

Abita Springs Trailhead Museum (ASTM) Board Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2023

Minutes taken by Courtney Blicht

Members Present: Martha Gruning, Niki Mendow, Stewart Eastman, George Long, Courtney Blicht, GERALYN LIPS

Absent with notice: Melissa Smith, Ron Blicht

Absent without notice: Felicia Walker

Visitors: Tayler Miguez, Angie Harrell-Hahn, Kimberly Irizarry, Jason MacFetters, Lauren Crout, Keitisha Young

- Meeting called to order at 5:01 pm by President George Long
- Martha moved that minutes of the October 2023 meeting be approved. Niki seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.
- Financial report by Martha Gruning, Treasurer
\$41,933.00 balance. No other details provided by Town Hall. Janet does not yet have detailed information on expenses for En Plein Air and Cajun Dance.

Unfinished Business

- Preservation report: No report. Melissa was absent.
- Meeting with Mayor (George): There was no meeting because they were busy. Hope to schedule when new board members have been elected.
- Programming (George): Alan Flattmann exhibition: George and Courtney attended his exhibit at Carol Robinson Gallery in New Orleans recently. It was a beautiful show and should be considered for a solo retrospective in 2024. Alan teaches art at the Abbey and has published a popular book on painting with pastels. George has been in communication with Lyn Hill Taylor, who is director at the Abbey, about an exhibit with Alan.
- Bunny Matthews exhibition: Bunny lived in Abita and is best known for his cartoon characters Vic 'N Natly. George has been in touch with the Historic New Orleans Collection, which seems ready to support and exhibit here. They house much of Bunny's work. The Arthur Roger Gallery has many of his works for sale and have agreed to provide them for purchase at such an exhibit here. Proceeds would be split 25% museum, 25% gallery, 50% Matthews estate. Proposed dates are April 19-21 and April 26-28, 2024. George is in possession of one of Bunny's original drawings 4' x 8' donated by Dave and Michelle Kelsey to the Museum for possible inclusion in a show. ACTION ITEM: George will present the idea of a show to the Mayor for his approval and determination of necessary logistics by the Town. One requirement by the

HNOOC for them to allow us to show the work is that the space must be monitored for temperature and humidity, which is not something we are able to provide at this time. So that would need to be worked out.

- Birding group meetings: Martha was approached by Donata Henry, a good friend of Walter Clifton, inquiring about utilizing the Museum for meetings. She is forming a group on the north shore that would be an extension of the Audubon Birding group. Angie mentioned that they will not be using the Museum. The first meeting will be held at Town Hall on December 7.
- Poet Laureate: George provided a summary of the event held on November 5th. Alison Pelegrin offered a lovely reading of her poems. The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities acts as host for the series for a two year period. The LEH expects the Museum to offer an honorarium of \$100, which the Mayor has agreed to.
- Docents: George said it continues to be a challenge to have all docent shifts covered each week. He encourages board members to familiarize themselves with the Docent Handbook. Martha said that if each member took one shift each month, all would be covered. George explained that visitors often ask where the actual springs are. He suggested that a water feature should be developed by the Town and would be a popular tourist destination. He mentioned that a new Abita Princess statue, donated by the Blitch Family Foundation, will be placed in the roundabout and it will have a water feature. ACTION ITEM: Martha will determine the definitions of springs vs. water wells and whether or not there are any active springs in the town limits.

New Business

- Board nominations (Courtney): Current nominees, Lauren Crout, Kimberly Irizarry, Keitisha Young, and Jason MacFeters introduced themselves and provided background on their motivations to serve. George mentioned there is room for another nominee. Nominations will close on December 5th. Voting will occur during the December meeting and officers will be selected at the January meeting. Martha explained officers' duties.
- MOTION TO ADJOURN: 5:50 PM, moved by Martha, seconded by Stewart. Motion approved unanimously.