

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, May 8th, 2024 – 7 pm

Monroe County Museum
126 South Monroe Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting of April 10th, 2024
5. Public Comment
6. Committee Updates
 - 6.1. Executive Committee
 - 6.2. Awards Committee
 - 6.3. Building Committee
 - 6.4. Markers Committee
 - 6.5. Projects Committee
 - 6.5.1. Monroe County Historical Society Extension Request –
Action Needed
7. New Business
 - 7.1. MCMS Reports
8. Old Business
9. Public Comment
10. Board Comments
11. Adjournment

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, June 12, 2024 @ 7 pm
Monroe County Museum
126 South Monroe Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161

2024 MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES	2024 COMMITTEES
Chair Brian Egen, District 6 Vice Chair Jeremy Potter, District 1 Secretary Michael Humphries, District 8 Immediate Past Chair Hobby Nels Trustee Emeritus Richard Micka Trustee Thomas Heywood, District 2 Trustee Mary Strevel, District 3 Trustee L William Conner, District 4 Trustee Michelle LaVoy, District 5 Trustee Anne Noland, District 7 Trustee Nick Guthrie, District 9	Executive Committee Chair: Brian Egen Members: Jeremy Potter, Michael Humphries, Hobby Nels, Andrew Clark, and JJ Przewozniak Awards Committee Chair: Michelle LaVoy Members: Thomas Heywood, Anne Noland, Mary Strevel, and Andrew Clark Markers Committee Chair: Jeremy Potter Members: Brian Egen, Nicholas Guthrie, Michael Humphries, Lynn Reaume, and Andrew Clark Projects Committee Chair: Michael Humphries Members: Bill Conner, Brian Egen, and Andrew Clark

Mission Statement of the Monroe County Museum System

At the Monroe County Museum, we fuel and cultivate our visitors' curiosity through the exploration of Monroe County's rich and varied stories, joining together to unearth meaning and illuminate relevant connections between the past, present, and future.

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM
BOARD of TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
April 10th, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
at the Monroe County Museum, 126 South Monroe Street, Monroe

Present: Brian Egen, Chairman Jeremy Potter, Vice-Chairman Michael Humphries, Secretary
Tom Heywood, Member Michelle LaVoy, Member Richard Micka, Emeritus
Anne Noland, Member

Excused: William Conner, Member Nick Guthrie, Member
Hobby Nels, Past Chairman Mary Strevel, Member

Museum Staff: Director Clark J.J. Przewozniak, Deputy Director Lynn Reaume, County Historian

Guest: Jeanne Micka, Sawyer Homestead

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m., roll was called and there was a quorum.

Approval of the Agenda: motion was made to accept the agenda by J. Potter, seconded by M. Humphries, and passed.

Approval of Minutes of March 13st, 2024 Meeting: M. Humphries made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as written, seconded by J. Potter, and passed.

Public Comment #1: J. Micka suggested painting the letters of the Museum sign on the front of the building.

Committee Updates: Executive: Chairman Egen said the group has not met.

Spirit of Service Awards Committee: Chairperson LaVoy has applications to consider, and the applications are now closed. The committee will now meet to formulate their recommendations for the awards.

Building Committee: Chairman Egen said the RFP was issued by the County March 28th and is expected back in April.

Historical Markers Committee: Chairman Potter said refurbished markers are being installed. It was noted that the River Raisin War of 1812 historical markers on the old Visitor Center site will not be used by the NPS; it was suggested they be removed soon. NPS will develop their own markers. Motion was made by J. Potter to remove the markers when the need and opportunity arises; seconded by M. Humphries and the motion was passed unanimously. The markers committee will meet briefly after the board meeting.

Projects Grant Committee: Applications are due April 30th.

New Business: Staff Reports: T. Heywood made a motion to accept the reports as presented, seconded by M. Humphries, and approved.

Old Business: Chairman Egen had some discussion on the Strategic Plan focus. Director Clark suggested bringing in a legal perspective concerning the ‘conflict of interest’ topic of the plan. Also possible updates for “Vision 2029.”

It was reported that County Commissioner Dave Hoffman has soil to distribute -waiting for the drying of the Territorial Park site- as per a donation offer at the last meeting.

Public Comment #2: J. Micka invited everyone to the May 4th Founders Day event at the Sawyer Homestead, 10-4 p.m.

Board Comments: R. Micka announced a program with Gerry Wykes at the River Raisin National Battlefield Park on April 24th.

The documentary “River Raisin: A Come Back Story” will have a reception and showing on Saturday, May 4th at the Museum and at the RRCA theatre next door.

M. Humphries said the Sterling State Park eclipse event went well, and museum staff had participated there. Members gave their favorable comments on the eclipse event, the Museum’s wide distribution of viewing boxes and safety glasses to visitors and libraries.

Director Clark mentioned that the new buyer of the house next to the Third Street storage facility is challenging the close proximity of the buildings with the city and the county.

There was a question about staffing for the summer and Director Clark said he is posting for a part-time Presenter position soon.

R. Micka asked “Who are your constituents”- something to be considered in regards to this group.

With no other business to discuss, motion was made by M. Humphries to adjourn, seconded by M. LaVoy and the meeting was concluded at 7:53 p.m.

The next Trustee meeting is Wednesday, May 8th at 7:00 p.m. at the Museum.

Lynn W. Reaume
Acting recording secretary
3 May 2024



Monroe County Historical Society

Established 1938

"Illuminating the past...to brighten our future."

May 1, 2024

Historical Projects Fund Committee:

The Monroe County Historical Society is requesting an extension of its \$20,000 award approved by the Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees in July 2022.

The project has exceeded our original timeline and we are requesting an extension to complete this project by May 2025. The painting project has been delayed due to contractor delays and other circumstances beyond our control.

Thank you for the consideration and continued support for this project. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

Peter Carlton
Treasurer

The Johnson Phinney House 22 West Second Street
P.O. Box 1733 Monroe, Michigan 48161
www.monroecountyhistoricalsocietymi.org

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM
Director's Report
Submitted by Andrew Clark, Director
Wednesday, May 8th, 2024

Organizational Operations

County Museum: Hours of operation are Sunday to Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm.

County Archives: Research is by appointment and via phone, mail, and email.

Territorial Park: Closed for the season. Will reopen Memorial Day Weekend 2024.

Vietnam Veterans Museum: Closed for the season. Will reopen Memorial Day Weekend 2024.

St Antoine's Historic Site: Grounds are open year round.

Upcoming Closures

The Monroe County Museum System will be closed Monday, May 27th for the Memorial Day holiday in accordance with the County of Monroe's holiday calendar.

Maintenance and Operations

Museum and Archives

Delivery date of our new first floor photocopier remains unknown.

Territorial Park

Historic buildings closed but site preparations are underway for the 2024 season – see JJ's report for additional details.

Met with contractor in regards to updating the bathroom in the schoolhouse and the feasibility of adding water to the east side of the park that doesn't require running hose from the school under the parking lot and through the creek.

On April 30th/May 1st, a driver using the shoulder of the road in front of Papermill School to make an aggressive u-turn sprayed the front of the building with gravel. All of the windows facing North Custer Road were broken. Mike and Robert quickly cleaned up the site, boarded up the windows, and delivered the storms to a local vendor for repair. The shoulder has been misused by drivers for ages so damage of some sort was likely inevitable. Because the road right-of-way extends to essentially the fenceline, placing any permanent barriers there to discourage poor and aggressive driving is frowned upon.

When the new Loop Trail is completed, it should bring an end to the problem. As the connector to Raisinville Road/M50 will run in front of the school, the redesigned park entrance will have concrete and curbs and a defined driveway. There will also be a crosswalk and traffic signal at the intersection. The work is expected to be completed sometime next year.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum

The museum will be readied for park opening on Friday, May 24th.

I met with a few members of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 142 and County Parks regarding the placement of eagle statuary within the memorial. The wooden

chainsaw sculpture of a chained eagle is falling apart. The veterans have decided on placing a cast concrete eagle along the walking path near to the helicopters.

They also hope to assemble enough volunteers to rebuild the sandbag enclosure around the mortar.

St Antoine's Historic Site Memorial

Nothing to report.

Exhibits

Nothing to report.

Awards Program

Nothing to report.

Building Program

Two proposals for a feasibility study were received at the central office on April 22nd. Both proposals are currently under consideration.

Markers Program

City public works staff reinstalled the *Boyd School* marker on Third Street.

I've been in contact with the folks at Sewah Studio. Due to the construction projects they have going on at their foundry, they're currently projecting about six months for marker refurbishments. Based on current obligations, I anticipate marker removal will be initiated later this month and delivered in early June.

In late April, NPR did a story about historical markers and many of the inherent problems there can be with them. They posted a small sample of markers that have perhaps inaccurate claims or problematic language. Somehow, two Monroe County historical markers were included in the story. One was the *Erie and Kalamazoo Railroad* (for a competing claim that it was the first railroad west of the Alleghenies) and the second was the *Anderson Trading Post* (due to some outmoded language and portrayals of American Indians during the Battles of the River Raisin) - NPR failed to mention that the marker was no longer there. Due to community concerns regarding the language, we had removed the marker in December 2021 and it has remained in storage ever since.

Historical Projects Fund

The deadline for applications for 2024 was April 30th. The applications will be bundled up and handed over to committee chair Humphries this week for distribution to the committee for review and recommendations.

Personnel Updates

A job posting for a part-time, year round presenter was distributed last month through county human resources, Indeed.com, and the Michigan Museums Association. The position closes on Wednesday, May 8th.

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Deputy Director's Report

Saturday April 6, through Monday May 6, 2024

Submitted by Jeffrey J. (JJ) Przewozniak

On Thursday April 25, we participated in *Art in April*, organized by the Downtown Monroe Business Network. Thanks to Mary Minney and the volunteers of Frenchtown Spinners Guild who were our featured fiber artists for the evening.

Friday April 26 was Agriculture Awareness Day, held at the Monroe County Fairgrounds (newly sponsored in small part by us, together with other organizations). Like last year, our hands-on activity station was a big hit, as young guests tried their hand at the mechanical corn sheller and grain mill.

On Saturday April 27, we participated in the Earth Day Expo, held at MCCC. Thanks to Andy and PB for coordination, facilitation, and cooperation

On Tuesday April 30, I met with several guests at the Eby house for a visit and brief presentation of recent developments. Thanks to Bill Saul for organizing the fun presentation about our combined efforts there.

On the evening of Tuesday April 30, we hosted *Researching Your Historic Home*, co-sponsored by the MCMS and the Monroe Historic District Commission. Thanks to the presenters and all who helped organize and facilitate this excellent event.

On Wednesday, May 1, we took our show on the road to Custer Elementary for a day of in-class hands-on presentations of *Aquatic Mammals of the Fur Trade*.

On Saturday May 4, we hosted an evening reception for the premier of *River Raisin: A Comeback Story*, presented by The City of Monroe Michigan Commission on the Environment & Water Quality. Thanks to Chairman Egen for including and featuring the MCMS in this valuable and meaningful effort.

Territorial Park:

- On Tuesday April 16, water was turned back on to much joyous acclaim and revelry. Two of the four half-barrels used for water around the park have become unfortunate casualties of winter. The two survivors were cleaned and installed near the garden.
- As we prepare for summer operations, much diverse work centered on RRTP has ramped up considerably. This varied work includes grounds preparation, period clothing construction, and assorted work throughout the site. Special thanks to Mike for leveling the stone steps on Thursday, April 25.

- Annual treatment for stinging insects has been scheduled, as has our annual poison ivy removal. At this time, a second portable toilet and two handwashing stations have been installed at RRTP for the remainder of the season.
- The farm field enhancement project has been plagued by wet conditions throughout the month. Thanks to Commissioner Dave Hoffman, a large amount of good dirt was dropped off on Monday, April 22 and staged at the east end of the park. On Friday April 26, conditions were finally dry enough for heavy equipment, and the top layer of the field was cleared of rocks and debris. At this time, we await a deeper excavation, and the installation and grading of new dirt.
- Betwixt the rain drops (and sometimes under them), the kitchen garden has been cleared, amended with compost, and mostly planted for spring.

Miscellany:

Thanks to volunteer Sabrina Miller for yet another donation of items in support of MCMS living history programming, dropped off on Thursday April 25.

Planning and coordination continues for the upcoming Fourth Annual French Heritage Corridor Conference – *What's Cooking: la recette for Creating Collaboration in the French Heritage Corridor*, which will be held at the RRNBP Friday May 17 - Sunday May 19. The conference will include a visit to RRTP on Sunday.

Planning and coordination continues for several upcoming field trips.

LOCAL HISTORY DIVISION Report

For April, 2024

We were open by appointment for 12 visitors, 5 walk-ins, and 22 GSMC members.

Topics included the obituaries, Chippewa Indians, genealogy, photographer C.W. Hill, families Kirtland, Keeney, Hoffer, Louis Navarre and house histories, including the Weier house on W. First. I had just found an early image of the house in its glory when the request came in for 'any pictures'? and I could share a brand-new 'old' picture!

Rachel processed 32 obits from 12 requests. She handled 9 phone call requests and 13 emails. When upstairs she continues to move and label the obituary drawers, plus answer requests and look up obits. People using the obituary files have remarked to us how nice it is to have the lower filing cabinet drawers empty- this is due to the extra cabinets we received from the Monroe News/Gannett.

Robert had 19 outside calls and answered 15 emails. He continues processing the William Capaul collection images. Processed from FIC (Found in Collection) on the Frederick Nims Family (2024.0.33-36) were items found in the storage box and had not been processed. We often have other such situations so a simple search is rarely simple. This may involve stray photographs which should be in the main photograph collection; documents that need to be entered into PP to be easily found; extraneous items that aren't necessary, etc.) He did a reordering of the Collection and made a new Finding Guide.

Accessions during April:

2024.13	Jennet Merriam: items pertaining to the McGill & Durell families
2024.14	Patricia Hoffer Hudson: Hoffer family documents
2024.15	Robert & Marilyn Duffey: Nims family records
2024.16	Michael E. Vann Wasshnova: identified family photographs
2024.17	David LaPrad: identified family photographs of the founding couple and the first generation

Deaccessions & removed:

A84.3.22.1.1 W. Price: 1936 "Who's Who in Michigan"- Monroe county men copied.
3115.3612 Nims: "A Historic and Present Day Guide to Old Deerfield" (Mass.) by Lewis. The two relevant pages were copied for the file. The Deerfield, Mass. Society did not want the book- they had other copies.

I scanned and sent over to the city three images to be used for City Hall wall art, no charge.

I am still (and will be for a while) processing the extensive Everett Payette Collection we received from the Monroe News/Gannett last year. There has been no official finalization of the Rights Use pertaining to the whole collection, except for the donation forms I used for each load brought to the museum (which I have already discussed). Currently I am at 3000 images processed (not counting adding negatives and some duplicates) which is less than halfway through the storage boxes.

I have returned to the Verhoeven collection to make it more useable and have a more helpful finding guide.

The Erie Historical Society group gave us much appreciated information from their files for some of our images.

County Obituary page: not received in time from County IT

Lynn W. Reaume, County Historian
3 May 2024