

Abita Springs Trailhead Museum  
Board Meeting Minutes for August 31, 2020  
Recorded by Courtney Blich

Members Present: Courtney Blich, Geralyn Lips, George Long,  
Martha Gruning, Annie Weaver, Stewart Eastman, Marian Roper, Susan  
Foster (via Zoom)

Emeritus Member Present: Ron Blich

Absent with notice: Bryan Gowland, Peg Scimemi, Margaret Blich

Absent without notice: Steve Davis, Carolyn Boudreaux

Meeting called to order at 5:04 pm. Minutes from July 27, 2020 meeting  
approved.

Financial Report: Martha

Financial report from town was not available. Bank balance is approximately  
\$30,000. YTD income is \$1800.

OLD BUSINESS:

PRESERVATION PROJECT UPDATE- George

1. Catalog It

The museum still intends to move forward with the "Catalog It" software  
for documenting/organizing photos. George said that there is a good tutorial  
for instructions.

2. Videographer

George has been in touch with Derek Wolfman to possibly work with the  
museum to create videos to enhance the museum's presentation of archived  
material. He inquired as to the cost for an event such as Push Mow (with a 2  
week turnaround) and Derek estimated approximately \$1200.

It would also provide an opportunity to begin interviewing town residents  
who have a wealth of knowledge regarding the history and culture of Abita. A  
working list of potential residents is in place.

3. Mary Davis

George spoke with Mary about initiating the project to catalog and  
organize her photo collection. She is still not comfortable having someone sit  
next to her, but may be willing to utilize Zoom if we can find an appropriate  
assistant. She also states she is very busy through the end of the year.

#### 4. Storage of Physical Objects

The town renovation project is still underway and until this is complete, it is difficult to find space to store donated or collected items.

Martha is concerned that Mary is still in possession of photos purchased by the museum and would like to follow through with having them returned. It would also provide an opportunity to begin interviewing town residents who have a wealth of knowledge regarding the history and culture of Abita. A working list of potential residents is in place.

*ACTION ITEM:* George will contact Mary regarding photos to be returned.

#### EVENT UPDATES

1. Push Mow- During the past year, George and the Push Mow volunteers from the museum have expressed their concerns regarding the volume of work necessary to create a successful parade. As a community-building event, museum members feel that TOAS would be an appropriate host. George has communicated this with Dan and Janet who understand they would be responsible for Push Mow next year. This would allow the board members to focus on the mission of the ASTM.

MOTION by Marian, seconded by Ron:

*The ASTM board will no longer sponsor Push Mow from 2021 forward but will assist at the town's request.*

Discussion of pros and cons: George mentioned that the complexity of the Push Mow Parade is partially due to added facets, such as the Judges' Viewing Stand, Costume Contest etc. Martha feels we shouldn't sponsor anymore and perhaps John Preble can provide input. Stewart feels that Push Mow does fit our mission as it represents the uniqueness of Abita. Ron suggested that perhaps the parade could be held in the fall in conjunction with the Abita Fall Fest. George reminded the board members that the parade was started by John Preble. He came to the board and requested that we begin sponsoring as he was too busy. Martha suggested that as a community building event the town will find that it is an important event.

MOTION passed 6 members for and 1 member against.

2. Garage Sale- Martha would like to refocus on the mission of the ASTM and feels that the garage sale does not fit our mission.

MOTION by Martha, seconded by Annie:

*The ASTM board will no longer sponsor the Garage Sale from 2021 forward but will assist at the town's request.*

Discussion of pros and cons: Although it does bring in funds for the museum, it is also an event that would be perfect for the town to sponsor. Martha has chaired the event for 6 years, and although it requires one individual to do the majority of the work, no one has stepped up to chair the event in the future. George feels that the town needs to organize and coordinate volunteers for these events.

MOTION passed 6 members for and 1 member against

3. En Plein Air will not be held this year due to the virus. Ron has informed the artists that paintings may be submitted from 2020 and 2021 for the exhibit to be held April 23 through 25. The board feels strongly that this exhibit does support our mission as local artists are instructed to paint settings from the St. Tammany area.

Ron has also communicated with Alex Lawson (Plein Air magazine) who suggests that the ad purchased for this year can be submitted for the Feb/March 2021 issue.

4. Busker Festival will not be held this year, however Bryan communicated via Geralyn that the grant money from the Jazz and Heritage Foundation may be used to hire local musicians to perform in Abita. Geralyn says that she is willing to continue assisting Bryan with vendor selection and perhaps with other details.

5. Louisiana Bicycle Festival has not been officially cancelled this year. Stewart suggests that it may still be held in the fall. The museum was asked to sponsor the Bike Festival as the previous mayoral administration wanted it under the "umbrella" of a town organization. This is no longer necessary and the museum does not assist in planning or organizing the event. George has supported the festival by communicating via media outlets.

MOTION by George, seconded by Marian:

*The ASTM board will no longer sponsor the Louisiana Bicycle Festival from 2021 forward but will assist at the town's request.*

Discussion of pros and cons: George mentioned that a commercial entity, Brooks Bikes, was involved with the festival last year. He feels that if a commercial entity is a sponsor and assists with coordinating the festival, the

museum shouldn't be involved. Stewart stated that the museum should continue to sponsor the festival. He questions what events we plan to sponsor that would be more appropriate. Events supporting our mission have previously been discussed (a reading by the LA French Poet Laureate, A Historic Walking Tour of Abita, Art and Jewelry shows, etc.) George believes the lack of direction and organization for the festival does not reflect the museum's standards for events.

MOTION passed 6 members for and 1 member against

George mentioned that the town may encourage the restructuring of the Abita Civic Organization to oversee some of these events. They should continue to develop a database of volunteers.

### NEW BUSINESS:

Totem Pole Update:

George contacted Dave Kelsey who built the totem pole as the paint was fading. Dave was able to wrap metal around the wooden pointers ..... (get wording from George)

A webcam intended for the top of the pole has not yet been placed. There is a weather station at this time.

Pavilion Tower Update:

Ron provided the board members with drawings of the proposed Pavilion Tower. He described the placement of the tower and its benefits for future events held in the Pavilion (increasing capacity). Final cost estimates are not available as the town is waiting on a structural design plan. A portion of the Abita Fall Fest proceeds will be donated to this project. Ron mentioned that the museum and the town may also contribute to the cost.

Constable Election:

Stewart requested time for the Constable candidates (Matthew King, Byron Armand, Stewart Eastman) to speak at a future ASTM meeting. The board discussed limiting the speeches to 3 minutes each followed by questions and answers.

ACTION ITEM: George will invite the candidates to either the September or October ASTM board meetings depending on their availability.

Meeting adjourned at 6:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Blich

Co-President ASTM