

**FHDC Advisory Board Meeting**  
**July 11, 2022**  
**4:00 pm**  
**Blue Earth Room – Flint Hills Discovery Center**  
315 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Manhattan, KS 66502

Present were the following members of the FHDC Advisory Board: Mr. John Hund, and Mr. Brad Logan. Ms. Rose Bacon, and Ms. Susan Rensing participated virtually. Also present were, FHDC Assistant Director, Mr. Stephen Bridenstine and Guest Services/Membership Manager, Ms. Mary Hildreth.

**Minutes**

April 2022 minutes were approved as written. Ms. Bacon moved and Mr. Logan seconded. On vote, motion carried 4/0.

**Old Business**

- **TASK Grant** - The Tourism Attraction Sub-grants for Kansas (TASK) program is a one-time opportunity for the enhancement of Kansas attraction assets. The TASK program is administered by the Kansas Tourism Division of the Kansas Department of Commerce. Our grant was for \$200,000 and the other half would be matched by the FHDC Foundation. The FHDC applied for this grant to fund an interactive, augmented reality prairie environment that was originally in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor KIDSCAPE plans but removed due to lack of space. If we get the grant, the earliest this would open would be 2024. Mr. Bridenstine shared we were expecting an answer first week of June, but it has been delayed as it is a federal grant and hope to have an answer within this next month.

**FHDC Report**

***Director Comments:***

All is going well at the center and guests are enjoying the Prairie Playscape area and the summer exhibit, “Big League Fun”. Attendance and revenues are up, and we are back to planning for this coming fall program events. Had a successful Flint Hills Festival in early May are already planning for next year’s event.

***Staff Update:***

Sally Dreher began her new position as the Curator of Education on Monday, May 23. Still need to hire a part time Volunteer Coordinator. This position is supervised by the Curator of Education, and we are working on posting this position by August. Still have an opening in Guest Services and rental support staff.

***Outreach/Special Events:***

The month began with Flint Hills Festival on May 7<sup>th</sup>. This year’s event was free outside, but admission was required for entry into the center. Many local partners, food trucks and music along with fun activities for all ages. We had 3009 in attendance.

Opened the Prairie Playscape-2<sup>nd</sup> floor children’s area on Friday, May 27 at 9:00am and that evening opened the summer exhibit, “Big League Fun”. It was a fabulous day for both events and both exhibits have been well received by guests.

Hosted Sports Saturday: Get Fit! Have Fun! on June 25<sup>th</sup> from 10am-3pm. A fun day will with healthy living message with partners and activities. Partners included: Ascension Via Christi, Kansas Learning Center for Health-Halstead, K-State Sports/Athletics, K-State Rowing, KSU PA program, Little Apple Soccer Club, Parks & Rec Dance Troop, and Ayurveda Yoga. In addition to a visit by Willie the Wildcat and book signing with Bill Snyder and D. Scott Fritchen. Had over 600 in attendance!

National Day of the Cowboy is scheduled for July 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10am-3pm.

***Exhibits:***

May 28-September 11, 2022-Big League Fun

<https://www.bbcmkids.org/big-league-fun/>  
September 2022-January 2023-How People Make Things  
<https://thediscoverynetwork.org/exhibit/how-people-make-things/>  
January 21, 2023-May 7, 2023-Dinosaurs: Fossils Exposed  
<https://thediscoverynetwork.org/exhibit/dinosaurs-fossils-exposed/>  
May 20, 2023-September 4, 2023--Mission Aerospace  
[https://www.minotaurmazes.com/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/Mission-Aerospace/brochure\\_24.pdf](https://www.minotaurmazes.com/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/Mission-Aerospace/brochure_24.pdf)

### **Development/Marketing**

- Secured \$55,000 sponsorship from Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation for the exhibit, *Big League Fun*.
- Continuing with themed daily social media posts like “Member Monday”, “Flint Hills Business Spotlight” to highlight unique businesses in the region, “What we do Wednesday” to show FHDC behind-the-scenes work, and “Sunflower Summer Spotlights”.

### **Education Department:**

- End of May through June – Held 18 days of full day Summer Adventure Camp and 5 days of half day Summer Adventure Camp.
- Demonstrations for Splash of Science began at beginning of June. Very active with families in Blue Earth Plaza. Helping to draw attendance inside after program.
- Continuing the Outdoor Classroom program series with scheduling happening now for grant-funded school programs, the Nature Explorers Jr., Prairie Garde Walks, and Nature Together program this fall.
- Offered a June StoryWalk Downtown in partnership with Downtown Manhattan Inc. and Manhattan Public Library. Featuring the book *Randy Riley’s Really Big Hit* by Christ Van Dusen.
- Offered two Low Sensory Saturday mornings where patrons could visit with less stimulation from exhibits and operations in the building.
- Education team members participated in the Flint Hills Festival by having a booth where families could interact with educators and each other by making dry ice bubbles, learning from the Bison box, playing vole in the hole, building with blue blocks, or playing Dino corn hole.
- Team members supported Sports Saturday in a successful event by offering an obstacle course, a pom-pom craft, and a baseball toss.
- Preschoolers in the Flint Hills is now offered as a morning session and an afternoon session on the first and third Tuesday of the month. We offered 8 sessions throughout April-June with 71 preschool participants.
- Offered 63 Education Programs benefiting 1,731 students. Offered 19 Group Visits reaching 612 visitors.

### **Rentals:**

Rentals have increased but slowly. We have had to pull back on some events this summer due to staffing issues.

### **Volunteer Program:**

Our volunteer support is still present in the building and increasing daily. Jonathan Mertz continues to serve as interim. Will be posting the position in early August. Volunteers were recognized at this year’s Friend of the Flint Hills. April volunteer hours total: over 300

### **Guest Services/Membership:**

D.J Smith-Getchell joined our Guest Services Team in May, and are hiring for the other vacant position.

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, we hosted Coach Bill Snyder and D. Scott Fritchen for a book signing of My Football Life and The Rest of the Story. We had 641 in attendance that day.

This is the second year the FHDC has participated with the Sunflower Summer through the KS Department of Education. The program will pay admission for all students (public, private, and home school) in the State of Kansas to visit (90) venues one time from May 28 – August 14. Any student from ages preschool – 12<sup>th</sup> grade and special education students up to 21 years of age plus two guardians are eligible by downloading the application or filling out the alternative registration form. The program reimburses the FHDC our regular rate of \$10 per adult and \$5 for youth. To date, we have welcomed 2298 individuals through the program.

**Admission Attendance:**

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
<b>2019</b>	3202	3420	5161	2584	6353	4314	5159	4264	4232	2914	3376	2483	<b>47,462</b>
<b>2020</b>	3393	3404	1938	0	0	388	1772	1682	1558	1695	1394	1281	<b>18,505</b>
<b>2021</b>	1659	2219	3337	2106	3657	4287	5691	3370	2432	3379	3544	3663	<b>39,344</b>
<b>2022</b>	1878	2630	3536	3414	6898	7029							<b>25,385</b>

**2022 Year to Date (January - June: (2020 is excluded))**

	<b>FHDC Revenue Year to Date</b>				
	Admissions (Including nontaxable)	Gift Shop	Education	Rentals	Memberships
2019	\$ 82,373	\$ 26,711	\$ 31,292	\$ 41,425	\$ 36,199
2021	\$ 70,507	\$ 31,908	\$ 21,412	\$ 16,725	\$ 27,522
2022	\$ 71,514	\$ 37,917	\$ 31,807	\$ 25,463	\$ 32,050

Membership:

- Spring Members Drive: April 14 – May 31: FHDC 10-Year Anniversary kicked off the Spring Membership Drive leading up to Big League Fun, our summer exhibit, and the completion of our 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Prairie Playscape. New or renew memberships received 10% off, April 14 – 17<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the centers 10-year anniversary. Memberships that were pre-purchased and did not start until current membership expired. All members that renewed during the drive were entered into a gift basket drawing valued at \$150. We sold 557 memberships totaling \$11,827 in membership revenue.

**Membership Sales Comparison:**

	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	358	350	220	177
February	300	298	212	243
March	418	213	358	308
April	207	12	189	294
May	294	1	257	384
June	309	86	337	332
July	305	168	253	
August	363	171	138	
September	256	148	170	
October	247	206	255	
November	189	366	254	
December	357	229	330	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3603</b>	<b>2248</b>	<b>2973</b>	<b>1738</b>

**FHDC Foundation Report** – will purchase 15 passenger van for the FHDC with a wrap with our name and logo. Friend of the Flint Hills over (100) in attendance and raised over \$14,000. Participated in Grow Green in April and raised over \$14,000. Some of the funds were used to purchase (300) youth passes to be given as prizes for summer reading program to libraries across the Flint Hills region. Prairie Playscape opened and the FHDC Foundation should have payments for this project paid in full by the end of summer. Bison, Beef, and Bourbon will be held on a Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. Save the dates will be sent out soon.

**New Business**

Sculpture Committee to add public art in and around the FHDC. In 2020, we had a proposal to display a bison sculpture in front of the FHDC. We put the project on pause as the city was examining their public art policy and we did not have full funding for the sculpture. Moving forward to 2022, The Greater Manhattan

Community Foundation has funds available to pay for the sculpture. We are looking for a committee, to help create a plan to guide this process. The second step would be selecting a piece of art we would like to move forward with on this project. Mr. Bridenstine, reached out to artist that had bison sculpture were considering in 2020. That sculpture was not available, but he was open to commission something.

**Proposed Committee:**

FHDC Director

FGDC Assistant Director

FHDC Foundation Director

FHDC Advisory Board Member #1 – Ms. Vicki Patton

FHDC Advisory Board Member #2

Community Member #1

Community Member #2

Community Member #3

Mr. Bridenstine is looking for one volunteer from the board member. Ms. Rensing suggested an MHK resident, someone from the Art and Light Museum, Ms. Jess Kerr, and a representative from the KSU Landscape Architecture School.

Ms. Rose Bacon resigned from the Advisory Board as they are retiring and moving out of state.

**Adjournment**

At 4:50 p.m., Mr. Logan moved and Ms. Rensing seconded to adjourned the meeting.