

Abita Springs Trailhead Museum (ASTM) Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 31, 2022 at the Museum

Minutes taken by Courtney Blich, Secretary

Members Present: George Long, Courtney Blich, Calissa Folse, Niki Mendow, Jimmy Nelson, Stewart Eastman, Felicia Walker, Michelle Milner, Geralyn Lips (Emeritus)

Absent with notice: Martha Gruning, Ron Blich (Emeritus)

Absent without notice: Bryan Gowland (Emeritus)

Visiting:

- Meeting called to order at 5:04pm by President George Long
- Michelle moved that minutes of the March 2022 meeting be approved. Jimmy seconded the motion, which was approved.
- Financial report by Niki Mendow, Treasurer: Account balance \$39,069.94 as of May 31, 2022, which does not include Dale Hauck exhibit proceeds.

Niki suggests that we use the En Plein Air format for documenting sales at future exhibits.

Unfinished Business

- Storytime by Calissa: Karen Wallsten can do a fall weekend for the children's hour geared to 5-9 year olds. Karen recommends 10-20 kids with help from other adults. It can be held indoors or out. Calissa asked if we could offer an honorarium. George suggests forming a committee to plan it. Felicia has offered to be on the committee.
- Stewart reports that the Baton Rouge poet laureate, Jonathan Mayers, is willing to do a Sunday in July at 4pm. His poetry is written and spoken in French. ACTION ITEM: Stewart will check on any videos of Jonathan that could be used to help promote the event. Stewart will ask him if he would also like to display his artwork at that time.
- Walking tour. Stewart provided six copies of the Abita Walking Tour Guide for our review and possible planning for future use. Niki was given the receipt for printing the copies.
- Restroom usage. The Town has not yet responded to George's expressed concerns regarding use of our restroom by others. The Board has agreed that the inside bathroom should be for use by docents and not the public.

New Business

- Marian Roper has resigned. George explained that he had sent her an email asking why she was missing meetings. This seemed to upset her and she replied with her resignation. Courtney reviewed our bylaws and her position "may" be filled by a majority vote of the board.

- George reports that Vincent Ciolino, a devoted docent, has passed away. George shared Vincent's published obituary with the board. He again emphasized that board members need to fill empty docent shifts and made the point that the museum is not fulfilling its mission if it's not open for business. Michelle expressed her concerns about this as well.

George will discuss with the Town our need for support in recruiting docents. He suggests setting up a more comfortable seating area for our docents and possibly a small shelving unit for a library of publications. Calissa suggests reaching out to local college students and also mentioned a credit course through Nicholls State University for students volunteering at Laurel Valley.

ACTION ITEM: Calissa will contact Southeastern and Nicholls as well as the St. Tammany Tourist Association. Niki said she would be willing to present our need for docents to groups that meet in town. George mentioned that the docent handbook is currently being updated.

- Annual docent appreciation event. Martha is willing to offer her home for a gathering in early November for museum board and volunteers. Courtney offered to work with her on this.
- Preservation Project report. Emily McDaniel is moving to Houston but is willing to continue working on the project until we start a process of scanning residents' documents and photos or we hire someone local in that role.

George said he spoke with Janet about having events where the public is invited to bring photos and documents to be scanned and added to the archive.

ACTION ITEM: George will arrange for Calissa to have access to the CatalogIt account.

- Choctaw Heritage event and trail. Stewart reports that Tom Aicklen attended the joint event on Earth Day with the Bicycle Festival and Friends of the Park in May. Tom discussed the idea of tying in those events next year with a project he's working on to create a Choctaw trail through southeast Louisiana. Tom is looking for the board's support for a possible press conference regarding the project with the Lieutenant Governor participating. Tom had expressed his concern for the lack of attendance and poor organization of the Bicycle Festival. Part of his Choctaw Trail project would include erecting posts with QR codes that would link to relevant information. George suggested we visualize it as a museum without walls.

ACTION ITEM: George, Stewart, and Jimmy will be the committee to research and plan our participation in this project.

George said committee meetings should be held during our time off in June and July before our next meeting at the end of August.

- George is looking for volunteers for selling concessions at the next Cajun Dance because some of our regulars are unavailable.

- The board discussed whether or not we should continue to support the Songwriters Circle but no decision was made.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm.

Next board meeting is scheduled for 5pm on Tuesday, August 30.

Upcoming events of note:

June 11: Concessions at Cajun Dance

October 1: Concessions at Songwriters Circle