

**Virginia Museum of Natural History  
Waynesboro Advocacy Committee Meeting  
Waynesboro Office of Economic Development  
May 5, 2025, 1 PM  
Minutes**

**Attending In-Person:** Dr. Maggie Van Huss  
Mr. Rick Kane

**Attending Remotely:** Dr. Tom Benzing  
Ms. Faye Cooper  
Ms. Stephanie Duff  
Mr. Jonathan Martin (staff)  
Mr. Ryan Barber (staff)  
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (staff)

**Welcome**

Dr. Tom Benzing called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM and welcomed everyone attending in-person and remotely. It was determined there was no quorum present, therefore no votes could be taken.

Minutes from April will be voted on at the June committee meeting.

**Detail Design**

Mr. Barber reported that Dr. Benzing and Dr. Carole Nash's funding support letter provided to the Finance Committee of the VMNH Foundation was appreciated and well received. The Finance Committee will recommend to the full VMNHF Board to use multiple line items as suggested to finish financing the detailed design work. The full VMNH Foundation Board will meet on May 16<sup>th</sup> to vote on the proposal.

Mr. Martin gave a brief status report about the ongoing preliminary design work.

Design Progress and Cost Estimate

The design firm, Glavé & Holmes has nearly finished their work and reported an estimated project cost of \$20,944,084. The most recent DEB target cost is \$19,642,304. Staff anticipate detailed design work to be completed in 6-8 weeks.

Site Approval and Next Steps

Staff learned that due to a recent executive order the Department of Engineering and Building (DEB) is now permitting construction in or adjacent to floodplains. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is responsible for approving work in 500-year floodplains. Our site engineer (Timmons Group) is currently working with DCR.

Value Engineering (VE) Study

Glavé & Holmes is currently conducting the VE study, which is required for preliminary design approval. Many VE elements have been addressed such as colorful panels removed and ceiling height reductions. Further options may be limited.

#### VMNH Coordination Efforts

VMNH staff is working with Scott Wachter (JMU) to be granted a waiver for the independent cost estimate and VE study that typically follows the detailed design stage. If approved, this could reduce the preliminary design costs by ~\$60,000. A second independent cost estimate will still be required at the end of working drawings.

Staff are also exploring funding options to meet sustainable energy requirements.

#### **Advocacy**

The letter writing campaign continues and has been encouraged by many organizations.

It is anticipated that during the next full VMNH Foundation Board meeting, a vote will be taken to sunset the current role of CCR. The former CCR will then take on the new role as a supplement for VMNH Foundation for fundraising specifically in Waynesboro. There will be a joint meeting between the former CCR and WAC on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025.

Mr. Barber reported that river interpretive signage is projected to be installed in early June. Signs are currently in production. VMNH staff plan to participate in a ribbon cutting event on August 21<sup>st</sup>.

Dr. Benzing reported that the Wayne Lecture Series concluded in April and will resume this fall. Guest speakers for the fall have already been contacted and work continues to bring engaging and insightful guests to the Wayne Theatre.

Mr. Barber said the Riverfest event was successful for VMNH outreach, serving 560. Staff in attendance found most people are aware of the project and anxious for the opening.

Ms. Duffy confirmed the Waynesboro Street Art Festival and Museum Rodeo will be held on May 17 and May 18 at Constitution Park. VMFA is participating by bringing their new trailer to the event. Dr. Benzing asked about the status of our trailer and if it will be available for visitors. Dr. Benzing asked if we need volunteer support for this event that we contact Len Poulin as soon as possible. Mr. Barber reported that we should be receiving a quote by the end of this week (5.9) from Charlie's RV & Outdoors. Once we have the scope of repairs, staff will solicit quick quotes to continue the process. Staff is unsure if the trailer will be available for on May 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Open Discussion**

No new business.

#### **Adjournment**

Next meeting: June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1:00 PM - Waynesboro (joint meeting with CCR)

Adjourned 1:25