

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 6, 2023, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Executive Committee (“Committee”) of the Board of Regents (“Board”) of the Smithsonian Institution (“Smithsonian”) conducted a videoconference meeting on December 6, 2023. Participating were Board and Executive Committee Chair Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey and Committee member Barbara M. Barrett.

Also present by invitation of the Committee were Secretary Lonnie Bunch; Counselor to the Chief Justice Robert M. Dow, Jr.; Chief of Staff to the Secretary Greg Bettwy; Acting General Counsel Farleigh Earhart; Deputy Chief of Staff to the Regents Kate Forester; Special Assistant to the Regents Mallory Gianola (recorder); Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer Meroë Park; and Chief of Staff to the Regents Porter Wilkinson.

CALL TO ORDER

Board and Executive Committee Chair Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and reviewed the agenda.

Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey reminded the Committee that the April 8, 2024, meeting of the Board of Regents coincides with the next total solar eclipse. The Board is planning to travel to Johnson City, Texas, with the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (“SAO”) Advisory Board, SAO scientists, and Smithsonian Journeys. The Committee reviewed the proposed schedule, meeting format, and list of confirmed attendees for the April meeting.

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the draft minutes of the November 14, 2023, Committee meeting were approved.

REGENTS’ PUBLIC FORUM

As part of the Smithsonian’s ongoing commitment to transparency, the Regents typically host an annual public forum to provide an opportunity for direct interaction with the public. Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey reviewed the format of the Regents’ annual public forum to be held on December 19, 2023. The event will be held virtually and will provide an opportunity to introduce the new members of the Executive Committee. The public forum will also focus on key matters at the Smithsonian, including the new museums, America250 celebration, collections space planning, and artificial intelligence (“AI”).

JANUARY BOARD MEETING

Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey then led a discussion on the upcoming meeting of the Board of Regents to be held on January 29, 2024. Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey noted that although topics are being finalized, the January meeting agenda will likely include the following items: (1) the annual compensation review for the Secretary and senior executives, (2) proposed recommendations for 2024 committee chairmanships and membership, (3) the annual report on workplace culture, and (4) key matters at the Smithsonian,

including a financial review and implications from any Federal budget decisions, updates from the Human Remains Task Force, and strategic plan implementation.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

The Secretary provided an update on the state of the Smithsonian. Secretary Bunch first informed the Committee that he would be sharing the December issue of *The Atlantic* with the Board of Regents, which is an issue dedicated to re-examining Reconstruction and includes an article written by the Secretary, as well as features from David Blight, Drew Faust, and Anna Deveare Smith.

The Secretary also updated the Committee on the giant panda program. On November 8, 2023, the giant pandas Mei Xiang (may-SHONG), Tian Tian (tee-YEN tee-YEN), and Xiao Qi Ji (SHIAU-chi-ji) departed the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute and arrived in Chengdu, China the following day. Pandas Mei Xiang and Tian Tian first arrived at the National Zoo in 2000 as part of a giant panda research and breeding program between the Smithsonian and the China Wildlife Conservation Association. The Smithsonian remains committed to continuing its efforts to secure and safeguard a healthy future for giant pandas and their habitat.

Secretary Bunch also led a discussion on the Institution's ongoing response to the Washington Post's series regarding human remains in the Smithsonian's collections. The Secretary reminded the Committee that the Smithsonian formed a task force to develop a policy that addresses the future of human remains held within the museums' collections. In December, the Human Remains Task Force will deliver its recommendations on how to best proceed with the repatriation of approximately 30,000 human remains in the Smithsonian's collections. The recommendations will be shared with the Board of Regents at its January meeting.

To conclude, the Secretary briefed the Committee on his participation in an upcoming Congressional Hearing. On December 12, the Committee on House Administration will hold a full committee hearing titled, "Looking Ahead Series: Oversight of the Smithsonian Institution." The Secretary noted that it has been three years since the Committee has held a wide-ranging oversight hearing of the Smithsonian.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Committee moved into an executive session at approximately 11:24 a.m. to discuss confidential personnel and business matters.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to consider, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey, Chair