



Museum Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: METROPOLITAN MUSEUM BOARD **DATE: OCTOBER 10, 2018**

FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE REGARDING ADMINISTRATION AND BUDGET, STRATEGIC PLANNING, STAFFING, COLLECTIONS, FACILITIES, MAIN MUSEUM RENOVATION, EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ISSUE

Receive and file the Director's Update regarding administration and budget, strategic planning, staffing, collections, facilities, main museum renovation, exhibits and programs, and community engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Metropolitan Museum Board receive and file the Director's Update regarding administration and budget, strategic planning, staffing, collections, facilities, main museum renovation, exhibits and programs, and community engagement.

DISCUSSION

Administration and Budget

Museum staff are at work with the Finance Department to justify retention of carryover sums identified from the prior FY, noting that unusual one-time needs exist in the context of the renovation and expansion.

Strategic Planning

Revision of the Museum's Strategic Plan continues, with a revised plan for 2019-2024 soon to be available for review by staff, Metropolitan Museum Board, and other stakeholders. The Museum continues on track for this final draft to be completed by the end of 2018.

Staffing

The new Curator of Historic Structures, Lisa Masengale, began her duties on Monday, September 24, 2018. Interviews will begin imminently for the position of Curator of Natural History. The Museum has obtained approval to proceed with posting the position of Collections Registrar. Further discussion of long-term staffing needs is planned for the current meeting's agenda.

Collections

Research on collections management software continues, complicated by a preferred vendor's schedule of release for their updated version. The physical move of the collection continues in advance of new cabinetry delivery. In the wake of termite tenting at Heritage House in August,

collection objects were cleaned and condition-reported, and substitutions and rotations were made to send some objects back to storage for a “rest” from light and particulate exposure. With our new Curator of Historic Structures on board, more progress on the collections move and stewardship is expected, including encapsulating and moving the fumigated Harada House siding to secure indoor storage. The Museum is grateful to the Police Department for permitting munitions expert Erik Dorothy to assist the staff in reviewing the historic firearms collection, determining the safety of individual objects, and providing staff with safe handling instructions.

Facilities

The General Services Department oversaw rebuilding of the crumbling front porch and railings at Heritage House; the refreshed entrance was completed in time for the annual Chinese Moon Festival on September 23, 2018. The next Heritage House task is to address spalling and disintegrating brickwork at foundation level. New landscaping contractors have begun their duties at both the Main Museum and Heritage House.

The Harada House Foundation was successful in their first grant application—\$15,000 from Metabolic Studio. The grant will fund three teams of architects plus cost estimators to provide detailed restoration options for Harada House that will include hard numbers; these estimates are anticipated by year-end. The restoration of Robinson House with CDBG funding is proceeding through its approval stages.

Main Museum Renovation

The Request for Proposal (RFP) for a renovation architect was issued on August 30, 2018, and followed by two amendments. The site walk took place on September 27, 2018, and the final submission deadline is October 25, 2018. Board members Mary Hughes and Todd Carpenter accompanied Robyn Peterson to meet with Stephanie Harvey in the Marketing Department for an initial productive discussion in advance of rebranding the Museum, which will occur on a parallel track with renovation.

Exhibitions and Programs

A successful event marking the centenary of the judicial decision upholding the Harada family's right to own their home was held on September 17, 2018. Harada Centenary Day was attended by about 125 people, including three Harada family members. The event featured an engaging list of speakers and an opportunity to celebrate a civil rights turning point. The event took place at the Harada House-Robinson House location, although Harada House remains closed to the public, reminding attendees of the urgent need to proceed with restoration.

The annual Chinese Moon Festival occurred successfully at Heritage House on September 23, 2018, with attendees enjoying traditional Chinese storytelling, food, handcraft activities, and moon-gazing.

Community Engagement, Partnerships, and Collaborations

Meetings continue with the three community advisory teams. About 150 responses to a manual survey to gauge public interest in a wide array of temporary exhibition possibilities has been collated; the City's Marketing Department will assist the Museum in converting the survey to an electronic format that will assist with distribution and collation. A productive initial meeting also took place in August with a new informal gathering of cultural institution leaders.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the receipt and file of the Director's Update.

Prepared by: Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
Approved by: Lea Deesing, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney