

**Date: Nov. 11, 2015**

**Minutes of the Nov. 11, 2015, French Legation Museum Committee Board Meeting, 1 p.m., DRT Headquarters**

**To: FLM Committee and Karen Thompson, chair**

**From: Gaylon Finklea Hecker, FLM Committee member**

**Attending**

- Karen Thompson, chair; members Janie Babcock, Tammye Beveridge, Judy Day, Dusky Waters, Kay Valenta, Gaylon Finklea Hecker, Edie Tyler, Rachel Bryson, Marianne Laughlin, Sharon Wander
- Staff: Martha George Withers
- On the phone: President General Betty Edwards, who was called away early in the meeting
- Excused: Teresa Johnson, Kathy Howell, Sherry Causey, Glenda Black, Janis Keen
- No guests

Chair Karen Thompson called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. Minutes from the previous meeting were approved as submitted. There was no treasurer's report.

Karen explained that Carolyn Reed and Pam Lynn, longtime FLM Committee members, had resigned for personal reasons. The committee members agreed that the group appreciates their efforts, hard work and willing participation and will miss them.

**Committee Reports**

Individual committee reports are either included at the end of this document or, because of length or complexity, are sent as attachments to the email to be sent to distribute these minutes.

- 1) **Grants Committee Report** – (see below) Presented by Mariann Laughlin due to the recent resignation of Gayla Lawson, who served for 10 years. The committee greatly appreciates her service. Karen said she had “done more than her due” over the many years with many wonderful successes to show for it. *(Also see below from Gayla French Legation Museum Committee Products, Events, Projects of Significance 2006-2015)*
  - **No action taken;** See notes for discussion
- 2) **Grounds Committee Report** – presented by Judy Day (see below)
  - No action taken; See notes for discussion
- 3) **Gift Shop Report** –
  - No action taken; See notes for discussion.
- 4) **Flag Committee Report** – presented by Edie Tyler
  - There is no flag report. See notes for discussion.
- 5) 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee Report – presented by Rachel Bryson (see below)
  - No action taken; See notes for discussion
- 6) **History Committee Report** – presented by Gaylon Finklea Hecker (see below)
  - No action taken; See notes for discussion
- 7) **Director's Report** – presented by Martha George Withers (attached)
- 8) No action taken; See notes for discussion

- 9) Jewelry Committee Report – presented by Mariann Laughlin
- No action taken

**Old Business and Unfinished Business**

- **No action taken**

Meeting adjourned.

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**Reports Filed for this meeting:**

- 1) **Karen Thompson, French Legation chair; BOM report**

**FRENCH LEGATION MUSEUM COMMITTEE**

Since the last BOM meeting on September 12, 2015 the committee met on September 16, 2015 and October 14, 2015. Minutes were distributed.

On Sunday, September 20, 2015 the FLM participated in Austin's Annual Museum Day along with 37 other Austin museums. We had 456 people that day (360 toured house) which was included in the total of 970 visitors in September. We had one wedding and one reception. 81 regular visitors took the tour. Storytime theme was “Things That Go” and 20 children attended.

Standing Report: Treasurer Kay Valenta

DRT FL Museum (4460)	\$ 68,944.33
DRT FL Memorial (0031)	3,603.19
DRT FL Grants/Collections (0665)	3,214.00
DRT FL Baretta Kitchen Fund (2047)	<u>13,189.66</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88,951.18</b>

- The French Legation Museum is the beneficiary of a fund held at the Austin Community Foundation.
- The Fund Balance as of September 30, 2015, was \$10,559.50. (Principal: \$5,000.00)

Grant Chairman Gayla Lawson invited Sujiro Seam, French Consul General of Houston , and his technology specialist and a representative of the French-American Chamber of Commerce in Houston to meet with us to help secure partnership/connections with French-American businesses. This is on-going.

The FLM was recognized by the Austin Chronicle as “Best Non-Theatre Film Venue for 2015 for Cinema East films in the summer shown on a screen set up at the bottom of the hillside. Another public awareness was from Trip Advisor, on-line social media, as Top Rated History Museum in small museum category. A plaque for this achievement is in the Gift Shop.

This chair attended the District 6 Workshop in Huntsville on September 26th, presenting a report with Power Point. Also had FLM sales table. Also attended the District 8 Workshop in San Marcos on October 10<sup>th</sup>.

October 3, 2015 was the first Texas-French Market Day on the grounds attended by over 1,000 people. About thirty vendors had a large variety of booths. Plenty of food and drinks. The Silent Auction was fun as was the cannon from the Moses Austin Chapter of the Sons of the Republic

of Texas. Plans are already being made for next October 1, 2016. Television and radio coverage gave a lot of public awareness.

Grounds improvements included a tree analysis from Davey Tree Specialist. New grounds plants and grass analysis was given by Sheryl McLaughlin of Kevin Wood Landscaping and KLBJ Austin Gardner program of 29 years. Trees need major work and so do the grounds. 2015 has had too much rain, except for the 3 months with no rain. True feast or famine.

Carolyn Reed and Pam Lynn, both former FLM chairman, resigned from the committee.

Karen R. Thompson

November 4, 2015

## **2) 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee**

November 11, 2015

Memo to: French Legation Committee

Memo from: Rachel Bryson, 175<sup>th</sup> Chairman

- I will be meeting with Michael Buls of Escape Artists Studio at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, just before our regular meeting, so I will give a verbal report. Michael and his wife Beth Fowler are extremely involved in the artist's community in Austin and in Texas. Both of them are also extremely interested in the continuing preservation efforts of the French Legation. I attended one of his art exhibits recently that was benefiting a non-profit organization to help protect the honey bees in and around Austin. Beth is on the Board of Directors of the Austin History Center Association. A Texas art show is being proposed and those will be the only vendors that will be asked to participate. Children's events still need to be available.
- Karen, Janie and I have already had a meeting to discuss the March 5<sup>th</sup> event. A list of committee chairpersons was drawn up and I will be notifying them soon after the November 13<sup>th</sup> event, to see if they will take on the assignments and help us get ready for the Texas Independence Day Pig Roast on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
- The March event will be different and will be advertised accordingly...it will be Texas Independence weekend and the Sunday after our event will be "Hero's Day". Possibly a formal, "striking of the colors" around 5:00 on Saturday, performed by the Texas National Guard could be observed. The SRT will be at our event, but they have been told that the cannon will only be shot off at certain times during the event and will be announced to the attendees.
- At the present time, this event is to start after the downtown parade, but since the time will still be on winter daylight savings time, it might be best to start earlier, since we will have to shut down and be cleared out by 6:00.
- As of this time, the music has not been nailed down, but there are some strong possibilities. Also there will be an actual pig being roasted, but a catering service will be on site serving pulled pork and pork sausage, along with, Texas Republic side dishes...brown beans, corn on the cob, etc.
- Yes, there will be a silent auction going on and so everyone needs to start collecting items now and especially after Christmas.

## **Rachel Ann Bryson**

### **3) History Committee**

Nov. 9, 2015

From: Gaylon Finklea Hecker

To: Karen Thompson, French Legation Museum chair; committee members

Re: History Subcommittee, French Legation Museum Committee Gaylon, chair; Sherry Causey and Kathy Howell, members

Over the past month, the History Committee has been involved in various activities relating to the French Legation:

- 1) Gaylon and Sherry are part of a subcommittee, led by Janie Babcock, who will host a delegation of French officials and City of Austin representatives on the Legation grounds at 4 p.m., Friday, Nov. 13, as part of Austin's Sister City arrangement with the City of Angers, France. They participated in a dry run of the event in early November in the Carriage House. The members brought lovely silver and crystal serving pieces and decided how the tables should be arranged with food and sangria. They will dress Texas-style for the event and help welcome and photograph the visitors.
  - Gaylon wrote the media advisory about the event that Ron Olivera used to alert the local print and TV media, as well as the mayor's office.
- 2) Creating a children's book of French Legation history to be sold as a fundraiser and in the gift shop during the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary year continues, with ideas for the narrative flowing. Basically, the idea at the moment is to use photographs to illustrate the story told by a local fox squirrel. He will narrate the history of the first blonde French squirrels who "squirreled away" in the French charge d'affaires valise and came to the Republic of Texas, lived on the Legation grounds, saw the history unfold, had generations of children down through 175 years with the current generation now planning a "Jole-Blond" Squirrel Family Reunion on the grounds during the anniversary year. This sets up a perfect scenario to remember the history.
  - Gaylon has tried twice to photograph the elusive blonde squirrel currently living on the grounds, but with no luck as yet. Sherry is very good with gathering potential plot anecdotes and coming up with plot ideas and history sources. Karen will select the basic history to include and illustrate.
  - Grants specifically for projects dealing with children's education, children's history education, etc., are being identified so that we can request help with the expenses related to this project, particularly printing.

Submitted respectfully, Gaylon Finklea Hecker

### **3) Grant Committee**

#### **FRENCH LEGATION MUSEUM GRANT COMMITTEE REPORT**

November 5, 2015

The grant committee has not met recently. Gayla and Martha have discussed requesting \$5,000 from the Texas Historical Foundation for the last matching funds needed for the Master Interpretive Plan. Gayla is working on that document and will send the work to Martha next week.

Still no news from the request to seek funds from the Summerlee Foundation for the HVAC and electrical work needed for the House.

I have been working on finding grants utilizing the Fort Worth Center for Non Profit. The Center has become more of a teaching service for nonprofit developers, but does still retain the Grant Research service online. The program also does have the ability to allow me to email grants that I find that may be useful to us, to my own email address so that I am able to work on them from home.

I have an appointment on Monday to begin grant research and have “wheedled and cajoled” the young lady who is there into giving me some personal assistance. I will be calling the Summerlee Foundation on Monday to see where we stand with the funds for the HVAC and electrical work. I will also be touching base again with the Amon Carter Foundation, who told me to check back at the end of the year for any small amounts of money that they might be able to award to us as part of another grant.

I will be looking at Sustainability and partnership grants, with an eye to seeing if we can find some grants that we can get outright, without the FLM or the DRT having to make any contributions.

Respectfully submitted, Mariann Laughlin, Chairman, Grant Committee

**Gayla Lawson’s resignation from FLM Committee, also Grant Committee chair**

November 5, 2015

Dr. Betty W. Edwards, President General of The Daughters of The Republic of Texas

Mrs. Karen R. Thompson, DRT French Legation Museum Committee Chair

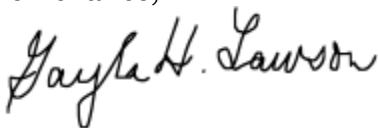
Dear Ladies,

After considerable and careful thought, I am submitting my resignation from the French Legation Museum Committee. Having served for almost ten years, I feel that it is time to fully retire and focus on other personal goals.

It has been a privilege to work with many talented, generous and patriotic women. I have learned an enormous amount from dedicated and knowledgeable staff and volunteers over the years, as well. The many tasks that I had an opportunity to be a part of helped me realize the magnitude of service (and just plain work) required to preserve and operate a small house museum. It is really not possible for me to express the depth and breadth of this experience and the gratitude I feel for all the fine people who have touched my life during it.

Frequently, I called upon past FLMC members for history, advice and understanding. Perhaps I can be of similar use, if my time, health or other commitments allow. I am enclosing an outline of events, products, achievements, documents, etc. that were produced by the FLMC over my term of service so that their history is listed in such a way that those efforts might be useful to the current committee members. The chronology may not be perfect – but is close.

Bon chance,



Gayla H. Lawson

Also from Gayla Lawson

**FRENCH LEGATION MUSEUM COMMITTEE**

## PRODUCTS, EVENTS, PROJECTS OF SIGNIFICANCE 2006 – 2015

Chairs: Pat Kopychak, JoAnn Moore & Carolyn Reed (co-chairs), Patricia Horridge, Cindy Anderson, Gayla Lawson, Carolyn Reed, Pam Lynn

### DEC 2006

FLMC members used Nominal Group Technique with combined FLMC & Hq/Museum Committees to brainstorm needs/wants for the future. That led to the Vision – RTHC idea and movement. Originally to be part of the DRT Capital Campaign.

### 2007 - 2008

.Pat Kopychak, FLMC's former chair, got a DVD, *A Glorious Opportunity*, produced and filmed by Whitney Milam. A re-enactment of Dubois and the pig war with a segment about DRT maintaining and preserving the House. DVD's sold in the Museum Shop for several years. We used that Dubois phrase about Texas in many subsequent fundraisers and in connection with the RTHC project.

..Grant committee wrote an \$80,000 grant to the National Endowment for the Humanities -- not granted but favorably reviewed – with the advice to resubmit **when we had completed a master interpretive plan that was labeled as essential for substantive grants.**

### 2009

.1997 Condition Study re-discovered and conversations with Volz regarding current declining status of structure

.Revised DRT personnel manual and FLMC procedures up to ADA and other legal requirements –which included museum professional standard job descriptions/evaluations

.Secured Raises from BOM for professional staff to **minimum** of comparable professional positions

.Assumed cost of the benefits for employees (\$20 K) (that basically covered the raises)

.Recognized by Texas Historical Asso. for Research/Exhibition: Slavery & Neighborhood Study (Steph Jarvis, Director)

### 2010

.**2010 Structural Assessment** by Volz accomplished

.Installed new networked technology (hardware & software, etc. with several Dell & NTLP grants)

.Digitized all financial data (prior to OAG inquiry)

.Changed financial operations to Quick books and secured bookkeeper/account

.Major grant and fund-raising campaign planned and begun

### 2010 – 11

.Re-roofed and painted all non-historic bldgs.

.Completed HELP governance training and completed **FLMC Administrative/Governance Manual** – hard copy and disc

.Project was funded and led under the auspices of the MAAA - Mid America Arts Alliance. It was an excellent experience - both for staff and committee members who engaged with it. From that time, new FLMC members were trained with manual to achieve continuity of purpose/understandings.

### 2011

.*FLM Day in Austin and the State* on April 8, 2011- Past & present FLMC chairs recognized on the floor of the Texas House of Representative on 170<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

.French-focused fund-raising events with partners from Ville-Franche-sur-Mer, advisory group and others

### 2013

.Completed House Structural Stabilization (approx. \$ 400,000) and began plans for interior work needed.

### 2014

**.Interior Assessment** by Volz completed (estimate of \$550,000 + aprox 50% change order related to unseen damage)

.Multi-year plan designed and presented to the BOM with intentions to seek major funders to complete Master Interpretive .Plan that would guide preservation and the building of a sustaining endowment.

.THPTF (THC) partial grant for Master plan awarded.

## **2015**

.ACVB grant for first effort toward Interior work begun– back entry and ramp

.Austin Community Foundation and Moody Foundation matched THPFT funds for Master plan

.French connections renewed with new French General Consul and others

### **4) Grounds Committee**

#### **FRENCH LEGATION MUSEUM COMMITTEE**

#### **GROUNDS REPORT**

**NOVEMBER 11, 2015**

Karen met with Sheryl McLaughlin about some ideas we may pursue on the grounds of the FLM. Sheryl has broadcast the Austin Gardner program on KLBJ for twenty nine years and is widely recognized for her knowledge.

Karen also met with our tree man about taking down some trees that are dying, and thinning out several trees to give us more sun for the grass. He will give us an estimate for the whole job and also break the cost down per tree, giving us the opportunity to spread out the work and expense.

We would like to have a landscape plan done for future plantings and designs for walkways, benches and additional pots of plants that will not require a lot of watering. It will be expensive to have the plan done, so if anyone has some ideas about an architect that would do a plan for us for free, please share.

Judy Day