

MINUTES OF THE MAY 12, 2022, FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

The Facilities Committee (“Committee”) of the Board of Regents (“Board”) of the Smithsonian Institution (“Smithsonian”) conducted a videoconference meeting on May 12, 2022. Participating were Committee Chair John Fahey and Committee members Representative Adrian Smith; Michael Govan; Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey; Dennis Keller; John W. McCarter, Jr.; and Mitchell N. Schear.

Also present by invitation of the Committee were Director of Smithsonian Facilities Nancy Bechtol; Chief of Staff to the Secretary Greg Bettwy; Associate General Counsel Craig Blackwell; Under Secretary for Administration Ron Cortez; Deputy Chief of Staff to the Regents Kate Forester; Special Assistant to the Regents Mallory Gianola (recorder); Under Secretary for Museums and Culture Kevin Gover; Inspector General Cathy Helm; Chief Financial Officer Janice Lambert; Senior Adviser to Senator Leahy Kevin McDonald; Assistant General Counsel Anne Nelson; Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer Meroë Park; Director for the Office of Planning, Design, and Construction Derek Ross; Director of the Office of Government Relations Vernon Simms; Assistant Secretary for Advancement Rob Spiller; Director of the National Collections Program Bill Tompkins; and Chief of Staff to the Regents Porter Wilkinson.

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair John Fahey called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 2, 2022, COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the March 2, 2022, Committee meeting were approved without modification.

NEW MUSEUMS

Under Secretary for Administration Ron Cortez updated the Committee on the status of site selection for the two new Smithsonian museums: National Museum of the American Latino (“NMAL”) and Smithsonian American Women’s History Museum (“SAWHM”). The locations for the two museums are to be determined by the Board of Regents not later than December 2022. Smithsonian leadership and the Regents are working diligently to comply with the statutory deadline. Mr. Cortez noted the Committee’s discussion would serve as a preview to the larger conversation planned for the Board at its June meeting.

The Committee first reviewed a list of sites that are being evaluated by the architectural engineering firm Ayers Saint Gross (“ASG”). Potential sites are being evaluated based on location, existing site conditions, transportation, environmental factors, costs, and acquisition potential. Mr. Cortez also informed the Committee that audience research projects concluded in March and the results will be incorporated into ASG’s site analysis and weighting of criteria. Surveys and focus groups were conducted to solicit both local and national perspectives. Focus sessions included stakeholders from civic groups and community non-profits, government

leaders, congressional representatives, artists, performers, educators, museum professionals and potential donors. The leaders of the commissions that originally recommended establishing the museums were invited to comment along with leaders of Latino and women’s organizations as well as the advisory and council board members for both museums. In addition, Smithsonian leadership consulted with the mayor’s office, the D.C. Council and local groups.

The Smithsonian Facilities team led a tour of potential sites for the Board of Regents on April 11. The SAWHM Advisory Council also toured potential sites in-person, and a virtual tour was held for the NMAL Board of Trustees. Among the sites toured by the Regents and the advisory boards, potential locations included unbuilt sites, sites with historic buildings, and sites with buildings that could be demolished. Current next steps for site selection include developing preliminary space programs with NMAL and SAWHM for use in ASG’s evaluation of sites.

REVITALIZATION OF THE HISTORIC CORE

Director of the Office of Planning, Design, and Construction Derek Ross led a strategic discussion on efforts to revitalize the Historic Core – the Smithsonian Institution Building (the “Castle”) and the Arts and Industries Building. The discussion focused on preparing the Castle to support special events and public operations during the United States Semiquincentennial celebration in 2026. The Smithsonian is planning to execute portions of the planning, design, and construction that can be accomplished prior to spring 2026 in an effort to ensure that the Great Hall, Schermer Hall, and Commons spaces in the Castle are open for special events from spring through fall 2026, and the landscape surrounding the Castle and AIB are open and safe for public use. The Committee also discussed plans to maintain flexibility for future revitalization project scope for the Central Utility Plant (“CUP”) and potential for AIB to be selected as one of the new museum sites.

SMITHSONIAN COLLECTIONS SPACE PROGRAM

Director of the National Collections Program Bill Tompkins and Director of the Office of Planning, Design, and Construction Derek Ross briefed the Committee on how the Institution is addressing current and long-term collections space needs, acquiring new collections, and working to safeguard collections already entrusted in the Smithsonian’s care. As the Smithsonian looks to bring two new museums to life, the Institution will need more collections space and must leverage opportunities to realize efficient and effective operations through shared facilities and resources. Together, the Suitland Collections Center Master Plan and the Collections Space Framework Plan serve as a model of One Smithsonian collaboration and will enhance stewardship of collections by establishing long-term strategies, priorities, policies, and plans to address Institution-wide collections needs. Along with lessons from this collaboration, a key takeaway from the Committee’s discussion was the need to reevaluate long-term collections’ strategy in order to balance the high cost of storage space against programmatic needs.

CAPITAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND FACILITIES RESOURCES

The Committee had an opportunity to ask questions related to the read-ahead information provided on the Facilities Capital Program, including major capital projects planned for fiscal years 2022 through 2031 and funding for fiscal years 2021 through 2023. In fiscal year 2022, the Smithsonian received \$210 million in capital funds. The Smithsonian requested \$265 million in federal appropriations for facilities capital for fiscal year 2023, including \$36 million for construction of the Pod 6 collections storage facility at the Museum Support Center and the final \$23 million for the National Air and Space Museum revitalization.

The Committee also received read-ahead information on the Facilities Maintenance Program and funding for fiscal years 2021 through 2023. In fiscal year 2022, the Smithsonian received \$116.9 million for the maintenance program, to continue addressing the Institution's deferred maintenance backlog. The Institution requested \$119.3 million in facilities maintenance for fiscal year 2023.

MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATES

The Committee also had an opportunity to ask questions about the read-ahead information provided on the Smithsonian's major capital projects, specifically the revitalization of the building envelope and infrastructure at the National Air and Space Museum on the National Mall; planning of the National Air and Space Museum Integrated Bezos Learning Center; and the construction of the collections storage building Pod 6 at the Museum Support Center in Suitland, MD.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Committee then moved into an executive session at approximately 2:37 p.m. to discuss confidential business matters.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
John Fahey, Chair