

MINUTES OF THE JULY 21, 2021, FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

The Facilities Committee (“Committee”) of the Board of Regents (“Board”) of the Smithsonian Institution (“Smithsonian”) conducted a videoconference meeting on July 21, 2021. Participating were Committee Chair John Fahey and Committee members Representative Adrian Smith; Michael Govan; Dr. Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey; 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; Chief of Staff to Representative Smith Monica Didiuk; 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; Acting Under Secretary for Administration Doug Hall; Inspector General Cathy Helm; Chief Financial Officer Janice Lambert; Assistant Secretary for Communications and External Affairs and Chief Marketing Officer Julissa Marengo; Senior Adviser to Senator Leahy Kevin McDonald; Program Management Specialist for Smithsonian Facilities Tiffany Myers; Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer Meroë Park; Director of the Office of Facilities Management and Reliability Rick Petito; Acting Director for the Office of Planning, Design, and Construction Derek Ross; Director of the Office of Government Relations Vernon Simms; Assistant Secretary for Advancement Robert Spiller; Chief of Staff to the Regents Porter Wilkinson; and Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Administration Allison Willcox.

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair John Fahey called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and reviewed the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 30, 2021, COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the April 30, 2021, Committee meeting were approved without modification.

COMMITTEE CHARTER REVIEW

The Committee reviewed its Charter per its mandate to annually review and assess the Charter and evaluate the Committee’s performance with respect to the requirements of the Charter. No modifications to the Charter were proposed.

HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN REVITALIZATION

Director of Smithsonian Facilities Nancy Bechtol updated the Committee on the revitalization of the Sculpture Garden at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. The Sculpture Garden revitalization will address critical infrastructure needs and enable the Hirshhorn campus to support the museum’s mission and expanded programming and collections, as well as enhance

visitor experience and accessibility. Ms. Bechtol reminded the Committee that the Smithsonian is required to identify and engage a variety of consulting parties during the Section 106 review process, which applies to federal agencies. The Smithsonian submitted an information presentation to the National Capital Planning Commission (“NCPC”) in June, with preliminary site development plans for the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden Revitalization project. The Institution also conducted Section 106 Consulting Parties review across two dates, June 16 and July 7, 2021, to specifically address details of the inner partition wall featuring stacked stone. The design phase is slated to continue through 2021, with construction beginning in 2022.

REVITALIZATION OF THE HISTORIC CORE

Acting Director for the Office of Planning, Design, and Construction Derek Ross briefed the Committee on the revitalization of the Historic Core, which encompasses the Smithsonian Institution Building (“Castle”) and the Arts and Industries Building (“AIB”). Mr. Ross highlighted the benefits and building goals for the proposed new underground Central Utilities Plant (“CUP”), which will provide mechanical and electrical infrastructure and a new Consolidated Loading Facility to improve the efficiency and safety of materials handling on the South Mall Campus. The below grade construction will also create areas for building systems and support spaces that will free up areas in both historic buildings for public use. Mr. Ross reviewed the funding plan through fiscal year 2028 along with the proposed project schedule. The project is moving from concept design to schematics, with complete schematic design expected in February 2022.

NEW SMITHSONIAN MUSEUMS

Mr. Ross also led the Committee’s discussion on the status of site selection for the two new Smithsonian museums: National Museum of the American Latino and Smithsonian American Women’s History Museum. The locations for the two museums are to be determined by the Board of Regents not later than two years after enactment of the bill – December 2022. Mr. Ross informed the Committee that the Smithsonian has completed the normal Request for Quote (“RFQ”) process. The architectural engineering firm Ayers Saint Gross and Moya Design Partners as a subconsultant have been selected to help identify, evaluate, test, and vet available sites for each museum concurrently, to be presented to the Board of Regents for consideration. It is anticipated that the Facilities Committee will perform a preliminary site selection review in April 2022.

SMITHSONIAN FACILITIES CAPITAL PROGRAM

The Committee received an update on the facilities capital program and funding for fiscal years 2021 through 2022. The Smithsonian submitted a request to Congress for \$230 million in facilities capital for fiscal year 2022, which included funding requests for the National Air and Space Museum rebuilding, revitalization of the Smithsonian’s Historic Core, and construction of the Pod 6 collections storage. Ms. Bechtol informed the Committee that Congress had not passed the fiscal year 2022 appropriation and the Institution is preparing to begin fiscal year 2022 operating under a Continuing Resolution (“CR”). The Committee also reviewed the

breakdown of federal funding and projected timeline for major capital programs and projects for fiscal years 2022 through 2031.

CONSTRUCTION COST DRIVERS

Mr. Ross then led the Committee’s discussion on construction cost drivers as they relate to mitigating the risk of rising construction costs. Cost drivers currently impacting the Smithsonian include contractual requirements, access, and quality. Although construction costs measured by gross square feet are escalating, the Smithsonian is working towards construction cost savings efforts in its major capital projects, including offsite fabrication, use of advanced Building Information Modeling technologies, and re-use innovations.

SMITHSONIAN FACILITIES MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Next, Director of the Office of Facilities Management and Reliability Rick Petito presented the facilities maintenance plans and funding requirements for fiscal years 2021 through 2022. For fiscal year 2022, the Smithsonian submitted a request to Congress for \$116.8 million for the facilities maintenance program. Mr. Petito also reviewed the aggregate gap in maintenance funding, the Smithsonian facilities maintenance budget request of two percent of the Institution-wide Current Replacement Value (“CRV”), and the increases in proposed maintenance funding for fiscal years 2021 through 2027, which will enable the Smithsonian to continue addressing critical facility maintenance and investment needs. Mr. Petito noted that while the Smithsonian has completed a total of 447 maintenance projects in fiscal years 2020 and 2021, supply chain cost increases resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic are impacting the Institution’s maintenance projects and allocated budget.

MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATES

The Committee then received updates on two of the Smithsonian’s major capital projects related to the National Museum of Natural History (“NMNH”). Ms. Bechtol first gave an update on the replacement of the NMNH Botany Greenhouse at the Museum Support Center in Suitland, MD. The existing Greenhouse must be demolished before the construction for the Pod 6 collections storage facility can begin. This project will include construction of a new NMNH Botany Greenhouse adjacent to the Smithsonian Gardens Greenhouse site. Design has been completed in fiscal year 2021 and construction is scheduled through fiscal year 2022. Ms. Bechtol also reviewed progress on the electrical infrastructure project at the National Museum of Natural History. The project scope includes demolition and comprehensive replacement of the electrical system, its major equipment, and associated components throughout the museum. Design of the project was completed in 2020 and construction is expected to be completed in 2023.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Committee then moved into an executive session at approximately 11:21 a.m. to discuss confidential business matters.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,
John Fahey, Chair