

Edmonds South Snohomish County Historical Society (ESSCHS)

Preserving and Sharing Our Heritage

Minutes from April 2, 2018 Board Meeting

Approved May 6, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 5 PM by President Jerry Freeland.

Jan Flom and Sandra Butterfield were excused. Barb Fahey was delayed and arrived at 5:15 at which point 13 of the 15 Board members were present and a quorum was established. Museum Director Katie Kelly was also excused due to her inclusion in the Mayor's delegation to Hekinan Japan.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The balance sheet and P&L financial report had been sent in advance to all board members. (Attached to printed minutes) Not much had changed since the Board retreat on March 24th.

APPROVAL: Motion to approve by Ann Wood, second by Linda Borofka, unanimously approved.

MINUTES: It had been difficult to get revised draft minutes out in advance of the meeting because of the short turnaround time since the Board retreat. The following corrections and additions were noted:

- 1) All funds included in the "Total Bank Accounts" line are liquid. (Though the Charles Schwab account holds investments they can easily be sold and liquidated at any time.)
- 2) On page 5 under the bullet points regarding where help is needed by the Financial Committee, "Safety and Security plans for Museum, Storage and Markets" should be added.
- 3) Two typos: On page 5 Dean Averill's name was listed as Avery. On Page 9 it should be Emily Scott not Elizabeth.

APPROVAL: Motion for approval as corrected made by Sandra Allbery, second by Dean Averill, unanimously approved. A corrected version of the draft will be sent out and posted on website.

RAINY DAY FUNDS: Dave Buelow explained that the formula he sent out in February establishing the desired amount for the Rainy Day Fund was based on possible "worse case" projected deficits which could occur if market income and other sources of income were lost. The dollar amount at this time is estimated to be \$85,000 per year. As approved in March the fund will hold enough to cover a two year deficit so the total set aside will be \$170,000. This is a reserve fund not a restricted fund. The policy with the formula was sent out after the March 24 meeting. After the policy is approved, it will become part of the complete financial policies document. Dave will incorporate it into the existing document and send out the updated version to all board members.

APPROVAL: Motion to approve made by Teresa Wippel, second by Kathleen Ihnken, unanimously approved.

VISION PLAN: Jerry then indicated that our primary reason for meeting this time was to gather ideas for updating and improving the vision plan that is currently in place. This had been on the agenda for the workshop meeting but time ran out before it could be addressed. She then turned the meeting over to Barb Fahey.

The vision plan currently in place was developed from an extensive brainstorming workshop held in 2016. It contains strategies and goals that are to be worked on and hopefully accomplished by 2023. The working document has 25 bullet points describing various "desirable outcomes" that will ideally be

realized by implementing specific strategies to bring about constant improvements to the society and museum. They are listed under headings that identify where responsibility for implementation rests.

In 2017 the document was reviewed and assessments made regarding progress and priorities that should be worked. These were identified through the use of color coding that has made the document very complicated.

Barb noted that she had received advance comments from some board members regarding ways to improve the document which included

- Opinions on what should be emphasized as goals for 2018
- Items that should be removed since they are not realistic or because they had been accomplished
- A request to try to consolidate some of the bullet points.

(A compilation of these comments will follow these minutes and were part of the meeting by inference and reference.)

The task of trying to address all of the vision bullet points was deemed to be impossible given the amount of time available so it was decided to not spend a lot of time on the items related to governance and finance because much of the work of the last two years has brought about lots of progress in these areas. It is now time to focus on the items that really addressed our mission and establish our value to the community.

A great deal of discussion then followed regarding various bullet points that deal with the collection, the museum and community outreach. Following is a very brief summary of major important discussion points. They are not necessarily in the order they were addressed at the meeting, but provide critical information that should help define the areas that need to be worked on in the coming years and potential courses of action.

COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

The vision plan calls for:

- 1) Sufficient and appropriate staffing so a second person is knowledgeable about the collections and operations and could fill in absent the Director.
 - A second staff position has been established as a part time collections manager. Should that position be made a full time position? What is still left to be done related to the management of the collection?
 - Briana, who fills this position described the huge task still ahead to get the collection completely inventoried, complete the Collections Policies Document, establish ownership of all the items, and determining what should be deaccessioned and what are “found items” that don’t really belong in the collection.
 - The collection covers items from the time period of 1872 to 2018 but is not well balanced. Efforts must be made to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the collection and develop strategies to enhance it with an emphasis on earlier and more recent time periods
- 2) Recognition as a resource for documenting history from its beginnings up to present day and making it available to the public.
 - Additional tasks could include archiving documents and creating a data base of documents available through the website.

- Some focus should be placed on Native American history. Efforts should be made to partner with the tribes who have their own museums to bring in exhibits that may even be helpful to the schools that have this as part of the curriculum.
 - Work toward making resources available on the website that will support this curriculum need.
- 3) Making sure the collections are well housed
- There is major concern in this area. The current storage facility is substandard for the appropriate storage of our collection. Gaps under doors prevent a sealed environment. Bugs can get in. It is impossible to control humidity. Temperatures fluctuate greatly with the different seasons. With that having been said, it is the best we could find and afford at the time when we were searching for a new storage location in 2015. The market is even tighter now and nothing out there would offer much improvement. The only way to improve the situation would be to build something which meets our requirements. Yet another concern is the possibility we might be forced out of the location we now have. There is only 1 1/5 years left on the lease and though we have an option to renew for 5 more years, the rental rate is not locked in. A greatly increased raise in rent could make it impossible to stay there. But moving sets up a whole other set of issues. Every time the collection is moved it has to be re-inventoried. We are still trying to complete that job from this last move.
- 4) Make the museum a “must-see” attraction, update lower level.
- The lower level must be updated sooner, rather than later. Though a committee has been formed to plan for the celebration of the 50th anniversary in 2023 that will include a complete renovation, it is desirable to make some lower level improvements immediately. Suggestions include creating an area for a fire department display. There are many items available from the original Edmonds Fire Department. Display could include the unclaimed peddle car.
 - Interactive experiences should be a part of every exhibit in the upper level.
 - Great efforts have been made to make it possible for visitors to operate the train display, but so far have not been successful. There are people still trying to make it happen.
- 5) The creation of satellite locations.
- We need to move forward on this, but chose locations that really make sense. We should not try to locate displays throughout all of South Snohomish County. We should start by working in partnership with other organizations to present their history such as at Swedish (formerly Steven’s) Hospital.
 - We might also be able to partner with other societies to supplement their exhibits by loaning items and get recognition for it.
 - This goes back to the issue of documenting ownership of our items. We can’t loan anything or place it in an exhibit until we have proof we have the rights to it.
- 6) Continue collecting oral histories.
- This is of high importance for many reasons and should be accelerated. But there are significant problems in making it happen. Volunteers are in critical need to fulfill several tasks beyond actually filming the histories. It takes many hours of advance contact before the process takes place and afterward more hours to edit and upload the end product. We have 11 interviewers but only one person working on the other facets of this program. That causes a big backlog of work.

- 7) Be engaged in strategic partnerships.
- There has been discussion about reaching out to the other communities in South Snohomish County to offer assistance in building their history story and/or developing exhibits. This might be a way to raise awareness of our existence and to attract new supporters and volunteers.
 - Caution must be used so that we don't over reach our capacity.
 - Efforts must be offered as collaborations so there is no perception we want to take over.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Vision Plan calls for:

- 8) Developing a base of enthusiastic volunteers that are well trained and appreciated.
- This is the biggest need of the organization right now. A lot of time was taken at the Board retreat to address this matter. The things that were discussed and defined as part of an action strategy will be incorporated into the vision plan.
 - Among the most critical need is more docents. Many slots are now unfilled each month causing limited access to the two levels or the closure of the museum without warning.
 - It would be highly desirable to be open at least on evening a week and more hours on the weekends for greater access for working people and families.
- 9) An active, engaged membership.
- We need to rethink our policies regarding membership. The membership committee will meet and come up with a plan to redefine the membership program.

The meeting ended with the Board setting 6 specific areas to focus on in 2018/2019

- Volunteer recruitment with specific job descriptions for each volunteer job.
- Fully staff docent shifts and expansion of hours to be open including some nights.
- Improvement of the lower level to include a fire department display.
- Grow the oral histories program
- Develop at least one Satellite Exhibit (Possibly at Swedish Hospital)
- Work at forming collaborations with other historic groups and local cities.

The Board tasked Barb Fahey with cleaning up the vision statement based on all the ideas and discussion from the Board retreat, March 24th and this meeting. A draft will be compiled for further consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Fahey, Secretary

Comments from Board Members submitted by email prior to meeting

- With only 5 years left until 2023 it seems that the plan in its entirety may not be realistic. This may be the time to refine and clean up the plan.
- Eliminate the things that have been accomplished and the things that are unrealistic.
- Eliminate enhancements to north side of exterior grounds. City is doing landscaping and not feasible to do a Northside plaza given the many other things we wish to accomplish.
- Possibly combine some of the bullet points.
- Recognize the new Resource Development Committee and place appropriate item in that area.
- Great emphasis must be placed on recruiting volunteers. Everything we hope to do is dependent on volunteer help.
 - Greater push at the volunteer fair.
 - Use of articles in all media like My Edmonds News
 - Expanded messages about our needs, especially recruitment at the information booth at the markets.
- Leave in the plan:
 - Back up staff for Director
 - Development of Bequests Brochure and appropriate advertising about it.
 - Expand business donations
 - Find Board members with appropriate knowledge and skills to fit our needs
 - Enlist retired teachers to develop interesting programs and curriculums for children
 - Expand inventory in gift shop. Attention getting, quality items especially with Edmonds themes should be a priority before the summer months.