

FLINT HILLS DISCOVERY CENTER ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

May 11, 2015

4:00 PM

Present were the following members of the Flint Hills Discovery Center Advisory Board: Chair Ms. Suzan Barnes, Ms. Christine Benne, Ms. Rose Bacon, Mr. Mike Haddock, Mr. John Hund, and Mr. Ron Wilson. Fred W. Goss, FHDC Director, Mr. Jonathan Mertz, FHDC Events Coordinator, Mr. Stephen Bridenstine, FHDC Public Program Coordinator were also present. Mr. Jeff Wolfe, K-State Director of Conferences and Mr. Bruce Snead, FHDC Foundation President.

Welcome

At 4:02 p.m., Ms. Barnes called the meeting to order.

Minutes

At 4:05 p.m., Mr. Wilson moved to approve the March minutes and Mr. Hund seconded. On vote, the motion carried 6-0.

FHDC Staff Report

- **Education/Interpretation Report**
 - **Technology:** Mr. Bridenstine provided a short presentation on the 15 iPads now being used at the FHDC. Also parts of the gift are cases and a charging station with funds donated by an individual through the Foundation. They have been used in day camps to create another medium to reflect on the Flint Hills. Mr. Bridenstine shared a video that was created by day camp participants and related that the new technology will be used for future FHDC programs for all age ranges.
 - **Save the Last Dance:** On May 17, 2015, photographer, Noppadol Paothong, will present a final presentation, *Connecting Kids to Nature*. He will be at the FHDC to relate stories from his photographic adventures as well as speak on the importance of connecting to nature at an early age. The presentation is family friendly and suitable for all ages. Presentation is included with general admission.
- **FHDC Facility Rentals**
 - FHDC Director Fred Goss and Development Officer Jerri Hager reviewed the current rental fee structure for the FHDC and recommended changes to the rate structure in order to make the sales and reservation process simpler for FHDC events sales staff and most importantly for the customer.
 - Jonathan Mertz, FHDC Events Coordinator presented the current fee structure for facility rentals. Current pricing options are confusing to the customer with many variables including the number of attendees, length of event, etc. and require lengthy explanations to complete the reservation.

- Based on past experience and sales, the FHDC staff proposed a flat fee of \$1,200.00 for a three hour reception rental for the **first and second floors** in lieu of the current \$1,000 fee for three hours. There would continue to be a \$200.00 charge for each additional hour of the rental after three hours.
- For a **Saturday full building rental as proposed**, the rental fee would be \$2,500.00 in fiscal year 2016. Currently FHDC charges \$2,300 to \$2,700 for a full building rental fee for a Saturday based on the number of attendees.
- For a full building rental, **Sunday through Friday**, the fee would be \$2,000.00 as proposed for fiscal year 2016. The current **Sunday through Friday** full building rental fee is \$1,800 - \$2,200 based on attendance. Included in these options (Saturday and Sunday through Friday full building rentals) is the proposal to eliminate a guest count as customers aren't always sure of their attendance but do want to rent the FHDC for their event. Jonathan stated the FHDC can accommodate 250 people for a seated dinner and 400-500 people for a standing reception.
- Business Meetings: FHDC also proposed a full day rental fee for the Flint Hills and Blue Earth meeting rooms and FHDC classroom as they are generating limited income Monday – Friday with business meetings. For the 3rd floor meeting rooms (Blue Earth and Flint Hills), the new fee would be an hourly rate of \$50.00 per hour or \$300 for a full day rental. After hours rate would be an additional \$25.00 per hour.
- For the FHDC class room, the hourly fee would be \$75.00 per hour with a \$450.00 fee for an all day rental and a \$25.00 per hour after hours fee.
- Terrace Rentals: The terrace rental fee would increase to \$225.00/hour from its current \$200.00 per hour rate and no longer charge an after hours fee as it will be combined with the new rental rate.
- Gift Store Staffing and Rentals: In the past, FHDC has not required a fee to keep the gift store open after hours as sales were expected to offset the cost of staffing. Store sales are inconsistent with the attendees not always purchasing merchandise. FHDC staff proposed to charge \$25.00 per hour to keep the gift store open for after hours events. The gift store fee for rentals would start at the close of the business day.

The Advisory Board discussed the changes, reviewed the hand outs and charts to understand the current and proposed facility rental pricing structure for implementation in the 2016 City of Manhattan fiscal year. Clarifying the rental sales process and rental fees was seen as a benefit for customers by the advisory board. Ms. Bacon moved to approve the price changes and Mr. Hund seconded. On vote, the motion carried 6-0.

FHDC Directors Report

- **Midwest Living**
 - Mr. Goss presented a hand out listing the FHDC is #1 place to visit in the Flint Hills by *Midwest Living Magazine*.
- **2014 vs. 2015 YTD FHDC attendance and revenue**
 - Admission revenues are slightly higher year-to-date for 2015 compared to 2014.
 - Education revenues are increased from 2014 by \$5,245
- **Exhibits Update**
 - *Flint Hills Masters* is moving ahead with Strecker-Nelson Gallery of Manhattan, KS.
 - FHDC staff will be meeting with KSU Beach Museum staff and Jay Nelson on co-op programs and marketing
 - *The View from Space* exhibit contract has been signed by the City Manager
 - *Amazing Dinosaurs!* Exhibition contract was approved at the May 5th City Commission meeting
 - *How People Make Things* exhibition contract will be presented at the May 19th City Commission meeting for their approval.
- **2015 Flint Hills Festival**
 - 400 in attendance this year
 - 2016 Flint Hills Festival date has been set for May 21, 2016
- **Bus on Us program with Freedom's Frontiers**
 - Fred was pleased to announce that the FHDC has officially joined as a partner with the Freedom's Frontier's National Heritage Area.
 - The Discovery Center will be participating in the "Bus on Us" program which pays 75% of transportation costs to FHDC for onsite programs for public and private schools.
- **Teacher Open House at FHDC:**
 - Fred has asked Public Program Coordinator Stephen Bridenstine to host a Teacher's Open House for the fall of 2015. Preliminary contacts have been made to school districts 383, 475, 320 for the open house. An update will be provided at future meetings.
- **Mega FAM tour Roots and Boots**
 - Saturday, May 11th at 10:00 a.m., the FHDC is hosting a tour in partnership with Kansas Wildlife Parks & Tourism, and the Manhattan CVB for a visit from United Kingdom travel writers.
- **David Kendall documentary film project**
 - Partnership with the FHDC Foundation as the fiscal agent will feature the history of the Tall Grass National Preserve near Strong City, KS.

Committee Reports

Ms. Barnes stated there were no committee reports.

New Business

Ms. Barnes stated there was no new business.

Public Comment

Mr. Jeff Wolfe, Director of Conferences at K-State, discussed his support for the FHDC. He uses the facility frequently and said it is great for guests coming from out of the area.

Mr. Wilson expressed appreciation for the FHDC Foundation for their financial support of the Cowboy Poetry Contest. There will be another Cowboy poetry contest at the Symphony in the Flint Hills.

Ms. Bacon commented on the lack of shelving in the women's bathroom for books and folders.

Adjournment

Ms. Barnes called the meeting to be adjourned and Ms. Benne seconded at 5:04 p.m.