

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 16, 2016, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE MEETING

The Executive Committee (“Committee”) of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution (“Smithsonian”) held a teleconference meeting on August 16, 2016. Participating were Executive Committee and Board Chair John W. McCarter, Jr and Vice Chair Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson.

Also present by invitation of the Committee were Secretary Skorton; Acting Chief of Staff to the Secretary Greg Bettwy; Assistant Secretary of Advancement Virginia Clark; Director of the National Museum of American History John Gray; Under Secretary for Finance & Administration/Chief Financial Officer Albert Horvath; Acting Provost/Under Secretary for Museums & Research Richard Kurin; Acting Assistant Secretary for Communications and External Affairs John Lapiana; General Counsel Judith Leonard; Deputy Chief of Staff to the Regents Rachel Parker; Director of Government Relations Nell Payne; and Chief of Staff to the Regents Porter Wilkinson.

CALL TO ORDER AND EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. McCarter called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and the Committee entered into an executive session to receive an update on a sensitive and potentially litigious matter.

The executive session adjourned at approximately 10:18 a.m., after which the Committee entered into open session.

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved the draft minutes of the July, 14, 2016, teleconference meeting without modification.

AMERICAN WOMEN’S HISTORY MUSEUM

Director of Government Relations Nell Payne updated the Committee on recent inquiries regarding the idea of an American Women’s History Museum. Currently, a congressional commission has been established to study the feasibility of the museum and report back to Congress by November 16, 2016. The commission was not provided any federal funding for its work, and was instructed by Congress to evaluate the feasibility of creating the museum without federal support. Ms. Payne summarized the Smithsonian’s involvement with the commission to date. Secretary Skorton and other Smithsonian officials have met with the Chair of the commission and some of the commissioners many times, including a tour of the Arts and Industries Building as part of their evaluation of potential sites. In these conversations, Smithsonian officials have stressed the importance of federal support in order for the project to be successful, and provided information and insight into how the Smithsonian and its museums function, as well as other types of relationships that could be created with the Smithsonian. The Smithsonian has been impressed with the caliber of the Commission’s work.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR THE JOSEPH HENRY MEDAL

The Committee discussed the Joseph Henry Medal, which is given by resolution of the Board of Regents to individuals in recognition of their distinguished service, achievements, or contributions to the Smithsonian. The general criteria required to merit the award was reviewed and the Committee agreed that any proposals of awarding the medal must include a justification of the candidate's accomplishments, beyond the impact on their respective museum, to demonstrate a more broad and cultural impact.

DIVERSITY ON CULTURAL BOARDS

The Committee discussed the topic of diversity on cultural boards, related to membership on the Smithsonian's advisory boards and the Board of Regents. Secretary Skorton suggested a number of ways that Smithsonian boards could expand and diversify membership, including the development of a working group to evaluate board operations and recommend improvements. The annual advisory board retreat, which is scheduled to be held in the fall of 2016, will include a discussion on diversifying boards on a broad level, including vocation, race, geography, and age.

REVIEW OF OCTOBER MEETING AGENDA

Chief of Staff to the Regents Porter Wilkinson provided a brief review of the draft agenda for the October Board of Regents meeting. The Committee will review the agenda again at the next meeting, which is scheduled for September 9, 2016.

OPENING OF NMAAHC

The Secretary provided an update on the opening plans for the National Museum of African American History and Culture ("NMAAHC"). Logistical planning is still underway for the celebratory activities and events that are scheduled to be held in the days leading up to and following the museum's September 24, 2016, grand opening. With the vast number of crowds anticipated to attend, security measures will be high.

The Committee discussed NMAAHC's plans to implement a timed pass system in order to address the high demand for visitor access during the opening, and in the months—and potentially years—that follow. To cover the costs of the pass system and other costs associated with security, staffing, and equipment to support crowd management, NMAAHC will charge a service fee of \$2.00 - \$3.00 per pass to commercial tour operators. Service fees will not be charged for passes for the general public or non-commercial groups, such as schools and religious organizations. The Committee agreed that the timed pass system is necessary to ensure safety and visitor engagement, especially during and immediately following the museum's grand opening. Routine evaluation and review of the system will continue, in order to determine the efficacy of timed passes and extension of the project.

LONDON UPDATE

The Committee received an update on the Smithsonian's collaboration in London with the Victoria & Albert Museum ("V&A"). In the coming months, Smithsonian management plans to convene regularly with the V&A both in London, England and in Washington, DC in order to further develop the content and general business model of the project. The Secretary and Mr. McCarter will both visit London in early September to engage in conversations about timeline, funding, and content.

ARTS & INDUSTRIES BUILDING UPDATE

The Committee was updated on the status of the Arts & Industries Building ("AIB"). Rachel Goslins was recently selected as the new Director of AIB. In this role, she will be responsible for the development and implementation of all plans, to include programming, exhibitions, and infrastructure. Previously, Ms. Goslins served as Executive Director of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities ("PCAH"), which advises the White House on cultural policy. Ms. Goslins first day at the Smithsonian will be August 22, 2016.

UPDATES TO SD 603

General Counsel Judith Leonard briefed the Committee on updates to the Smithsonian Directive 603. Changes to the policy will include the broadening of the policy's application to include review of potential Smithsonian programs, rather than just potential exhibitions. The policy changes will also alter the procedures by which potential programs and exhibitions are reviewed internally. It is anticipated that the changes will take effect this fall.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Committee conducted a final executive session to discuss personnel matters related to the staffing and organization of senior management and open museum director positions.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. McCarter, Jr.
Chair