

MINUTES
FLINT HILLS DISCOVERY CENTER ADVISORY BOARD
CITY COMMISSION ROOM
MAY 9, 2011
4:00 P.M.

Present were the following members of the Flint Hills Discovery Center Advisory Board: Mr. Ron Wilson, Mr. Dave Kendall, Ms. Sharon Brookshire, Mr. Mike Haddock, Ms. Suzan Barnes, Mr. Thomas Warner, and Ms. Kristin Brighton. Also present at this meeting were Mr. Curt Loupe, Director of Parks and Recreation; Mr. Bob Workman, Flint Hills Discovery Center Director; Ms. Melissa Kirkwood, Development Officer; Mrs. Buffy Woodward, Administrative Assistant. Visitors included: Mayor Jim Sherow.

MINUTES

Mr. Warner called for the approval of the April minutes. It was moved by Ms. Barnes, seconded by Ms. Brookshire, that the April minutes be approved. On vote, motion carried 7-0.

UPDATE ON CONSTRUCTION AND FABRICATION OF EXHIBITS

Mr. Workman stated that additional stone façade has been added to the FHDC. Several site tours have already been given, and more will be conducted. All of the interior concrete has been poured and the interior metal stud work has been completed. Sheet rocking will begin soon. The roof membrane is installed on the upper terrace. Set up is being done on the mechanical rooms.

He mentioned that he will be in Minneapolis this week to meet with Split Rock Studios, Hilferty & Associates, and McCownGordon Construction. The purpose is to review all exhibit and audio/visual designs, and to coordinate fabrication schedules. He will also meet with Split Rock Studios to gain a better understanding and formulate a budget for possible fundraising models.

He also noted that there will be a large mural on the south wall of the main exhibit area. The mural will be a very vivid sweeping vista of a mid-June day in the Flint Hills. 3D elements could be added later. Mr. Randall Bennett from Lawrence is the artist. He used to be with Split Rock Studios, but is now with Tallgrass Museum Services. Discussion was held.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE AND HOURS OF OPERATION OF THE FHDC

Mr. Workman presented the proposed schedule and hours of operation of the FHDC. The FHDC would be open 362 days per year, closed only on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. The hours would be Sunday – noon to 8 p.m., Monday – 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesday thru Saturday – 10 a.m.-5 p.m. The FHDC would be open 53 hours per week. He explained that being closed on the evenings most likely to be rented for special events would allow the maximization of earned revenue potential. The only disadvantages of the proposed hours would be staff coverage and necessary public education about the unconventional hours. Ms. Kirkwood gave an overview of the regional comparison data of museums spreadsheet she had created.

It was moved by Ms. Barnes, seconded by Mr. Haddock, to recommend to the City Commission that the FHDC be closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, a half day on Christmas Eve, and a half day on New Year's Eve. On vote, motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Workman stated that the FHDC should be as accessible as possible. The needs of the community will be served, and the rentals maximized. Seasonal hours are a possibility. It was moved by Ms. Barnes, seconded by Mr. Kendall, to recommend to the City Commission that the FHDC have seasonal hours. The winter hours would be Sunday – noon to 5 p.m., Monday thru Wednesday – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday – 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday & Saturday – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The summer hours would be from Memorial Day thru

Minutes

May 9, 2011

Page 2

Labor Day and consist of Sunday – noon to 5 p.m., Monday thru Thursday – 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday & Saturday – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. On vote, motion carried 7-0. Discussion was held.

PROPOSED ADMISSION FEES

Mr. Workman presented the proposed admission fees for the FHDC. These fees are based on an attendance of 60,000 paid visitors per year. The Exhibits ticket will not include the Immersive Experience. The Exhibits ticket prices will be: Adult - \$7, Senior - \$6, Student/Child - \$4, age 2 & under – free. The Immersive Experience ticket prices will be: Adult - \$3, Senior/Student/Child - \$2, age 2 & under – free. The combined ticket prices will be: Adult - \$9, Senior - \$7, Student/Child - \$5, age 2 & under – free. Sponsorships will be pursued for “free admission days”. Couponing will be implemented later, and exploration of a possible combination option with Sunset Zoo or the swimming pools. It was moved by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Haddock, to recommend the fees as proposed. On vote, motion carried 7-0. Discussion was held.

MUSEUM STORE OPERATIONS STRATEGY

Mr. Workman stated that the museum store would be run by the FHDC. By running the store itself, the City will keep all of the profits. The Museum Store Association has produced several excellent workbooks that will assist in the development of the store business plan. Staff will consider a logo-based product line, Flint Hills based products, and children’s educational toys in the areas of science and history. The store space is 650 square feet, a percentage of that could also be consignment space. The Operations/Exhibits manager would be in charge of the store. Discussion was held.

FOOD SERVICE CONCESSIONS STRATEGY

Mr. Workman noted that there was a café in the original plan. That area is being finished as a multipurpose space instead. He recommends not getting the FHDC into the food service business at the outset. Packaged food and drinks will be sold in the museum store, that can be taken to tables in the lobby or outdoor terrace, or to the park across the street. An RFP will be sent out to the catering community to make and stock the food and drinks. The FHDC will look into using recyclable materials and having disposal containers for the recycling of said materials. Discussion was held.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Wilson noted that Mr. Workman has done a good job with the FHDC so far.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be on June 13, 2011.