor?

Committee: Aye.

Kenneth Johnson: Are there any nays? If so, state your name. Again, just for recording purposes. Hearing none, we can move forward. I want to move forward to Government Relations. Katie, are you with us?

Katie Payne: Yes, sir.

Kenneth Johnson: Katie, it is all yours.

Katie Payne: Okay, great. Hi everyone. Today is the first day of session. The legislature is coming into their first floor session at noon today. You have probably read that in the newspaper. They are going about it differently. The House will be meeting totally virtually, and the Senate will be meeting in person at the Science Museum of Virginia. All the downtown Capitol complex has been closed to visitors, to lobbyists, to everyone except for legislators and their staff. It is going to be a very different session. I have been spending the last few weeks learning the new process for how they will

accept testimony. It is all very interesting. There are new opportunities, despite the challenges of the virtual setting. One opportunity being that for the first time, Virginia will accept written public comment on bills, so that is an exciting development. Hopefully some of these advancements will stay in place, even after this Pandemic is over and we can meet in person again. This is a short session. It should be a 45-day session. You have probably read in the paper that some Republicans are threatening to withhold their vote to extend from the constitutionally mandated 30-day short session. It is very unlikely that that attempt is successful. The Governor can, of course, just call us back to a special session if they go out after 30 days, so I fully expect this to go for at least 45 days. This is an off budget year. We did the biennial budget last year, so only small amendments will be made to the budget during this session. We had the Governor introduce his proposed budget back in mid-December. You all saw a summary of that. We had lots of good news in the proposed budget. The most headline grabbing one that I am sure you saw in the paper was the Monument Avenue Initiative to reimagine what should happen in that public space. That is about \$10 million for that effort going forward from the state, if it is approved by the legislature. It also includes funding for us to hire two full-time staff people to help with that effort. Of course, if that happens and gets approved, that funding will not be available until July 1st. We started working on some preparations for that project, but with the understanding that it must go through the whole process. It must be approved and then signed by the Governor hopefully in mid-spring. In addition to that, we got some funding for some temporary wage positions that we had asked for, to help us cope during the remainder of the Pandemic. It is about \$10,000 for the remainder of this year, which is just a few months. Then it is about \$115,000 going forward to hire additional housekeepers and security officers to help us as we continue to keep the public safe while they are in the museum. Then we also had a new capital project approved that was about \$5.8 million for life and safety updates. That is for finishing the HVAC replacement in the main portion of the building. Of course, that is even more important now as people are concerned about air filtration, so that will be very exciting to get that project done. It also includes funding to replace the roof over two sections of the museum that are above those HVAC systems. That is all very exciting. There is also a proposal in the budget to give a one-time bonus to state employees of about \$1,500 that is dependent on revenues staying consistent throughout this next cycle. We are watching that closely. The only disappointing news that we did receive in the proposed budget was as you all will probably recall back at the end of last session we had been approved for an additional \$400,000 a year to our operating budget for IT upgrades and leasing art storage space. We had been told that the money that had been unallotted because of the Pandemic back in the spring would be the first thing the Governor would try to restore when we came back into session. The Governor spent a good deal of time on this when he presented his budget and acknowledged that had been his intent. In the end, the decision that they made was to only fund unallotted budget items that were one time only. So, only for the next year. Anything that was ongoing, as our requests were, was continued to be unallotted in the budget. That is a disappointment of course, but the Governor's rationale is that the revenues just are not looking stable enough in the future to guarantee that he could make those commitments and then keep them. While they are still on the table, those look like they are pending, at least for this session. Of course, we will continue to push for them. Beyond that, we have seen about 700 bills get posted so far. I expect there to be closer to 3,000 by the end of next week. We are watching this very closely. I spend all day and night reading bills, but there are lots of new ideas floating around. There are lots of ideas we have seen in past sessions like paid sick leave and time off. Things like that, we obviously keep an eye on. It should be a very exciting session, and I would be happy to answer anybody's questions if you have any.

Carol Ann Bischoff: Thanks, Katie. I have some information to let you and the rest of the

Committee know. My delegate is Rip Sullivan, who represents Arlington and parts of Alexandria. Every year before the session, he usually has an event in his home for people to come and talk to him about their interests before he goes out to Richmond. This was done virtually on Saturday. There were about 100 people who participated, and I just took the opportunity to give a shout out to all the employees of VMFA. How they have really risen to the top, particularly all the efforts that they have made in education. I thanked him for everything that the Governor and our legislators have done for us. This was, I think, the key point I would like to make, which is like me, he was unaware of the VMFA. I learned about it from my mother-in-law and he learned about it when he actually went down to Richmond to take his seat. He told everyone on the call, most of them were from Northern Virginia, "You know, you have really got to check out the VMFA. It really pushes above its weight." I mentioned the online resources and he said to everyone, "After the Pandemic, you guys have got to get down there." I wanted to let you know. He also mentioned that he is one of the only people there who is not running for Lieutenant Governor so he is going to be there for us to talk to. I wanted to pass that along to you.

Katie Payne: Thank you. Thanks, Carol Ann. That is great, and I really appreciate you taking the chance when you had some face time with him to promote the museum. Please, everyone else take a page out of that book. If you have an opportunity with your local legislator, we love for you to mention all the work we are doing. That is a wonderful touch point, Carol Ann. Ken, I am sorry. I realize I neglected a very important thing, which is to say that the proposed budget makes no changes to the expansion plan funding, which was something we were watching very carefully.

Kenneth Johnson: Thanks, Katie. I also had a conversation last week with Clark Mercer, the Governor's Chief of Staff, and he is very positive and excited about the fact that we are leading the efforts with the monument. He also stated that more than likely we are going to an extended session, so get prepared. I am sorry. Thank you again, Katie, for a great report. Tom, advancement and membership?

Tom Gutenberger: Yes. Thank you. Before I get started, I do want to say thank you and acknowledge Jayne. Many of you know that Jayne is retiring at the end of January. She has just done such a great job for the museum and has been a really good partner for me in the first two and a half years that I have been here. I want to thank Jayne for everything she has done and let you all know that, unfortunately because of COVID, we cannot have a proper going away party. As soon as things ease up, we are going to make Jayne come back, and we will invite you all to a nice going away party for her. Hopefully, it will be sooner rather than later in the spring but I just want to say thanks a lot, Jayne for everything you have done.

Jayne Shaw: Thank you, Tom.

Monroe Harris: On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Jayne, we want to say thank you as well. You have done an excellent job, and we will miss you.

Meg Gottwald: Here, here.

Tom Gutenberger: That is great. Thank you, Monroe. First, what I will do is give a quick Campaign update. We have got a Campaign Committee Meeting next week. A number of folks on the call today are on the Campaign Committee, so we have really great news. As Katie said, we received the money for the expansion from the state. That \$125 million obviously boosted the Campaign total a

great deal. We are right now at \$181 million for the Campaign towards the \$365 million which is great news. Of that, \$125 million is in public support, but \$56 million is in private support. The great thing about that is we are seeing people continue to support the Campaign and the museum during the Pandemic. That \$56 million in private support is up 33% from the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1. We are in very good shape. We have got a lot of work ahead of us, and who knows what the future is going to hold in terms of how people react to the Pandemic. At this point, knock on wood, we are really in good shape. Just a couple of highlights on the Campaign money: operating support is at \$25 million, which has been incredibly helpful to make up for some of the shortfalls in terms of revenue that we have lost because of not being able to have events or weddings and not having the full complement of people be able to come into the museum. For endowment, which is critical, we are at \$25 million; the capital, \$132 million. The state money, obviously boosted that a great deal, but another great thing is the unrestricted is at \$15 million, which a lot of that money can count towards the capital match, if we would like it to. That is great news on that standpoint. Then planned gifts were at \$15 million. If we recall, our sort of threshold or goal was to be at \$48 million in terms of planned gifts. For those of you who are on the Campaign Committee, when you were at our last Campaign Meeting we had Bonnie Devlin, our consultant come in and talk to us. What they are seeing nationally is that people are making hybrid gifts when they are making major gifts, which is a combination of a planned or estate gift along with an outright gift. I think that we are going to continue to see a lot more traffic in terms of planned gifts during this time. We are in great shape with \$15 million towards that. Like I said, we have got work to do, but we are in a fortunate place. Our gift officers and Jayne and her team, they have just been on the phone all the time, emailing and calling. We are doing *Cocktails with Curators*. We have done a lot of things to keep in touch with folks virtually. People are continuing to make gifts, so we are happy about that.

Overall giving membership, we are basically flat with membership. We are down about 1.5% at about 35,000. The issue with that though, is remember we extended people's memberships by four months while we were closed. As we get into the spring, we are going to start to see whether those folks are actually renewing or not. One of the difficult things was we had hoped for 225,000 people for *Sunken Cities*. As you all know, we will have less than 100,000. Our special exhibitions really drive membership, but we have come up with a lot of strategies to try and get people to renew. Also, we are trying to go after new audiences. We are also trying to make our messaging a little more about philanthropy for our general members rather than just about benefits, because really the benefits and special exhibitions are what has been driving membership. Basically, flat there. The good news is in leadership membership. We are up 3%, and the place where we are going to have challenges is in the general members. The total dollars are at \$6.6 million. We are actually at 90% of the goal for the entire year. That is because we did reduce our goal based on what we knew would happen with folks not making gifts like they have in the past. As you remember, most museums were predicting a 10% to 20% decline in their philanthropy, so we are at \$6.6 million, 90% of our goal. The place where we have taken a little bit of a hit in dollars is in general memberships. Those are down about 300,000. Fortunately, we are strong in our leadership membership and unrestricted is at \$2.8 million, which is 110% of the goal for the year-to-date. That is feeding the budget, so we are in good shape there. I apologize for not having slides on this, but we just got our reports on Monday. There was not enough time to be able to submit slides for the presentation, but I did not want to give November numbers. They were so different from what we had seen at the end of December. Any questions on where we are in terms of overall fundraising?

Pamela Reynolds: Would you mind repeating what the endowment number was? It sort of faded out a little.

Tom Gutenberger: Yes, \$25 million.

Pamela Reynolds: Thank you.

Kenneth Johnson: Any additional questions for Tom?

Tom Gutenberger: If not, I can go into talking about our fundraising campaign and strategies for the *Dirty South*. If you would like me to, Ken.

Kenneth Johnson: Have at it, *Dirty South*.

Tom Gutenberger: As you all know, our next major exhibition is the *Dirty South*, which is curated in-house by Valerie Cassel Oliver. She has done just a phenomenal job with this. What we typically do for our major special exhibitions is we will have a series of events in the museum where we will do our pitch to get people to sponsor the exhibition. Unfortunately, as you know, we cannot have folks come into the museum. Now to make that happen, we had to pivot to figure out something different. We are trying something new. What we have done is we had contracts with the West Cary Group who is doing some work actually with communications. It was good because they already knew us and we knew them. What we have done is we have created a video that we are going to use to do our fundraising pitch for sponsorships. One of our team members, Charlotte, has put together a really great campaign and strategy around how we are going to raise money for the *Dirty South*. I should say we have already raised over \$600,000, so we are making really good progress on it. My goal would be \$900,000, but I would love to get us over \$1 million. What we have done is create the video, which I am going to show in a second. I just think it is fantastic, but what we have done is we have recruited people to host virtual sessions. We want to have between 10 and 15 of these virtual sessions. We actually have 10 confirmed at this point. Our goal is to get sponsors at a minimum of \$5,000 for the exhibition, so our hosts are recruiting the people to be on to listen and participate in the calls. We are hoping that they can get at least 10 people to get onto the call. The format will be, the host will welcome and thank folks for participating and joining on the call. Valerie is able to join all of them at this point. She is really busy trying to get the catalog and other things done for her exhibition, but our hope is that Valerie can participate. She will give an overview of the exhibition, and then we will show the video. Afterwards, our gift officers will follow up with each person who participated in the call to ask for their support. If the host wants to solicit folks, that is great. We are not putting that on them at this point, if they do not want to. It is really to get people to at least come in and listen and participate. Last night, we had a session with the hosts that actually went really well. It was kind of a dry run for us to go through it. I think that this is going to be a really great way for us to broaden our audience. I think that it is an opportunity, actually, for us to solicit folks outside of Virginia, particularly outside of Richmond. Doing this virtually, ironically could provide us with a really great opportunity to be successful in different ways than we have in the past. Our hope is that we will raise at least \$150,000 through this effort. I actually think we will probably raise a lot more than that, because when you see the video, it is almost impossible not to want to be a sponsor of the show. We have got a number of people, like I said, who were willing to participate. If anybody wants to recruit or help host, we would love your support. What we could do at this point, just because of Valerie's time, is to co-host with someone who has already volunteered. I think the more people on the calls, the better. I think Valerie is the most effective part of this whole thing, so having her as part of the call is really important. Please offline, if anybody is interested in hosting or supporting the show, please let me know. Jayne, did I forget anything else about the

strategy now? Okay. With that, if anybody has questions, I would be happy to answer them. Then we are going to show you the video. No? All right, do we want to show the video?

Kenneth Johnson: Sure. How long is the video?

Tom Gutenberger: Three to four minutes.

Kenneth Johnson: Okay.

At this point a video for the exhibition *The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse* was played. This is a transcription of that video.

Narration: What is the Dirty South? It is a place, a feeling, an essence, a culture, a clear and present voice that had existed for centuries but had been largely ignored until Andre 3000, brash, young Atlantan and one half of the duo Outkast stepped onto the Source Awards Stage upon accepting the award for Best New Rap Group, he announced, “The South got something to say.” It was a simple yet resonant phrase that gave rise to a powerful voice of the Dirty South. We have been meditating on his rage ever since.

Valerie Cassel Oliver: And it just begins to open the floodgates. You know, to begin to really think and to meditate on the south as a site, as a source of inspiration, as a source which we are all drawing from. It is something that even older people understand as being this sort of amalgamation of cultures. The *Dirty South* really looks back at capturing not only how that is manifested visually, but how it is also manifested sonically.

It really is a sort of thought of or distilled some of the things that they were thinking through. What do they most reference upon? Often, it is the land. It is both the man made land. It is also the natural landscape, which it often times feels very surreal. There is a sort of magicalness about the landscape.

We are looking at belief systems, whether they manifest in the sacred or in the secular. Whether it is understanding oneself interdimensionally. You know, being in both this place and in another place that one can extend one's body. You know, through not only adornment but extending one's body through thought processes.

The third part is the body itself. What does blackness feel like? What does it look like? It is the cadence of the voice. It is the movement of the body. And, I think those things still hold very true. Even though we are drilling down 100 years, we know it goes back for centuries. It is that persistence of traditions that go on and on and on and evolve with each successive generation.

We have really been thinking long and hard about how to really embrace all cultures here at the museum, but certainly looking at the south, looking at our own backyard as spaces of inspiration. I think everyone will see themselves reflected in this work. While it comes out of an African American expression, it really frames our collective expression.

Tom Gutenberger: Great. Well, thank you, Ken. I do not know if anybody had any questions about the Campaign or video or anything?

Monroe Harris: That is wonderful. Who put that video together?

Tom Gutenberger: West Cary Group.

Monroe Harris: Nice.

Kenneth Johnson: Is that original music or do we have to buy that?

Tom Gutenberger: You know, I do not know actually. Jan, do you happen to know?

Kenneth Johnson: Just double-check that, please.

Jan Hatchette: It was actually a purchase. It is not original but we are creating something, a part of the exhibition. Valerie is having commissioned a special work. We just did not have it in time for the video.

Kenneth Johnson: Totally understood. We have created some great videos, and then, you know, had to go back and buy, which of course is crazy expensive.

Tom Gutenberger: We actually went through all the artist approvals and all the things that we needed to.

Kenneth Johnson: Good deal. Tom, talk to me offline. I do not know if it is a conflict for our company to sponsor or not.

Tom Gutenberger: I will talk to you offline, and I am sure I will come up with the answer that it is not a conflict. We will talk.

Kenneth Johnson: Great report and great presentation, Tom. Thank you so much. Jan, you have the floor.

Jan Hatchette: Good morning everyone. I will just start off by saying that we just completed two days of working with film production. Hulu has a TV series that will be featured later this year based on the non-fiction story about the Sackler Foundation and the Opioid Crisis. The film production was at the museum for the past two days, so our staff has been working feverishly to help them out. It is a great revenue builder for the state, so that is why VMFA agreed to be one of the locations for the shoot.

I will start off by talking about *Sunken Cities*. These numbers are actually old numbers, so as of last Sunday, we were at 62,673. We have one week remaining in the exhibition. Of course, you know coverage has been going pretty well with *Sunken Cities*. We have done a lot of local stories and been pitching nationally. We have one more week of that to go. I wanted to share this video. We have received some comments from visitors about the safety. Was it safe to come to the museum because of COVID? We wanted to create a video that would showcase that the museum was a safe place to go. We are doing time tickets, so that people can physically distance in the space and show folks that were there were wearing masks.

At this point a video displaying safety protocols for the exhibition, *Treasures of Ancient*

***Egypt: Sunken Cities*, was played. This video did not contain spoken dialogue.**

Jan Hatchette: That video performed pretty well, with over 468,000 reach and comments and engagement over 10,000. *Virginia Arcadia* is the next exhibition that will open on February 6th. Our hope is to tap into an expanded visitor base with this exhibition, with special attention to audiences interested in history and nature, as well as art. Our interest groups, folks that we have talked about really trying to engage include folks interested in American art, Virginia and U.S. history, naturalists, environmentalists, folks that explore the outdoors, travel enthusiasts, photography, folks interested in national parks and state parks. We are really reaching out to our tourism partners, Virginia Tourism and Richmond Tourism, students and teachers in the school system. Usually fourth graders take trips to the Natural Bridge and since those are canceled, talking about how we reach out to those folks and share some virtual programming that they can use in the classroom. Hiking groups, that is a vast group of folks that we hope to target with this exhibition. This is just some of the art that we will be using on different materials, whether in digital formats or in print formats.

The Dirty South. Tom introduced the *Dirty South* to us with the video that was done for Advancement. We will use that video, but of course it will have to be shortened significantly for marketing and PR purposes. The exhibition is scheduled to begin May 22nd and run through September 6th. Of course, this exhibition is aligned with the Strategic Plan and we will go after all of our audiences but pay specific attention to our African American audiences and try to really engage those audiences through different marketing and PR avenues. Through interest groups, we have talked about with this particular exhibition, of course, art history and fine arts, American history, African American art, hip hop music enthusiasts, culture and film enthusiasts, jazz, blues, all different sort of musical venues, American travels, southern art. VCU is a definite school that we are going to promote this to, as well as other HBCUs. There is a music festival, but due to COVID, we are not sure if it will happen, called *Something in the Water* in Hampton Roads. It usually takes place in April, so if that is an opportunity, we will certainly take advantage of it. Maybe take the slab that is being created down to that actual festival, if it is being held. Of course with this exhibition, our reach will be in the Richmond area, but also focus heavily on Northern Virginia, DC, Maryland, Hampton Roads, and Newport News, which will include of course Virginia Beach and all of our normal radius. We will spend a little more time and dollars promoting in these areas. Events that we have talked about like pop-up music events throughout Central Virginia, our family day will be African American family day, so our focus will be around the *Dirty South*. We have talked about our *After Hours* events that Paula Saylor-Robinson, on my team hosts, every year, possibly doing, if COVID-safe, possibly doing a trap house themed event, which could be possibly outdoors. If not, we will figure out something that we can do virtually. June is Black Music Month, so we will take advantage of that and use influencers to help promote the actual exhibition. On this slide, you see different imagery that we will be using on our digital social and marketing platforms. The speakers, the middle image is a church. This is not the actual slab, so once the slab is created, we will have images of that and use that in our marketing. One other thing that I was going to say about *Dirty South* for a media stunt, what we have talked about and talked with Valerie about is having sort of a competition of some sorts where we can challenge different folks, bands at high schools and colleges. We talked about getting the Richmond Ballet involved, the Richmond Symphony, asking them the question, "What does the *Dirty South* mean to you?" You could have choirs at different churches put together a music compilation. Just having a contest of some sort, where we get others involved in creating what the *Dirty South* means to them.

PR highlights for the communications office. We have had several acquisition releases that have

appeared in different art publications like *Art Daily* and *Art Fix*. *The Washington Post* covered us for the Monument Avenue initiative. The other big PR highlight that we have had has been around the *Kamoinge* exhibition and the exhibition being at the Whitney in New York. It is hard to believe, but in December, we celebrated our one year anniversary of *Rumors of War*. Because we really could not do much on site, we did ask to have the gentlemen that produced the projections on the Lee Monument to work with us and create a *Rumors of War* projection that we did show at the museum for three days, December 10th through 12th. It proved to be successful. Folks actually came out. It was a short four minute long video that was on the side of the building. You could actually see *Rumors of War* and see the projection going on at the same time. That was our way of celebrating the installation that had happened one year ago. Other events happened to celebrate like *Jazz Cafe*. There was a *Fridays After Five*, so we just tried to do some programming virtually as well to celebrate the one year anniversary. That is the video. We are not going to show that today.

Other events. Audience development partnered with education for something that Chase sponsored for the museum. We developed these art kits and went around to the different elementary schools in Richmond, as well as the Boys and Girls Club, Peter Paul Development Center, and Girls for a Change - a great collaboration project with our education team members.

Bringing the Art to You. I hope you all are subscribing to the newsletter that we send out weekly. It is our way of engaging with our members and other subscribers. I think we have around 150,000 people that are subscribing to our publication. We see very few folks that are unsubscribing, so they are not feeling like they are overwhelmed at this point. It continues to do really, really well. Our open rates are around 26% to 30% depending on the content. Anytime we include a video, those numbers go up. I will end with the magazine, so these are the three publications that we have produced over the last year. The one that you see on the far right with the Odita mural was our first edition that we sent out a digital version. We will continue to do a digital version. Right now it is a PDF page turner with the ability to include video, but we will continue to work on it as a digital publication to make it available. A group that we were not mailing our publication to was our students, so this was a way to add the students into a receipt of this actual publication by doing it virtually and digitally, I should say. That is the conclusion of the communications report, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Kenneth Johnson: Thank you, Jan. Are there any questions for Jan at all?

Martha Glasser: I have a question. This is Martha Glasser. Thank you for your presentation. When you are speaking about possibly *Something in the Water*, I had a thought. Would it be possible to have *VMFA on the Road* during that time of the festival, if it happens? Then go give a warm welcome to our state museum and have a membership push during that time.

Jan Hachette: That is a great idea, and we will certainly talk to Jeffrey about that. That is an excellent idea, Martha. Thank you.

Martha Glasser: Thank you.

Kenneth Johnson: It is a great idea. Thank you, Martha.

Pamela Reynolds: I just wanted to say, Jan, it is amazing all that we have been through and how you have kept VMFA on the front of so many things in the newspaper and just everything. The idea of

being on the wall, I was there, and it was just so much fun. You can imagine what you can use that wall for. I just want to say congratulations on the *Arcadia*. You know, Thomas Jefferson owned Arcadia, and it was his, he really sort of maintained it for a long time. They have a very active membership, so it may be that you could tie in with Monticello and maybe have a guest speaker. You know, Leslie Bowman would be that person, I would think. The other thing, there are a lot of preservation groups that are very, very active around the state, Start Richmond and Preservation Virginia. I am just suggesting that might be also a way of tying in.

Jan Hatchette: Absolutely. Thank you so much. Great suggestions, Pam.

Kenneth Johnson: Any others?

Jim Klaus: Jan, I feel like I am on every email list from the museum, at least I thought so. For some reason, the one that you indicated, I do not know that I am on that list. I was looking on the website and trying to figure out, how do you get on that list?

Kenneth Johnson: That is the cool list, Jim.

Jim Klaus: Yes, evidently.

Meg Gottwald: I am not on it either. I just looked it up myself.

Jan Hatchette: You are not receiving the weekly emails on Thursday? Okay, then we need to check it out, because it is supposed to go to all members, which you all are members. Unless for some reason you have opted out of it, you should be receiving it, but I will check on that for you. We can look into that.

Meg Gottwald: I am not getting it either, so look for me. Thank you.

Jan Hatchette: Okay, Meg.

Kenneth Johnson: Alright, we are back in the club.

Meg Gottwald: Trying to be cool, Ken.

Kenneth Johnson: Charlie?

Charlie Whitaker: Hey, Jan. Thank you for that. I was curious on the Reimagining Monument Avenue, what the timeline is? This being the External Affairs Committee, including the plan to kind of engage the community around that. Not to discuss it now, but just wondering what the timetable is for that project.

Jan Hatchette: Alex, do you want to take that?

Alex Nyerges: I would be glad to. First of all, as Katie mentioned, it is proposed in the Governor's budget, \$10 million for the down payment on implementation, and then \$750,000 for the actual staffing and operations that will go into the operating side of our budget. That is, basically, for two years. This does not take effect until July 1, and one will assume for the moment that the Governor's

bill will pass. The appropriations will be made, so we will go into action officially on July 1. The timetable right now, Charlie and for everyone, is that we are going to be using the next five and a half months to do our organizational structure and our planning, creating an elaborate timetable for the two years of planning and implementation. We see that FY22, the first year of the appropriation, will basically be our major planning timetable. FY23 will be the first year of implementation. I will also say we do not have a preconceived notion of what this plan should be. We are going to bring the best experts in from the history side, historic preservation, urban planning, and from landscape architecture, architecture, and everything in between to create a plan about what the vision for Monument Avenue should be. We are concentrating on from the Boulevard to what was formerly known as Stewart Circle and may still be. Obviously all of those aspects will be considered. One of the hindrances at the moment is the lawsuit around the Lee Statue. The administration believes that is just a matter of time and we would agree wholeheartedly that is true. In fact, we have already begun. In fact, I spent the last two weeks of December on the phone with a lot of our colleagues and other constituents who have something to say. There is also a nonprofit organization that is being formed that is called, interestingly enough, Reimagine Monument Avenue. It is made up of a number of community citizens. That is being led by a provisional board. They are applying for their 501(c)(3) status, and we, Michael, Katie, Caprice, and I met with them a week ago Monday for almost a couple of hours to walk through what their plans are, and for us to tell them what we plan on doing. Of course our plan is somewhat short on details, because we are proceeding very slowly, very carefully to make sure we get this right. A couple of final things I will say. One, I mentioned before. We do not have a vision of what this will look like. That is something that will come out of the collective thought processes of all of these great thinkers that we will bring to the table from not just across Richmond and Virginia, but across the country and quite frankly across the world. The other is we are going to be inclusive and inclusive to the highest degree, because we want everybody's voice to be heard. The people who are protesting either for the monuments or against the monuments. People who are protesting, you know, legally, such as the folks on Monument Avenue. I can tell you there is no shortage of people who have reached out to me and others on our team with ideas and suggestions about who should serve or who should be involved. That is where we are going to spend the next five months. What I would encourage everybody to do is if you have suggestions of people that should and can serve in some capacity, because we will not have a single committee or entity. This is going to be looking at it from a variety of angles. The only two caveats I will tell you is that when the Governor's office called and said we would like you to do this, I said, "Well, we will do this, but number one is that we get to dictate structure and organization. What we do not want to have is a community-based group of well-meaning citizens that are not going to be able to create the grand vision that this really requires. The other is that there are no real constraints on what can be done or should be done." Obviously, there are budget constraints long-term, but I think the Governor's proposal is a good demonstration of how much commitment there is. I suspect it will continue on into the next administration. The partnership with the City is really important. In this meeting last Monday, when asked the question, "Who is taking the lead on this?" the Head of Parks and Recreation said, "Our instructions from the City are that the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is leading this process." Now the only concession I will tell you is to the Chief of Staff. He said, "Alex, if I could ask one thing, can we not have an avenue of nothing but fountains?" I said, "Clark, I can promise you we will not have an avenue of nothing but fountains." Obviously, we do not know what the end result will be, but I cannot imagine it would be a procession of nothing but fountains. It will encompass everything from the green spaces in between the circles and the existing pedestals and former monument spaces. We are focusing, at the moment, on Boulevard to the edge of the VCU campus at the old Stewart Hospital. The end result, I suspect, because our goal is to not just be a solution for Richmond and for Virginia to reimagine Monument

Avenue, but something that becomes a model about how people deal with monuments. How do people deal with the notion of monumentality? We can serve as a model for places, quite frankly, across the world. We are also exploring avenues of funding. Clark and I have a meeting with the Mellon Foundation leadership on Friday. They are obviously very, very interested in us, and coincidentally, Tom, Caprice, several others, and I met with the Mellon folks a week or two ago. They are obviously interested in what we are doing on the monument question.

Kenneth Johnson: Thank you, Alex. How are we looking on time, Stephanie?

Stephanie Cooperstein: We have about five minutes left.

Kenneth Johnson: Excellent. Are there any additional thoughts or questions for Alex or the team? I have a few things I want to go over real quick with you, if I can. Anyone else have anything else? I have a couple of items, Alex, if you all would just give me a moment of privilege. One, I was reflecting that I know that later on we are going to give Jayne her roses and all that good stuff, but I was reflecting that when I got involved with the museum 20 plus years ago that on the Foundation, Jayne was one of the first people to walk up to me and welcome to me. She and Brian have been very instrumental in our community and had many different important roles. I want to tell you, Jayne, how much I really appreciate you and your service to the museum and your friendship. I know others on the call probably feel the same. Good luck with your next endeavor and your next chapter. Anybody else have anything else they would like to add? I just want to open the floor right now for that.

Alex Nyerges: I think ditto is the correct response, Ken, with an exclamation point.

Kenneth Johnson: Jim, did you want to say something?

Jim Klaus: Well, I was going to add from the Foundation side our sadness but excitement for Jayne moving on to her next phase, and we will miss her. I am glad I know where you live, Jayne. It is not far from my house, so I plan on seeing a lot of you through January and beyond. From the Foundation, we also really want to thank you and say what a great impact you had. You will be sorely, sorely missed

Kenneth Johnson: Alright, moving on. The next item I had, Alex, I want to thank you, the team, and our staff on being at the museum and especially the security folks that are working behind the scenes and putting their lives at risk every single day to have the museum open to give many people some sense of normalcy during these times. It is a big deal. Folks just do not understand that you have folks that put their life at risk every day, no matter how much precaution. It is just a really mean disease. I mean, anybody can get this thing, so I just want to make sure folks know that we understand and appreciate their sacrifice.

Alex Nyerges: Well, thank you, Ken. I want to applaud Kimberly and her people and then everybody across the museum, because I have to say that despite having now a couple 100,000 people visit and then, obviously, hundreds of staff on-site regularly, we have had very few instances of people who have tested positive for the virus. We have had 17, 15 of which have come from outside the museum, because we hired a contact tracer that is working in Human Resources. We are being swift and decisive. Our staff is being diligent. I will also say that for the most part, with two or three exceptions along the way, our visiting public has been adhering to all the rules of physical distancing

and wearing masks. The worries that we had have not developed, but really the staff gets a huge amount of kudos for being very diligent and the perseverance of doing that, so we can be a place that people can escape to find beauty and solace that is important in times of stress and difficulty like this. I think it becomes much more our role in society than ever before - being able to be open. We hope and pray that we will continue to stay open and be allowed to do so.

Kenneth Johnson: Thank you again, Alex. My last comment and this will not be a political statement, but it will be a comment from Ken about things that happened last week. It was most unfortunate for so many different reasons; however, I just want to let you know that I heard a sermon this past Sunday that I have been sharing with a lot of people. It really talked about the positive and the good things that are happening out there and not letting what happened last week overshadow some of the great things that are taking place in our country today. One, we get a new administration which could be a great thing for many of us. Also, the fact that you are going to have the first African American female Vice President. That is a historic moment for our country, and that is major progress in many ways. Then, we have the rollout of the vaccine, so hopefully we will be getting back to normal soon. There are a lot of things to be positive about and to look forward to. I hope we can lift your spirit in some sort of way and make sure to share that joy when you are with other people to let them know that love will prevail. That is all we have. You all have a good day. We are adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45am.

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