

# Abita Springs Trailhead Museum (ASTM) Board Meeting Minutes

October 18, 2023

Minutes taken by Courtney Blich

Members Present: Martha Gruning, Niki Mendow, Stewart Eastman, George Long, Courtney Blich, Felicia Walker

Absent with notice: Melissa Smith, Geralyn Lips, Ron Blich

- Meeting called to order at 5:02 pm by President George Long
- Stewart moved that minutes of the September 2023 meeting be approved. Niki seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.
- Financial report by Martha Gruning, Treasurer  
Nothing to report. No one at Town Hall responded to her request for current information. She said data from En Plein Air sales and Cajun Dance expenses was incorrect but upon attempting clarification, she received no response.

## Unfinished Business

- Preservation report: Melissa followed up with Andrea Norwood, a junior in history at Loyola. Andrea stated that she may be interested in the position.
- Meeting with Mayor (George): There was no meeting because they were busy.
- Programming (George): Board members are encouraged to suggest creative ideas for the future. Stewart suggested a Choctaw event. George believes Francis Broussard is ready to provide another presentation and is waiting to hear from him.
- Ray Buuck exhibition (George): The exhibit was very successful and it was delightful to work with the Buuck family. 30 prints were sold at \$20 each plus two etchings at \$220 each for total sales of \$1,040.00. The museum receives 30% equalling \$312.00. The Town will write a check to the family for their proceeds. The family left two original paintings on loan to the Museum. Those are the 'Abita Garage' and the 'Abita Pavilion'. One will be displayed in Town Hall and the other at the Museum. The 'Abita Grocery' original painting has been donated to the

Town by the owner, Robin Hurston.

- New signage (George): He ordered new signage, one a large, folding plastic sign, and the other is to be tabloid size on a tall stick. The larger one was too heavy and was returned for a refund.
- Consideration of Kimberly Irizarry as new board member (George): tabled because she was unable to attend the meeting. She works as a docent and is a student of Museum Studies through Harvard University.

### New Business

- George spoke with Abbey Artworks gallery director Lyn Hill Taylor. She supports the proposal of a Museum exhibit of Alan Flattmann's paintings. George said this would hopefully come about some time in 2024.
- George discussed the possibility of a Bunny Matthews exhibition in 2024 explaining that Bunny is known for some dark humor and his Vic 'N Natly cartoons. The Arthur Roger Gallery in New Orleans has some of his work for sale. The Historic New Orleans Collection has much of Bunny's work. Ron previously suggested that it would be good if we had something about Bunny's work for sale during an exhibit, such as a book. George mentioned that there is a book under development and it would be good to coordinate an exhibit with the book's release. Melissa said she would be happy to liaison with the HNOCC and Arthur Roger for such an exhibit. Dave Kelsey had been given a large, original drawing made by Bunny. Dave has donated it to the Museum, however, the Museum cannot accept the donation without a contract prepared for receiving it.
- Use of Museum by not-for-profits (Martha): Various civic groups have used the Museum in the past. She has accommodated them by helping with opening and closing the Museum using remote technology. At this time, that capability is not available to her. Martha was contacted by Donata Henry, who wants to establish a northshore Audubon bird group. She requested the use of the Museum for their meetings but Martha said she would need permission from Town Hall and clarify logistics for opening and closing. ACTION ITEM: Martha will bring this request to Town Hall and will also ask for clarification on the Town's policy about Town staff's

required attendance at all Town events. George has concerns about groups using the Museum that might not support or be in alignment with our mission.

- Docents (George): Board members are encouraged to check the docent schedule because docents aren't always available to fill all shifts. A policy for use of the Museum toilet was clarified. The toilet is for use by docents, especially during the upcoming Abita Fall Fest. Martha stated she and George continue to send weekly notice to docents of openings in the schedule.
- Board nominations (Courtney): Of current board members, only Melissa has one more year in her term. All others who wish to reapply should sign and date a copy of their current application and send to Courtney. She reviewed the process of preparing monthly agendas and minutes by using the meeting recordings and hand-written notes from the meetings. George said there's a need for a PR person to utilize MailChimp, website, and Facebook social media and said that maybe the Town's events staff would take it over next year. George said that the MailChimp blast uses the Museum sign-in sheet to add addresses. It is a free account when we have fewer than 2000 addresses. We currently have about 1800.
- MOTION TO ADJOURN: 6:04 PM, moved by Martha, seconded by Felicia. Motion approved unanimously.