



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: AUGUST 26, 2020**

FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE REGARDING BOARD NEWS, COVID-19 IMPACTS, HISTORIC HOUSES, STAFFING, COLLECTIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, AND VOLUNTEER AND SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

ISSUE:

Receive and file the Director's Update regarding Board news, COVID-19 impacts, historic houses, staffing, collections, exhibitions and programs, marketing and communications, and volunteer and support opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board receive and file the Director's Update regarding Board news, COVID-19 impacts, historic houses, staffing, collections, exhibitions and programs, marketing and communications, and volunteer and support opportunities.

DISCUSSION:

Board News

At the Museum of Riverside Board's (Board) first virtual meeting on June 24, 2020, the Board received a refresher from the City Attorney's Office regarding the Brown Act, Sunshine Ordinance, and City Code of Ethics and Conduct. The Board recommended forwarding to the Board of Ethics a request to create an acknowledgement form to be signed by Board and Commission members to acknowledge receipt of updated Code of Ethics and Conduct (RMC 2.78) documents. Subsequent to the meeting, staff confirmed that the request is a procedural matter rather than a proposed revision to the Code of Ethics and Conduct, and as such it will be addressed by the City Clerk as part of the swearing-in and onboarding process.

Updated name badges for all Board members will be mailed to all Board members shortly, if you have not received them already.

COVID-19 Impacts

City of Riverside leadership continues to follow a data-driven response to the fluctuating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The City remains under a local state of emergency declared in March,

and mandated closures at the state and local levels include museums. Museums are in Stage 4 of the Governor's four-stage reopening plan.

At the end of June, staff implemented the Museum Department's return-to-work plan, which included modest workspace modifications, signage, enhanced sanitation protocols, and ensuring that all staff workstations were audio- and video-equipped for Microsoft Teams meetings. The Museum Department's adaptations were less onerous than was true for many other City employees as we had already been physically distanced across our seven sites. Two staff continue to telecommute most of the time.

Visitation and public participation numbers for FY2019-2020—already impacted by the lack of availability of the main downtown site—were as sharply affected as anticipated. In-person program participation was 5,854 for the year compared to 24,605 in FY2018-2019 (noting that attendance for the 2018 Tlatilco exhibition offered at the Riverside Art Museum's site was not matched by another major exhibition hosted off-site). For the first time, however, the Museum tracked its social media reach, and the total was an impressive 743,147 in FY2019-2020.

Historic Houses

Small maintenance projects continue at Heritage House with one goal being to ensure that the house continues to appear occupied during closure. Heritage House is normally closed during July and August. A reopening date has not been set.

A conversation between Congressional Representative Mark Takano and State Assemblyman José Medina was recorded at Harada House on August 14, 2020. The clips will be released from this conversation between two elected officials committed to the core civil rights narrative of Harada House. Official notice is anticipated to be received in September regarding the nomination of Harada House for California state landmark status and inclusion of the house on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "11 Most Endangered Historic Places" list.

Staff are moving forward with a proposal to address the Robinson House project that will reconcile historic preservation with programming and budgetary demands. An extension for the CDBG funding has been approved. Sampling for a soil assessment took place on August 5, 2020.

Staffing

As of June 26, 2020, all six (6) Museum Department staff who had been on mandatory stay-at-home orders returned to work. Their return followed the City's plans in response to the stages of reopening issued by the state.

The staff often supplements its own small workforce with project-oriented university interns, but due to the pandemic, the Museum Department is unable to consider hosting interns for the fall term nor is there information regarding if internship programs are available to students for the coming term.

Collections

Migration of collection data to the new software platform (TMS Collections) is complete, and collections and education staff received training during the first week of August.

Progress continues on the draft of a Collections Development Plan that will describe and delimit the Museum's collecting focus. Collections Registrar Katie Grim (formerly Gove) has revised internal forms and processes relating to gift and loan processing. She also developed protocols for processing born-digital media.

The Collections Committee reviewed and advised on two new collections formed during the spring; a separate report about them is included in this packet.

Exhibitions and Programs

Programs are cancelled through December at this point, and future cancellations will be announced if and when they're determined. This includes the Moon Festival at Heritage House, the fall tea, Black Veil, First Sundays, school tours, Christmas Open House, and the Multicultural Council's Day of Inclusion.

Staff are researching software and hardware necessary for the development of virtual tours and digitized programs. Priority will be on developing tours of Heritage House and Harada House and upon digitizing the most in-demand, regionally relevant educational programs. This project will provide distance learning resources to assist schools in meeting curriculum mandates while they struggle to mitigate the negative impacts of school closures. The Museum has requested a small share of a generous CARES Act grant awarded to the City of Riverside to address a wide range of COVID-19-related impacts.

Marketing and Communications

After considering the strongly consistent response received to the rebranding options during sessions conducted prior to the pandemic closures, the Museum opted to move forward without further delay with full development of the preferred option. While additional audience testing had been planned, it is unknown how much longer it would have been before in-person meetings permitting the sharing of artists' presentation boards could occur. Finalization of the agreement with the California Baptist University student whose brand concept was favored is nearing completion. Staff will report further on this process at the next meeting. Completion is planned by the end of December. Thanks are due to Board members Mary Hughes and Todd Carpenter who have participated frequently throughout this process. They will continue to be on the "core team" that sees this project through. A new script for the website is in development, which awaits development of the new brand before it can be uploaded.

Social media continues to be the Museum's primary method for sharing collections and other content. Please note as well that the Museum occasionally releases an electronic newsletter. Three lists are identified for the Museum, which are planned to be merged.

Sign up here: <https://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/CARIVERSIDE/subscriber/edit>.

Volunteer and Support Opportunities

As of this writing, the Museum Department continues to be unable to schedule volunteers to work on site. Volunteers are essential to the operation of Heritage House, so the house must remain closed until this restriction is lifted. This is unfortunate circumstance, as a new team of collections-specific volunteers was just getting up to speed prior to the pandemic to assist the Collections Registrar, Katie Grim, with collections inventory and records digitization tasks.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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