

FHDC Advisory Board Meeting
October 11, 2021
4:00 pm
Blue Earth Room – Flint Hills Discovery Center
315 S. 3rd Street
Manhattan, KS 66502

Present were the following members of the FHDC Advisory Board: Mr. John Pecoraro, Ms. Vicki Patton, Mr. J.T. Lavery, Ms. Mary Beth Reese, Ms. Rose Bacon, and Ms. Susan Rensing. Also present were, FHDC Director, Ms. Susan Adams, FHDC Assistant Director/Development, Mr. Stephen Bridenstine, FHDC Guest Services/Membership Manager, Ms. Mary Hildreth, and FHDC Foundation Director, Ms. Lesley White.

Welcome

At 4:06 p.m., Ms. Patton called the meeting to order. Ms. Adams announced Mr. Bridenstine's promotion to FHDC Assistant Director/Development and presented him to the board.

Minutes

Ms. Bacon corrected the minutes adding the FHDC Advisory Board agreed to send two representatives to the FHDC Foundation board meeting to discuss the letter being drafted regarding the proposed Art & Light Museum. Mr. Pecoraro moved to approve the July 2021 minutes with the correction and Ms. Reese seconded. On vote, the motion carried 6-0.

Old Business

Ms. Adams shared that the letter regarding the Art & Light Museum has not been sent to the City Manager or City Commission since the FHDC parking lot is no longer under consideration for the project.

Discussion was held regarding the Kidscape design. Ms. Adams said she would send a 60% schematic of Kidscape re-design for the board members review on Monday, October 18. Ms. Adams shared current concepts at 30% and the conceptual design.

The three sections are:

1. Exploring the Land

- a. Live Animal Enclosures - View live animals, touch related elements (snakeskin tile, turtle shell, etc.) and read fun facts about some animals that call FHDC home.
- b. Prairie Façade - Open thematic Discovery drawers to explore real biological artifacts from tall grass prairie plants and animals.
- c. Air Tube Wind Interactive - Air tube maze allows guests to send pollinators, pollen, and other fliers across the oversized prairie.

2. Working the Land

- a. Mural viewers - Guests take a closer look at the mural with magnification viewers and identify the mural's plants and animals with the aid of an illuminating mural schematic
- b. Stone Stacking - To learn how history and geology overlap, FHDC visitors will try their hand "pioneer-style" at fitting faux stones into the open niches of a large simulated scenic wall. Young visitors and their families can also become "geology detectives" by examining tactile rock specimens set in nearby discovery drawers and looking for fossils.
- c. Ranching Gear/Hands-On Cabinet - Visitors explore jobs and tools of working-the-land trades e.g., ranching: branding irons, branded hide, barbed wire (mounted to wall, protective acrylic as needed). Open thematic Discovery drawers to explore real rocks, fossils, minerals, and soils that underlie the Flint Hills prairie.
- d. Barn Façade, Saddle, and Table - Visitors explore jobs and tools of working-the-land trades e.g., ranching: branding irons, branded hide, barbed wire (mounted to wall, protective acrylic as needed). Ms. Patton recommended a horseshoeing component, interactive wall mural, and rope activities. Ms. Bacon recommended a full horse for space, she loved the horseshoe component. She also felt an

overhead video would be beneficial. Ms. Bacon offered her land to film. Mr. Laverty asked what the FHDC wants the kids to learn from this new space. Ms. Bacon explained that grass contributes to the welfare of people. Cattle convert something we can't eat to something we can. Grasslands are necessary for this region.

- e. Toddler Corral - FHDC's youngest visitors will find many ways to crawl, climb, and maneuver around colorful, soft-sculpture elements reflective of prairie colors and shapes.

3. Sharing the Land

- a. Limb Bender Climber - Children build their gross motor skills climbing through oversized grasses and sliding to the ground.
- b. Train Table - Large design/landscapes reminiscent of the Flint Hills layered with train tracks and roadways allow open-ended, fine motor play. Key stops along the routes reveal select roles in the prairie to plate network (e.g., rancher, veterinarian, butcher, etc.)
- c. Cattle Puzzle - Guests discover the anatomy of their favorite beef cuts and surprising uses for cattle byproducts as they piece together this life-size steer puzzle.
- d. Cattle Systems - Guests get the inside view of a life-size steer as they trace the path of prairie grasses in and out of the digestive system.

Director Comments

It has been an amazing summer at the FHDC! We were busy with our very popular exhibit, Hands on Harley Davidson and participated in the Kansas Department of Health and Education, Sunflower Summer program. Additional information regarding attendance and the KDHE program are listed below. Our team has also been busy with developing plans for the 2nd floor children's area-Kidscape. A big thank you to each of you and our many community members who continue to support our work. We couldn't do it without each of you! So, thank you!

Staff Update

Stephen Bridenstine has been promoted to Asst. Director/Development.

Currently, the FHDC has the following staff positions open: Full time position-Curator of Education & part time position-Volunteer Coordinator.

Outreach/Special Events

Flint Hills Food Festival that was scheduled for Monday, September 6th was cancelled due to lack of restaurants and food trucks to participate. Plans are being developed for hosting the event in 2022.

Exhibits

September 25- January 2, 2022-Dinosaur Discoveries

<https://www.amnh.org/global-business-development/traveling-exhibitions/dinosaur-discoveries-ancient-fossils-new-ideas>

January 15-May 8, 2022-Measurement Rules

<https://pittsburghkids.org/pages/measurereental>

May 21-September 11, 2022-Big League Fun

<https://www.bbcmkids.org/big-league-fun/>

[September 2022-January 2023-Proposed-How People Make Things](https://thediscoverynetwork.org/exhibit/how-people-make-things/)

<https://thediscoverynetwork.org/exhibit/how-people-make-things/>

[January 2023-May2023-Available](https://www.bbcmkids.org/big-league-fun/)

[May 20, 2023-September 4, 2023-Proposed-Mission Aerospace](https://www.minotaurmazes.com/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/Mission-Aerospace/brochure_24.pdf)

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Education Department

- Hired and trained new full-time Education Supervisor, Katherine Colburn, who started June 1, 2021. This position had been vacant for (17) months since January 1, 2020. Hired two new Seasonal Educators in September.
- Completed (6) weeks of full-day camp for grade K-2 youth and (2) weeks of half-day camp for grade 3-6 youth with enhanced COVID safety protocols (e.g., mandatory face coverings). Completed without any COVID outbreaks or incidents.
- Started new series of grant-funded education programs at the Outdoor Classroom. This includes Nature Together for youth aged 0-3 and caregivers, Nature Explorers Jr. for special populations age 5-15, and two new geology school education programs – all free thanks to the Beach Family Foundation.
- Completed first ever Low Sensory Saturday event on October 2.
- Completed fall Downtown StoryWalk throughout the month of September in partnership with Downtown Manhattan and Manhattan Public Library with funding from The Alms Group. Featured the book *How do Dinosaurs Say Good Night?* to tie into our fall Dinosaur Discoveries exhibit. We gave away 100 free copies of the book to participants.
- Completed (28) formal education programs for (619) school age youth from June 1 through September 30, an above average number for the summer season.
- Restarted Education Birthday Party rentals, on hold since March 2020. Completed (5) rentals through October 9.
- Curator of Education Stephen Bridenstine serving on the Kidscape exhibit design committee

Rentals

Rentals have begun to increase and restrictions for number of people and limited catering has been lifted. We have hired a couple of seasonal staff to assist with the larger number of events.

Volunteer Program

Our volunteer support is still present in the building and increasing every day. Jonathan Mertz has been serving as interim in that position and has been getting new volunteers in as well as our past volunteers are returning more every week.

Volunteer Hour total year to date: 1,510

Guest Services/Membership

Hired and trained two new Guest Services employees, Brady Wolken who started June 2021 and Linda Zapata who started August 2021. One of these positions replaced Liz Wilson who graduated and relocated this summer, and the other position was vacant for a year.

Attendance:

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2019	3202	3420	5161	2584	6353	4314	5159	4264	4232	2914	3376	2483	47,462
2020	3393	3404	1938	0	0	388	1772	1682	1558	1695	1394	1281	18,505
2021	1659	2219	3337	2106	3657	4287	5691	3370	2432				28,758

- Sunflower Summer Program – The Kansas Department of Education offered a grant funded program to pay for families to visit (77) different venues in the State of Kansas for FREE. The Flint Hills Discovery Center was selected as a venue. The program allowed (2) adults and all youth (4-18) who were attending a school in Kansas (private, public, or home-school) to visit each facility one time. The KSDE paid us our regular \$10 adult rate and \$5 youth rate for each guest. Signup was on a Sunflower Summer Application and ran very smoothly. The FHDC was reimbursed weekly from the KSDE. This program ran from July 1 – August 15, 2021. This program brought

in (1545) adults and (1096) youth. It generated \$20,930 in admission revenue. Admission revenue in July and August surpassed 2019 July and August revenue when we were pre-COVID 19.

Gift Store revenue 2021 is up \$7000, in comparison to 2019. The focus is on carrying more local and regional made or themed product. Along with all other retailers, COVID has brought challenges receiving product.

Membership Sales Comparison

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	290	417	358	350	220
February	252	362	300	298	212
March	262	502	418	213	358
April	231	354	207	12	189
May	302	378	294	1	257
June	266	368	309	86	337
July	334	337	305	168	253
August	262	350	363	171	138
September	162	249	256	148	164
October	166	176	247	206	
November	178	203	189	366	
December	292	313	357	229	

TOTAL	2997	4009	3603	2248	2128
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Hosted (163) for the *Dinosaur Discoveries* Members opening on Friday, September 24th. Offered food and drink on the terrace as well as a preview of the exhibit

FHDC Foundation

We still have \$250,000 remaining in tax credits, that the Foundation needs to use by the end of the year. This is a unique opportunity as the Foundation was awarded the largest amount for the 2021 year. Donors use them as 50/50 credits, meaning the State of Kansas will return 50 percent of your gift when you file your 2021 taxes, in the Spring of 2022. This is a huge focus for the Foundation, as these go towards the funding for KIDSCAPE, the renovation of the 2nd floor. If you or anyone you know would like to participate, please contact Ms. White at fhdcfoundation1@gmail.com or call 785.748.1275.

The 2nd annual Bison, Beef and Bourbon event planning is in full swing. We are planning for the event to be held in person on October 23, 2021, at the Discovery Center. The night will be filled with bison and beef cuisine, complimentary bourbon, wine and beer, live music, and a silent and live auction. All proceeds from the evening will go towards the final funding of KIDSCAPE. Please share the event with friends, family, and social media. If you would like to purchase a ticket you may go to auctria.events/BisonBeefBourbon. Online bidding will open in one week.

We continue working on KIDSCAPE and its funding. This past month we were awarded \$100,000 from the Deihl Foundation, which we are so grateful for. Phase 2 was presented to the city commissioners on October 5th; therefore, we can continue moving forward. We believe the exhibit should open Memorial Weekend 2022. Ms. White said she would send tax credit information to the board.

New Business

The following Traveling Exhibits were presented and discussed along with approval to move forward with contracts for all three exhibits.

How People Make Things – September 24, 2022 – January 8, 2023

This is the first exhibit we are bringing back to the FHDC. Discussed potential partnerships with KSU Engineering, RMG Manufacturing, and Schilling Construction. Ms. Bacon moved to approve the exhibit and Ms. Reese seconded. On vote, the motion carried 6/0.

Mission Aerospace – May 20, 2023 – September 10, 2023

Discussed potential partnerships with KSU Physics, K-State Salina, Wichita Aerospace, Topeka Airplane Museum, and Forbes Field. Ms. Reese moved to approve the exhibit, and Mr. Pecoraro seconded. On vote, the motion carried 6/0.

Dinosaurs: Fossils Exposed – January 21, 2023 – May 7, 2023

Mr. Pecoraro moved to approve the exhibit, and Mr. Lavery seconded. On vote, the motion carried 6/0.

Adjournment

At 5:08 p.m. Ms. Patton adjourned the meeting.