



Metropolitan Museum Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: METROPOLITAN MUSEUM BOARD **DATE: DECEMBER 11, 2019**

FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE REGARDING THE MAIN MUSEUM RENOVATION AND EXPANSION, HISTORIC HOUSES, COLLECTIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS, AND MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

ISSUE:

Receive and file the Director's Update regarding the main museum renovation and expansion, historic houses, collections, exhibitions and programs, and marketing and communications.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Metropolitan Museum Board receive and file the Director's Update regarding the Strategic Plan, main museum renovation and expansion, historic houses, collections, exhibitions and programs, and marketing and communications.

DISCUSSION:

Main Museum Renovation and Expansion

At a workshop on October 10, 2019, the Museum's architects, Pfeiffer Partners, provided very workable options for moving forward with the renovation and expansion. Members of the Director's Design Advisory Team were also present. In anticipation of budget challenges, staff had already reduced original square footage requirements by 18%; the options the architects presented reflected those changes. The most promising layout at present replaces the post-1912 additions on the rear of the building with an addition that represents a modest net expansion of about 15%. The Museum is not yet able to announce when options will be ready to present for public input. Staff plan to introduce the project and its history to the newly elected City Council members soon.

Historic Houses

Heritage House saw very strong visitation for the annual Moon Festival; the 1,250 who attended may have been a record for the event. Also successfully concluded in October 2019 was a reprise of the Behind the Black Veil tours that highlight Victorian mourning traditions. Following demand for the always-sold-out spring teas in the Heritage House garden, the Riverside Museum Associates' volunteer coordinators of the teas scheduled an additional fall event in early November 2019; it was also a resounding success.

The issue of the falling block wall between Heritage House and the neighbor to the east was believed to have been completed; however, the wall began to disintegrate less than two (2) months after the contractors' departure. Staff are pursuing a final solution to this longstanding issue.

Staff continue to analyze the rehabilitation plans for Harada House provided by Architectural Resources Group and IS Architecture. In order to move ahead with fundraising requirements and meet important near-term grant application deadlines, a fundraising campaign goal was crafted with reference to the more costly of the two (2) plans. The Museum issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to engineering firms for a structural assessment of Robinson House. A revised project schedule is in draft for that site, and staff expect the selected engineer to be at work shortly after the first of the year. A team from the City Manager's office and the Director had a productive meeting on November 1, 2019 with Congressman Mark Takano regarding prospects for support of the Harada House rehabilitation project.

Collections

In November, staff submitted a revised and improved application for funding to the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). If successful, the Museum will be able to hire a fulltime Collections Cataloger for three (3) years, who will assist Katie Gove, Collections Registrar, in the massive task of bringing the documentation and storage conditions for the Museum's collections up to standard. Staff continue to move forward to obtain new collections management software and are aiming to begin data migration by or before January 2020.

Exhibitions and Programs

Pre-design planning continues. A meeting with the Directors' Program Advisory Team helped hone the approach to the broad topics that are in development. The process is reaching the stage when involvement of an exhibition designer and design firm will be beneficial.

Public programs for winter include Christmas Open House at Heritage House (December 8, 2019) and First Sundays on the front steps of the main museum building. The Museum participated in the Long Night of Arts and Innovation as well as the Innovation Fair held at the airport on October 19, 2019.

Marketing and Communications

The rebranding process continues slowly. Options developed to date do not yet reflect the identity of the Museum effectively to staff or the Marketing Advisory Team. By the time of this Board meeting, ideas from the advanced graphic design students at California Baptist University, under the leadership of instructor Mike Berger, will have been presented. At that point, staff will need to work aggressively to reach a satisfactory decision regarding the direction the Museum will take; there are communication needs that await the new brand. The Museum's primary mode of communication remains social media where there is high interest in posts that relate to the collections and the continuing process of packing and moving collections.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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