

# **Museum Board Memorandum**

City of Arts & Innovation

## TO: METROPOLITAN MUSEUM BOARD DATE: JULY 11, 2018

- FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT
- SUBJECT: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE REGARDING ADMINISTATION AND BUDGET, STAFFING, COLLECTIONS, FACILITIES, MAIN MUSEUM RENOVATION, EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### <u>ISSUE</u>

Receive and file the Director's report.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Receive and file the Director's report regarding administration and budget, staffing, collections, facilities, Main Museum renovation, exhibitions and programs, and community engagement.

#### DISCUSSION

#### Administration and Budget

The Museum's budget for the 2018-2020 biennium, along with the entire Fiscal Year 2018-2020 Biennial City budget, was adopted by City Council without incident on June 12, 2018. The new fiscal year began July 1. A detailed budget report is included in this agenda packet.

#### <u>Staffing</u>

The Museum's offer to a candidate for the position of Curator of Historic Structures has been accepted. The hire will be formally announced when all levels of City review are completed. Concurrently, we regretfully accepted the resignation of Curator of History Dr. Robert Przeklasa, who received an attractive offer for an academic position. He significantly advanced the difficult task of collection assessment in preparation for relocation, and will be recalled with admiration as the curator of the 2017 exhibition *Rising Above*. We continue to work with the City's Human Resources department to move forward with two new positions that will be critical for key tasks that lie ahead, including collections management and developing the exhibitions for reopening.

#### **Collections**

The relocation of the Museum's permanent collections from the downtown site to secure offsite locations continues. Freezing the taxidermy collection is nearing completion; some specimens await removal from exhibit cases. On June 5, 2018, City Council approved the purchase of archival cabinetry for use at the Museum's off-site storage facilities, to aid the process of reconfiguring these spaces to increase capacity. The equipment is currently queued for

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production; delivery and installation are expected in October. An additional order for custom shelving and a compactor units is working its way through City purchasing processes.

Policy revisions continue, as well as development and refinement of procedural checklists and appropriate forms for use in recurring collections processing (accessions, deaccessions, loans, and similar). Research is under way on collections management software options that will be more flexible, user-friendly, and economical.

#### Facilities

Several formal and informal discussions followed receipt of the April 30 structural engineer's report on Harada House, and historic preservation architects have been involved in some of these discussions. To a degree, these discussions have clarified the path forward, although the next step for Harada House remains, which is the launch of a significant fundraising campaign. The Harada House Foundation is undertaking this task in partnership with Museum staff.

A panel is currently being fabricated that will be installed at the Harada House-Robinson House site to acknowledge the contributions of lead donors to the campaign to purchase Robinson House.

The caretaker's apartment in the Heritage House carriage house has been converted into office space. There is an immediate need to identify alternate office space for all staff, but it is projected that two staff will be permanently located in these new offices.

Staff were occupied with precautionary object protection measures in advance of termite treatment of Heritage House and Robinson House.

#### Main Museum Renovation

Renovation and expansion planning continues. We anticipate issuance of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for an architect imminently. At a special meeting of the Cultural Heritage Board held on May 30, 2018, as well as a Town Hall meeting held on June 21, 2018, the Museum Director shared preliminary ideas about the impending renovation and expansion. The brief presentations included a summary of the building's current challenges, functionalities required to operate at maximum potential, and examples of successful museum expansion projects from around the world.

The Museum entered into a lease for additional warehouse space near the existing offsite storage facilities that will enable storage of exhibitry and furnishings during the interim reconstruction period, as well as accommodating three to four staff in temporary offices.

#### Exhibitions and Programs

Museum staff participated in the downtown Innovation Fair on June 2, 2018. Education staff are partnering with RUSD's summer geology camp, a program that substantially serves Title 1 schools.

Martin Sanchez's sculpture *Pretty Lady* will be located at Fairmount Park for the entire summer. *Uncovering Ancient Mexico: The Mystery of Tlatilco* is on view at the Riverside Art Museum through December 30, 2018.

#### Community Engagement, Partnerships, and Collaborations

The process of soliciting public input on the Museum's future is ongoing. Advisory teams are taking shape to assist staff in the areas of building design, exhibitions / programs, and branding / marketing; every attempt has been made to ensure that these teams are broadly representative.

Staff are specifically soliciting input on the dozens of exhibition possibilities that have arisen from many meetings and discussions; a decision regarding which to pursue for reopening must be made soon to allow sufficient research and planning time.

As part of a federal grant made to the City to advance understanding and awareness of African-American civil rights history in Riverside, RMM staff have assisted by preparing collections management documents for the Riverside African-American Historical Society (RAAHS). RAAHS staff are reviewing this material.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by:Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum DirectorApproved by:Lea Deesing, Assistant City Manager