

Museum Committee
Meeting Minutes
14 November 2011

Attendees:

Committee Members: Pat Alexander / Ernie Massey / John Stein, Board Members, Tonia Rioux/SCVB, Martha Schoenthal/Project Lead, Jeff Feldpauch/STA, Mike Reif/Assembly Member, Michael Harmon/Public Works Director, Bob Medinger/ED Society, Marilyn Knapp/Retired Curator/Public, Via telephone: Scott Carrlee/State Museum Curator, Mary Pat Wyatt, Alaska Cultural Resources

Public: Jackie Fernandez/SHS Museum Curator, Jim Dinley/City Manager, Don Kluting/Dave Patt, Centennial Hall Staff, Linda Triershield/SHS Board Member

The meeting convened at 6pm, with everyone introducing him/herself.

Martha Schoenthal, the Foraker Group's Project Manager for this project started with reviewing the highlights of the previous meeting and discussing some of the outcomes of the Museum Consortium meeting of October 25th.

The salient features of Mary Pat Wyatt's report were discussed in detail. It was requested that the summary also address some of the following.

Marilyn Knapp spoke of the critical role the society has in the intellectual and physical care, storage and security of Sitka historical heritage, and this should be emphasized.

Certain activities could be immediately undertaken. These are: development of an operations manual, development and implementation of a daily visitor report, begin developing a story line and themes for permanent exhibits and accelerating data entry into the museum's database. Jacqueline reported that the storyline was developed last fall. There was quite a bit of discussion regarding the amount of backlog of data entry required. Mary Pat continued her report with the importance of the body of the collections, including 8000 artifacts, 25,000 photo's and over 100,000 documents needed to be entered into the electronic museum data-base, PastPerfect, and dedicated staff FTE's and/or interns to accomplish this. It was not known how long it would take to complete the task.

The space program of 5800 square feet was reviewed. Two areas of concern emerged. The amount of workspace for office machines, front desk manager and gift shop storage seemed too small at 120 sf.(Mike Reif). Some concern was expressed that the permanent exhibit space may also be too small. There was some discussion about the amount of available building footprint. The amount available was very limited, but did have some flexibility.

The staffing plan proposal of 4.5 FTE's was reviewed. The current staff size is approximately 3.1 FTE. The recommended plan adds a half time archivist, half time program manager and some janitorial help. The other increases were in already existing part time positions. The staffing plan was designed to assist with the backlog of cataloging and operate the new facility. It was explained that this was in line with best practices for a professional museum and is comparable to other museums in Alaska.

The estimated budget and revenue portion of the draft report was reviewed. Mr. Dinley, the City Administrator, took umbrage with the Foraker Group's consultant's choice of words in the draft report in which the city support of the museum was characterized as "City subsidy". There seemed to be some confusion about whether or not the museum is a budget line item or a grant recipient, with several committee members indicating the assembly had changed it to a line item several years ago. The Foraker Group will change the phrasing.

The budget portion of the draft report requires some additional input before being finalized. Bob and Mary Pat are sorting thru the details.

The group adjourned for ten minutes to look at a mock-up of a 2,000 square foot exhibit that had been set up in the big hall. The purpose of the mock-up was for the committee members to get an understanding of what 2,000 square feet looks like and feels like and whether or not it could accommodate a bus-load of tourists. The need for high ceilings and over-sized doors was discussed.

The estimated project cost of \$4.2m was reviewed line by line. The amount is roughly consistent with the current legislative request. Martha Schoenthal emphasized that that this was a rough order of magnitude cost estimate.

The estimated cost of \$1,450,000 for preparing new permanent exhibits was reviewed line by line. The estimated cost would support producing high-end exhibits. Mary Pat cautioned against high maintenance exhibits. It was also noted in the report that the design of the new permanent exhibits should be such that it is easy to add newly acquired objects and local staff can make their own matching labels. There was some discussion as to possible fund sources for the exhibits.

The estimated operating costs were reviewed. Don Kluting was not sure that the correct numbers were presented for Centennial Hall operations and maintenance costs and did not adequately present the total cost of maintenance because his workforce labor was not included. He is concerned that his current staff be tasked with additional maintenance for the new museum. There was some discussion regarding a Honeywell contract that appeared to spike the operating costs.

Mr. Dinley indicated the cost of the operations and utilities in a new facility would need to be covered by the museum, and that even the museums core city funding may not be counted on. Bob reminded the group that the entire Pre-Development

process was to consider all of these issues. It was also noted that if the O&M costs were too high for the new facility, staying in the same location should be considered. However, the committee has only started their work, and much more is still to be reviewed and explored before the Assembly has the results presented.

Martha suggested that this was a lot of information to digest for one meeting and suggested that it be further discussed at the next meeting. The following tasks will be undertaken:

- Martha to contact other museums recently moved into new facilities and obtain O&M data if possible.
- Marilyn to research costs of permanent exhibit design and construction.
- Michael Harmon to research and understand the on-going Honeywell contract.
- Bob to send Don Kluting and Michael the excel spreadsheet for Don's review and update of the O&M numbers.
- Bob to provide additional budget data for Mary Pat's review and report.
- Mary Pat, with latest input, to complete the report.