



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: APRIL 28, 2021**

FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT **WARDS: ALL**

SUBJECT: DIRECTOR UPDATE REGARDING ADVISORY TEAMS, COVID-19 IMPACTS, HISTORIC HOUSES, STAFFING, COLLECTIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS, AND VOLUNTEER AND SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

ISSUE:

Receive and file an update from the Museum Director regarding advisory teams, COVID-19 impacts, historic houses, staffing, collections, exhibitions and programs, and volunteer and support opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board receive and file an update from the Museum Director regarding advisory teams, COVID-19 impacts, historic houses, staffing, collections, exhibitions and programs, and volunteer and support opportunities.

DISCUSSION:

Advisory Teams

The following activity occurred in the staff-level advisory teams. These teams meet on varying schedules. The pandemic continues to affect the meeting schedules for some teams.

- Collections Committee – The committee did not meet in March. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held April 28, 2021, immediately prior to the Museum Board meeting.
- Harada House Project Team – The team's next regular meeting will be held Friday, June 4, 2021. Members of this team with special expertise have been invited to serve on the review committee for selection of an architect for Phase I of the Harada House rehabilitation.
- Branding and Marketing Team – The entire committee has not met recently, although a core group tracked development of the new brand over the past few months. A virtual meeting for the entire team will be scheduled in spring 2021. The Museum's new brand will be presented to the City Manager's office staff and Council members as a prerequisite to the Board presentation. All of the stages are necessary before we can implement our new brand.

- Design Team – Activity suspended.
- Program Team – Activity suspended.

COVID-19 Impacts

City sites continue to re-open in stages. The Museum anticipates resuming normal Heritage House operational hours on September 10, 2021. Staff are at work on meeting necessary requirements to open to the public, such as a protective barrier at the front door admissions desk. Limitations on group size and other adjustments will be instituted.

Historic Houses

Review committees have been formed to respond to submittals that will result from the two Request for Proposal (RFP) processes that are under way for Harada House and Robinson House.

During the first quarter of 2021, modest progress occurred toward the Harada House fundraising campaign goal. Research on private foundations has resulted in learning that a few large entities that had initially appeared to be likely prospects no longer fund bricks-and-mortar projects.

Staff are gathering estimates for several site projects at Heritage House, including resurfacing of the drive and parking lot, repainting of the house, and work on the paths. Projects that will improve accessibility and safety have been prioritized.

Staffing

Three interns from UCR (since January) are at various stages of their formal internships, and one or more may continue as volunteers beyond their term. Inventory and digitization of Harada House Family archives and educational program support remain the main projects available to interns.

Profiles of Museum staff continue this month with Katie Grim, Collections Registrar. Dr. Douglas J. Long, Curator of Natural History, will present at the May meeting.

Collections

The majority of collections-related projects are long-term. Examples include inventory, digitization, photo-documentation, cataloging, and rehousing. While staff would be delighted to report completion of any one of these activities, it is worth keeping in mind that many museums spend many years bringing collections up to standard in these areas. Staff continue to make progress on all of them even when this report does not include a specific update on each.

Museums nationwide are beginning to reopen gradually. This includes the Palm Springs Art Museum where a painting from the Museum's collection by Cahuilla artist Gerald Clarke has been on loan since before the pandemic. The museum has extended the loan and encourage Board members to make the trip to Palm Springs to see the exhibition.

Exhibitions and Programs

A mobile unit for micro-exhibitions to be installed at various (and changing) sites in the community is in production. Designed to be more visually interesting than simply a pedestal with a vitrine, this unit will be the first of a possible three, should it accomplish our goals. The modular unit will accommodate digital content and an interactive. While the visual below suggests that it will be programmed with the Harada story, the initial unit will likely be programmed with a story related

to the Casa Blanca neighborhood, to be located in that neighborhood. Over time, different content will be installed for different locations around the City.



Heritage House will reopen with an exhibition called *Catharine's Closet*, which will feature Victorian costumes of the period when Catharine Bettner had the house designed and built. A special program by a historic costume expert is planned to accompany it.

Staff continue to become more proficient at developing digital programs. As we advance toward full approval of our new brand, staff intend to initiate a Museum-specific YouTube channel where these programs can “reside,” along with sharing them through the City’s YouTube channel and the Museum’s own eventual redesigned website. A video on the entomology collection and how-to videos for the grab bags prepared by Museum education staff for the virtual Insect Fair were released during the virtual Insect Fair, April 12-16, 2021.

Volunteer and Support Opportunities

The Museum is able to accommodate limited volunteer involvement and returning volunteers may need to renew their Livescans.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by:
Approved by:

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