

Flint Hills Discovery Center Advisory Board Minutes
July 11, 2016
4:00 pm

Present were the following members of the Flint Hills Discovery Center Advisory Board: Ms. Rose Bacon, Ms. Suzan Barnes, Ms. Larie Schoap, Dr. Emily Dringenberg, Ms. Christine Benne, Mr. Ron Wilson, and Mr. John Hund. Ms. Susan Adams, FHDC Director, Ms. Megan Berry, Development Officer, and Ms. Marie Martin, FHDC Foundation, were also present.

Welcome

At 4:00 p.m., Ms. Suzan Barnes called the meeting to order.

Minutes

At 4:01 p.m., Ms. Christine Benne moved to approve the May minutes and Ms. Larie Schoap seconded. On vote, the motion carried 7-0.

Old Business

Ms. Rose Bacon reminded the advisory board about the need to discuss fundraising for the *Voices* exhibit. Ms. Suzan Barnes said they would have a dedicated meeting about the fundraising.

FHDC Report

Introduction to Megan Berry, Development Officer

Development Officer Position was offered to Megan Berry. Megan is our current Marketing Coordinator and has been with the Flint Hills Discovery Center since January 2015

Marketing Coordinator Position

Marketing Coordinator Position has been offered to Melinda "Mindy" Robbins and she will begin July 18. Mindy received her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Finance from Kansas State University and her Masters of Arts in Education at Ashford University in Iowa. Mindy is currently working as a Human Resources Employment Specialist at Community HealthCare System in Onaga, KS. She has held a variety of different roles in HR, Marketing, Communications, Administration and Sales.

Special Events

Flint Hills Festival was Saturday, May 21 from 10am-5pm. Events included the following: archery, flint knapping, wood bowl turning, bubble blowing, live music, bounce house-obstacle course, rock wall climbing, jewelry making, and beer/wine tent. The event drew in 2,500 people with revenue of \$13,000 for the day. The most attendance and revenue generated to this date for the FHDC.

Upcoming event will be National Day of the Cowboy on Saturday, July 23 from 10am-2pm. The day will be filled with roping, branding, hands on crafts, rodeo clowns and queens.

Family Day will be on Sunday, September 11 from 12pm-5pm. This is our thank you and free day to the community. We will have a variety of booths and hands on activities with a focus on families/children.

Exhibits

Amazing Dinosaurs members only event attendance was 167 for the Friday, May 13, 5:30pm-7:00pm event.

Amazing Dinosaurs exhibit closes Sunday, September 11, which is also Family Day.

Going Home exhibit with Chapman Center for Rural Studies opens, September 24 - January 8, 2017
Going Home members only event will be Friday, September 23, from 5:30-7:00pm

Engagement Survey/Focus Groups

The FHDC has been working with New Boston to develop a Community Engagement Survey and two focus group meetings. This all was accomplished in mid June and early July. There were over 1,000 survey responses and 35 attendees at the Focus Group events. New Boston will be compiling the information and presenting it to the FHDC by early August. We are looking forward to hearing the communities' comments and suggestions.

Ms. Larie Schoap had a colleague in the focus group who's perception was the FHDC exhibits have too much reading, members were not aware of the benefits of ASTC Travel Passport Program, and only locals come to the FHDC. There was also a question of how many exhibits should we have per year? Ms. Larie Schoap, asked if we need to educate more and are hoteliers promoting us? Ms. Susan Adams and other advisory board members stated many of our visitors are from out of town as seen in our zip code analysis. Concerning the ASTC travel passport membership, Ms. Susan Adams stated that each member is notified of the benefits of the membership in the welcome letter and they are given the 340+ participating science centers brochure in the membership packet.

2018 Temporary Exhibit – Rainforest Adventure

Proposed exhibit dates would be January 27, 2018 - April 29th 2018

Rainforest exhibit is a large maze style exhibit with interactives at each station. Research on the Rainforest Adventure shows high attendance where it has been showcased. Ms. Susan Adams handed out packets explaining the exhibit. The FHDC is in discussion with the rental company to determine if it can be modified to work in the 2nd floor mezzanine. It covers 800 square feet of exhibit space and we would like to utilize that space with the same exhibit.

Ms. Rose Bacon stated the tallgrass ecosystem is the rainforest ecosystem inverted. The long root system for a tallgrass ecosystem is underground while the rainforest is root system is above ground. Many connections could be made with the two ecosystems. Mr. John Hund thinks this exhibit could draw a large audience.

At 4:32 p.m., Ms. Rose Bacon motioned and Mr. John Hund seconded that we move to approve the Rainforest Adventure exhibit for 2018 with the understanding we would have panels to discuss how the ecosystems are similar. On vote, the motion carried 7-0.

Review of Membership Levels

Ms. Susan Adams presented a membership spreadsheet with pricing and the benefits of our current membership program. Included were two proposed options for changes in 2017. This included a revenue comparison, members benefits lost and gained.

Mr. John Hund asked if we had any feedback on pricing? Ms. Susan Adams said we do know customers frequently request a family membership which is one of the proposed changes. Ms. Christine Benne was in favor of the \$25.00 price for adult memberships and \$100.00 price for our Bluestem (Family) membership. Ms. Susan Adams stated the proposed \$30.00 adult membership price for one of the options would bring the individual membership price to match the zoo. Ms. Larie Schoap thought small, incremental pricing changes over a few years might be easier for the customer to handle. Ms. Megan Berry and Ms. Susan Adams want to use the 2017 proposed price changes as a way to promote membership at the end of 2016. Starting in October 2016, we will let customers know that we are

having a price change in 2017 and use it as a way to encourage customers to buy at the 2016 price. Mr. Ron Wilson was surprised we only had 34 Bluestem memberships. With the addition of the “family” Bluestem membership we hope the membership number will increase. Ms. Suzan Barnes would like to wait to see the results of our survey before we approve and change pricing.

Mr. John Hund believes we have to aggressively pursue corporate memberships. Within our pitch, we need to educate on how unique the tallgrass ecosystem is.

Ms. Larie Schoap said a company gets a lot of benefits from sponsoring an exhibit at the FHDC as we are not competing with a lot of other sponsors. She is very pleased with all of the publicity from *Amazing Dinosaurs* for ESB Bank. Dr. Emily Dringenberg asked where the donations go for exhibit sponsorships verses a corporate membership. Ms. Susan Adams stated that exhibit donations go into project accounts. Ms. Christine Benne stated that we might want to pursue more exhibit donations. We could have a “want list” for upcoming exhibits.

Foundation Reports

Swanson House Consultants are working with the foundation to help set a path for the next five years. They are going to help determine what the foundation needs are and how to get the word out. Ms. Marie Martin stated that Swanson House Consultants are highly recommended and they were the organization that resurrected Camp Wood. The cost is being split between the City of Manhattan and the FHDC Foundation.

Educational Map of the Flint Hills

FHDC Foundation is the fiscal agent for this project. Eight maps have been placed and dedicated in Butler County.

Dave Kendall's Documentary

Ms. Marie Martin pointed out the great Dave Kendall article in the *Manhattan Magazine* discussing his love for and the importance of the tallgrass prairie. The article photo was taken in the FHDC. The FHDC is mentioned as a partnership and supporting this documentary. Ms. Marie Martin said he is in the editing stage of the documentary with a showing in November 2016.

Public Comment

Ms. Marie Martin said the FHDC Foundation is looking for board members.

Ms. Susan Adams said we are still taking RSVP's for the FHDC Advisory Board Appreciation Night on July 22, 2016.

Mr. Ron Wilson said the poetry contest had contestants from three states and was a great event at the FHDC. He also thanked Megan Berry for creating a logo and press release.

Mr. Ron Wilson handed out a flyer for dinner and entertainment at the Lazy T Ranch after National Day of the Cowboy.

Adjournment

At 5:05 p.m., Ms. Larie Schoap moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Christine Benne seconded. On vote, the motion carried 7-0.