

Ontario Museum of History & Art Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
March 28, 2023

Page 1 of 6

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Chris Kueng called the Museum Board of Trustees meeting to order at 6:00 PM

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Led by President Kueng

**ROLL CALL**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	President	Chris Kueng
	Board Members:	Randy Del Turco
		Jerry Weems
	Council Liaison	Debra Dorst-Porada
	Executive Director	Helen McAlary
	Museum, Arts & Culture Director	Marissa Kuchek
	Curator of Collection	Michelle Sifuentes
	Administrative Technician	Kari Kessinger
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Board Member	Rick Caughman
		Shannon Gerstheimer
	Museum Associate Liaison	Leslie Sherwood-James

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

January 24, 2023, were approved by a 3-0 vote with a motion from Board Member Randy Del Turco and second by Board Member Jerry Weems.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**CITY COUNCIL LIAISON DEBRA DORST-PORADA**

None

Museum Director Marissa Kuchek informed that there are three new Collections assistants at the Museum. Curator of Collection Michelle Sifuentes introduced the Museum's new Collections Assistants.

**STAFF REPORTS**

Director's Report

**Education:**

Ontario Museum of History & Art Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes

March 28, 2023

Page 2 of 6

Director Kuchek reported the Museum hosted a hybrid (in person and virtual) history talk on Kaiser Steel with Ric A. Dias at the end of January.

Last month's programs included the celebration of Black History Month with a silk-screening workshop hosted by Skool Boiz on February 4th. Art by local black artists was on display. The opening of the current exhibit *We the People* was held in conjunction with this quarter's Art Walk where over 500 individuals attended on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

On March 4<sup>th</sup> the Museum hosted an artist panel with seven of the artists from the current exhibit *We the People* moderated by Curator of Exhibits Leslie Matamoros, Assistant Curator of Exhibits Samantha Herrera, and guest curator Riea Owens.

Director Kuchek also reported on the following:

- In the last few months, the Museum hosted school tours with Ontario High School, Central Language Academy and Bon View Elementary all in partnership with CCMA.
- The education team has also been working on completing the final interactive component to the new exhibit *Built on Water* by collecting the final recordings for *Community Voices on Water*.
- The Museum conducted beta testing on the *Water Keeper* application for *Built on Water*.
- Upcoming education programs include: Mindful Art on April 7<sup>th</sup> and a *We the People* Art Cart Take Over with artist Cindita on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Exhibits:**

Director Kuchek reported that the current exhibit *We the People: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* opened February 2, 2023 with the assistance of two guest curators, Riea Owens and Dr. Patricia Jessup-Woodlin. Since its opening the exhibit has been featured in the Press Enterprise, Daily Bulletin, University of La Vern's *Campus Times*, NPR and KUCR radio.

Upcoming: 12<sup>th</sup> Ontario Open scheduled for May 18, 2023-July 30,2023

**STAFF REPORTS**

**Collections:** Collections Move to Bon View Offsite Storage

Collections Curator, Michelle Sifuentes began by summarizing a report from 2018 when the Museum hired Dave Harvey to do an assessment of the collection space which resulted in the need for 17,000 sq. ft. to provide for collection growth. With the addition of the new exhibit *Built on Water* roughly 2,500 artifacts were removed from the Museum's vaults. In 2020 plans were created for an offsite collection's storage facility amounting to 2,500 sq. ft. of space at 1333 S. Bon View.

Museum Curator, Sifuentes presented on the development and layout of the new offsite storage facility. She explained that the storage space is a room within the warehouse facility.

Ontario Museum of History & Art Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
March 28, 2023

Page 3 of 6

Curator Sifuentes reported on the multiple steps it took to empty the Museum's vaults, relocate items to new storage, pack, and move items to the offsite location. The collections team photographed, packed and prepped, and catalogued all items. The Museum hired Merchants Building Maintenance, LLC to install shelving units and archives units in the offsite location. The Art Collective was hired to crate and transport items from the Museum to the new facility from February 1<sup>st</sup> through the 6<sup>th</sup>. Curator Sifuentes explained that the collections team is currently working on organizing the new space. The three rooms will be divided as follows: room one will be the workspace, room two has five archival units and eleven shelving units, and room three will house large artifacts.

President Kueng asked various questions regarding the physical structure and future for the storage facility.

Curator Sifuentes explained the space set up and outlined the plans for inventory. She explained that inventory will start in May 2023 and will take about two years to finish. She explained the team caught some discrepancies that need to be fixed and the plan they have enacted to correct the problem.

Board Member Randy del Turco asked if the new storage facility will be filled.

Curator Sifuentes explained that the team will move as many items from the Museum to the offsite storage while still maintaining proper standards, and that this space will be used as a model for future spaces.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Mid-Year Strategic Plan**

Director Kuchek presented a revisit on the one-year action plan discussed last October to highlight where the Museum stands at midyear. Director Kuchek reviewed the Museum's mission and vision as well as the five key areas of focus, enhancing the physical environment, enhancing diverse communities, presenting a dynamic experience, develop additional resources, and achieve museum accreditation.

Director Kuchek presented on each strategic area of the strategic plan and related goals for this fiscal year:

Enhancing the Physical Environment:

Most of the goals for this year are almost complete. Once dry wall touch ups are finished the *Built on Water* gallery should be completed. The exterior lighting of the Museum has been fixed and the partial collections move to offsite storage has been completed. She asked in terms of physical environments does the board have any initial ideas on what our priorities for next year should be?

President Kueng asked the group to consider an issue the Museum encountered with the building and basement leaking.

Ontario Museum of History & Art Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
March 28, 2023

Page 4 of 6

Director Kuchek explained that the Museum is working with Public Works about making that a priority for next year, and shared that in order to waterproof they will need to dig and excavate areas of the foundation around the building.

Council Liaison Debra Dorst-Porada asked isn't this a part of the building master plan?

Director Kuchek responded yes; it is. The basement waterproofing is in the master plan for the facility but not in the strategic plan.

President Kueng reiterated that the basement should be a priority because it is a safety issue.

Director Kuchek, President Kueng, and Council Liaison Dorst-Porada also discussed the following as it relates to the Strategic Plan Update:

- The safety of staff members and the addition of an ADA compliant freight elevator that will be constructed to be used on all 3 levels of the Museum as well as open to the outside of the building. This will allow for movement of collection items.
- The order of priority items in the master plan. Priority list is as follows: basement waterproofing, installation of freight elevator and seismic work on the Museum roofing. All these items are contingent on both funding as well as the movement of collection items to create space.
- The upgrades to the HVAC units have been completed in the South Wing of the Museum including *Built on Water*, *Gem of the Foothills* as well as the Carlson Education Classroom. HVAC has been added to the offsite Collections Storage facility and plans are in place to install new units in the North Wing of the Museum during the summer.

Engaging Diverse Communities:

- Technological advancement in the form of translated self-guided stops are in the works for *Built on Water*. These stops would provide translation of the exhibit in both English and Spanish.
- The potential of shifting workspaces for staff members to increase the resources available to the public. The move would be contingent on an increase in offsite collections space, the inclusion of an elevator, and the amount of space available for staff.
- The inclusion of the different diverse communities in Ontario. Specifically, the inclusion of Ontario Ranch and the ability to outreach the growing Asian American population in that region. Executive Director Helen McAlary suggested that the Museum should create arts and culture events that would specifically connect to this community.
- Director Kuchek explained the different diverse connections the Museum has made this year in the development of the *Built on Water* exhibits. She explained that the exhibit showcases indigenous art, and the collections staff is working on identifying and returning indigenous objects. As well as building partnerships through the development of the exhibit.

Presenting a Dynamic Experience:

Ontario Museum of History & Art Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
March 28, 2023

Page 5 of 6

- Director Kuchek explained the focus for this year in the category of dynamic experiences is growing the attendance of the museum and the educational programming. A heavy value was placed on increasing student participation in tours, developing a curriculum for *Built on Water*, docent training and the annual staff retreat. All of this is designed to continue the upward trend of ensuring professionalism both in staff as well as docents to develop the education programs.

Develop Additional Resources:

- Director Kuchek highlighted the new resources for the museum so far this year such as the partnerships with local water agencies, Indigenous groups, local schools, and the hiring of a PR consultant.

Achieving Museum Accreditation:

- Lastly, Director Kuchek outlined the accreditation process of mid-year. From the submission of a self-study to the multiple Public Works projects to get the Museum up to standard. The new dates for accreditation site visit are August 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> 2023.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**MUSEUM ASSOCIATES COMMENTS**

Director Kuchek shared that last week the Ontario's Elks lodge donated \$5,000 to the Museum Associates.

Board Member Jerry Weems shares a new member will be joining the Museum Associates, John Machado.

**MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMENTS**

Board Member Del Turco commented on the terrific work of Curator Sifuentes and her team for the collections move. He stated that it makes the Museum look more professional and now staff know what they have at their fingertips in terms of collection items.

President Kueng said that even finding errors in the cataloging of the collection items and now saying 'we have to fix this now for forever' and implementing the process is a great step.

Board Member Weems stated he likes that there is a plan in place if changes need to be made for collection items.

Ontario Museum of History & Art Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
March 28, 2023

Page 6 of 6

Board Member Del Turco thanked Director Kuchek for her presentation on the Strategic Plan. He thinks it is a great idea to review the presentation before the site visit, so all members are on board.

Board Member Weems stated that he feels it is important to appeal to diverse cultures because they do come and participate with the Museum. The Museum has a lot of activities for the kids, and this grabs people's attention. He believes engagement with the children is a winner. He stated that the Museum's inclusion of indigenous tribes in *Built on Water* gallery is great.

President Kueng said it is a very different museum today then it was before. And so, we have come a long way and that's what he wants to share with the accreditation team. He said the Museum is doing some wonderful things.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

Built on Water Walk-through + VR Update- May  
Board Election April 2023

**NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday April 25, 2023 at 6:00pm in Historic Council Chambers

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Kueng closed the Board of Trustees Meeting in honor and memory of Steve Thomas, a longtime community member, very active in the arts, and former employee here at the Museum. Motion to adjourn was made by Board Member Randy Del Turco with a second by Board Member Jerry Weems with a 3-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 PM.

Submitted:



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Kari Kessinger  
Administrative Technician

APPROVED:



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Chris Kueng  
President