

Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors via Zoom

March 9, 2022

APPROVED

Board members present: William Browne Jr., board chair; Andrew Dahlem, vice chair; Andrew Briggs, treasurer; Liz Witte, secretary; Gary Anderson; Melissa Caito; Nancy Jordan; Thao Nguyen; Angila Retherford; Roland Shelton; Judy Singleton; Mary Walker; John Wechsler; and Robin Winston.

Board members absent: Fred Cate, Linda Conti and Jordan Gathers.

Advisory board members present: Greg Pemberton.

Advisory board members absent: Steve Anderson; and Alice Schloss

Staff present: Cathy Ferree, president and CEO; Susannah Koerber, chief curator and research officer; Nora Woodman, chief development officer; Brian Mancuso, chief officer of engagement; David Daum, chief financial officer; Kisha Tandy, curator of social history; and Renee Bruck, manager of communication.

State-appointed representative: Indiana District 82 Rep. David Abbott

Partners: Dan Bortner, director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources; Keesha Dixon, executive director of Asante Art Institute of Indianapolis.

Public attendee: Link Ludington.

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order at 12:02 p.m.

Consent agenda

The consent agenda, which included the Dec. 1, 2021 board minutes and 2021 Collections report, was approved.

Governance

Melissa Caito presented Dr. David Go, the Viola D. Hank professor and department chair of aerospace and mechanical engineering at the University of Notre Dame, as a suggested addition to the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites (ISMHS) Board of Directors. He resides in South Bend with his wife, Beth, and two children, Indiana and Donovan.

The motion to accept Go as a new board member was unanimously approved. Go will join the board starting in Fiscal Year 2023 and serve through FY25.

Investment Committee Report

Gary Anderson gave an investment update to the board, noting inflation is strong across most categories including shelter, food, electricity, new vehicles, energy and used vehicles. He also provided a summary of the ISMHS endowment. Overall, the museum endowment had a net return is 17.1% for 2021 – which is good and higher than both the policy benchmark and broad market benchmark. He noted the endowment totaled \$5.175 million as of Jan. 31, which has decreased slightly since the end of last year when the endowment totaled \$5.4 million. Gary noted the stock market changes have been very dramatic in just days, but this is the reason the investment committee has been sure to diversify the museum’s portfolio and will hopefully smooth the downdrafts that are currently happening.

Gary said he told the board before that it’s important to be steady at the till during the storm, and the storm is now. The museum system’s endowment has managed to navigate through a lot of storms in the past, and it is set up to perform quite well this time. Overall, the endowment is doing well against benchmarks, including both simple and custom benchmarks, he said. He also noted the endowment is in secure hands.

Finance and Budget Update

Andrew Briggs presented the finance and budget update, noting attendance is returning systemwide following the COVID-19 pandemic. Briggs also noted school numbers are beginning to increase, but he does hope to see those numbers return at a higher rate soon.

David Daum presented the Balance Sheet for FY22 as of Jan. 31, which showed assets totaling \$17.809 million and total liabilities totaling \$4.585 million. He presented the revenue and expenses statement for the period ending Jan. 31, which showed total revenues of \$6.589 million and total expenses of \$5.652 million.

He noted admission revenue is ahead of expected budget by \$58,000, and facility rentals and development are ahead of budget too. The forecast through FY22 includes \$10.978 million in revenues and \$10.893 million in total expenses, which will provide a positive net position of \$85,825.

The finance and budget update was unanimously approved.

President’s Report

Cathy Ferree presented the dashboard, noting that paid attendance is really starting to recover. The FY22 dashboard ending in January showed total ISMHS attendance at 63,021, which is a return of 65.65% of visitors when compared to FY19. Paid daily attendance was at 38,746 visitors, a return of 86.16% when compared to FY19. School attendance still lacks with only 6,604 visitors, or a return of only 32.68% when compared to FY19.

Cathy noted February’s attendance was very encouraging as well, with more than 5,600 visitors attending GeoFest in three days. Visitors also purchased memberships during the event, which was encouraging too.

She said school attendance is still a struggle, but the leadership team has several strategies as it's a bigger issue than just attendance. Some locations such as Corydon are sold out in April and May with school trips, but school field trips still struggle at ISM.

Cathy noted teachers have had a rough time throughout the pandemic, so museum staffers are always trying to meet them wherever they might be. Programmers are still willing to do Zoom programs and virtual outreach, and the education team is continuing to work on relationships so that the museum system is viewed as a resource for schools. She also told board members schools appear to be planning about three months out for field trips and haven't returned to the normal scheduling of trips a year in advance.

Cathy said the museum system is seeing members visit at all 12 locations, and the ISMHS is continuing to see real progress as the COVID-19 pandemic subsides. While presenting the State Historic Sites dashboard, Cathy noted Angel Mounds State Historic Site is nearing admission numbers from 2019, and site staff are looking forward to spring. She also told board members that six sites are operating in the positive before allocations, which is a great thing and something the board is trying to monitor.

The biggest deficit was New Harmony State Historic Site, and ISMHS officials will be working with the University of Southern Indiana (USI), a partner at that location, to see if there's a way to better allocate financial provisions for that location. The ISMHS receives a \$25,000 allocation as part of the partnership, but USI receives an allocation plus all of the ticket revenues from tours, which include our buildings. The ISMHS is tasked with building maintenance, as well as artifact preservation at that location.

Cathy provided an update to the master planning process, noting that TDC consultants are working with community focus groups and looking into who is in this area but not visiting the Indiana State Museum, as well as why aren't they coming.

She also noted hourly wages for part-time staff within the museum system moved to \$15 per hour so that the ISMHS could remain competitive. Cathy noted the museum system is still having issues finding staff – particularly front-line workers. She said the wage increase allows the museum system to be more competitive since several institutions moved to \$15 per hour in January. ISMHS had been slightly ahead of other institutions with part-time wages until the recent increase in January.

Cathy told board members that the removal of the canal boat at Whitewater Canal State Historic Site had been postponed due to flooding, but the project was expected to move forward in April. She noted the museum system hoped to utilize CR&R dollars to help with renovations.

Cathy also shared with the board that state legislators approved legislation making the mastodon Indiana's official state fossil. The mastodon represents the state of Indiana, as well as ISMHS, and the recognition also serves as a tribute to Ron Richard's work digging and researching mastodons throughout his career with the state museum. Indiana had been one of five states that didn't have a fossil, and bill sponsors worked with Dr. Steven Totten as well as Peggy Fisherkeller, curator of geology, and other ISMHS staffers throughout the process.

Collections

Kisha Tandy presented new acquisitions to the museum collection from local musician Jesus “Jesse” Quintana, who was born in Mexico, moved to the area and became a U.S. citizen. Quintana was known for his musical performances around the city of Indianapolis and in educational settings. A guitar, sombrero, other instruments, shirts and boots with an applique of Indiana that belonged to Quintana have been added to the collection, and Kisha noted this addition is a significant collection as it allows us to tell an immigration story, as well as the Latino history of Indianapolis.

Development

Nora Woodman provided an update for Development, highlighting new research and trends for fundraising. Trends from Giving USA, whose research is conducted by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, noted there has been an increase in charitable dollars from fewer donors. About 77% of charitable giving came from individual donors in 2019, but 69% came from individual donors in 2020. Nora noted a 2021 study from Bank of America and Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy indicated leadership gifts will continue to drive giving with 26% increasing their giving for pandemic needs. About 77.5% maintained or increased giving, and 74% indicated they will not change their long-term priorities. About 7% gave through a Donor Advised Fund – or DAF.

Nora noted CCS Fundraising tips for 2022 included finding opportunities to highlight mission and impact, leverage technology and continue to ask unapologetically.

She said the development department encourages board members to stay engaged and help with reconnecting with past donors, make new introductions, extend invitations to the 20th anniversary event or consider increasing their own giving to the Icon Society level.

Angel Mounds State Historic Site

Cathy provided information about upcoming renovations to Angel Mounds State Historic Site in Evansville. She noted the museum system is always looking at ways to maximize experiences at the state historic sites, and the museum system was able to secure \$4 million in funding from the state to rehabilitate the Angel Mounds State Historic Site Visitor Center thanks to our partnership with Indiana University.

The current visitor center was built in two separate pieces – one portion was built by Eli Lilly and another portion was built by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. The two buildings were combined to create the current center, but over the years some issues have come up. There are some roof issues that need to be addressed and the HVAC systems to be combined for consistent temperature throughout the center. The building also is dated and needs some work to improve a visitors’ first impression as it doesn’t look as welcoming as it could. Although this location does have importance locally and in Indiana, it also has importance regionally and nationally and updates will help to convey that.

Following recommendations by RATIO Architects, renovations are expected to include an improved gift shop experience and the addition of small food offerings since there aren’t many restaurants in the near

vicinity, the addition of an exterior patio, and renovations of DNR offices that are located on the second floor of the visitor center. Other updates will include some simple changes – like moving a staircase that is in the middle of the room – as well as creating storage spaces and updating kitchen needs for rentals and other programming needs. The restroom facilities also need updates.

The exhibition spaces also will go through transformations. Most of the exhibition space at Angel Mounds was completed in the 1990s, with a more recent addition of Eli Lilly and Glenn Black's story installed a few years ago.

The renovations should be fully completed by September 2024.

Cultural Landscape Report

Susannah Koerber presented information about a cultural landscape report of Angel Mounds, noting the document will give a comprehensive look at the location. The report will indicate what is present on the landscape and how best to preserve, develop and manage the space. ISMHS is working closely with IU to determine research and excavation goals. Susannah noted IU has all excavation rights to the property and keeps artifacts discovered at the property, and IU is also producing an archaeological management plan, which will provide future research direction.

She told board members that the report will allow the museum system to learn a tremendous amount from this process. We already know Angel Mounds was the second largest center of the Mississippian culture in the Midwest, next to Cahokia in Illinois. From A.D. 1000 to 1450, the location was a ceremonial, political and economic hub with architectural features that include several earthworks.

Angel Mounds became a state historic site in 1946 and a National Historic Landmark in 1964. The site currently encompasses 560 acres, of which 450 acres have landmark status. It is recognized as one of the best-preserved Pre-Columbian landscapes in the Midwest. Preservation initially began thanks to Eli Lilly, and the site became the first focus of scientific archaeology in Indiana under Glenn Black.

Liz Sargent with Historic Landscape Architects based out of Charlottesville, Virginia, will manage the project and produce the report. Liz also will work closely with Michele Greenan, Mike Linderman and team throughout the project. During the project, a cultural preservation consultant will interview ISMHS' Native American advisory group and other tribal knowledge-bearers, and ethnobotany consultant will identify indigenous use of plant resources, and a Mississippian context consultant will research and provide context about how Angel Mounds compares to other Mississippian sites, as well as look at other public sites and how they interpret their experiences. This information will be gathered into in-depth, specialized reports.

The timeline for the Angel Mounds project includes planning and research in 2022, infrastructure improvements and construction happening in 2023, and the implementation of experiences and project completion by September 2024.

Meeting adjourned, and board members entered into executive session at 1:36 p.m. The next board meeting will take place on June 8, 2022, from noon to 2 p.m.