



APPROVED Minutes
Quarterly Board of Trustees Meeting
Forum
2500 West Broad Street

October 17, 2024
3 p.m.

Present: Dr. Denise Walters, Cristina Ramirez, David Mills, Elsa Falls, Patricia Nicoson, Gina Burgin, Fran Bradford, Karey Malyszko, Dr. Irma Becerra (Virtual), Thomas Gottwald, Amishi Amin, Kate Hight, Ram Venkatachalam, Jeff Bentley, Dr. Robert Winn (Virtual)

Staff: Rich Conti, Courtney Moyer, Ash Harris, Timshel Purdum, Martha Quinn, MJ Benson, and Ada Sue Siler.

Other Attendees: Deborah Love, Office of the Attorney General; Cindy Norwood-Marquez, member of the general public; Tyler Silvestro, ASLA PLA Marvel; Chieh Huang, PLA Marvel; Sophie Maffie, Marvel.

Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Walters, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. and verified a quorum was present.

Dr. Walters introduced the three newly appointed Trustees: Kate Hight, Ram Venkatachalam, and Jeff Bentley. Dr. Walters then asked all in attendance to introduce themselves and share a brief few words about themselves.

Dr. Walters asked the Trustees to review the June 20, 2024, meeting minutes. Dr. Becerra called a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Ramirez called the second. Dr. Walters called for a vote which passed unanimously without objection.

Dr. Walters confirmed that this meeting is her last as Chair of the Board. Dr. Walters reviewed the proposed slate of officers and committee members.

Chair: David Mills
Vice Chair: Dr. Robert Winn
Secretary: Cristina Ramirez

Finance & Business Operations: Gina Burgin (Chair), Cristina Ramirez, Jeff Bentley, Dr. Denise Walters

Building/Site: Karey Malyszko (Chair), David Mills, Thomas Gottwald

Strategic Planning: Fran Bradford (Chair)

Education: Dr. Denise Walters (Chair), Dr. Robert Winn, Dr. Irma Becerra, Elsa Falls

Northern Virginia Science Center: Patty Nicoson, Ram Venkatachalam

Dr. Walters asked for any discussion regarding the proposed slate of officers. Hearing none, she called for a motion to approve the slate of officers as proposed. The motion was called by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Ms. Malyszko. A vote was taken by verbal affirmation, all in favor. Motion carries.

Mr. Mills expressed his gratitude to Dr. Walters for her service as Chair, highlighting the tremendous benefit and success of having a skilled scientist and leader at the helm of the Board of Trustees. He praised her grace and professionalism, prompting a round of applause in her honor.

Mr. Conti also shared his appreciation, noting that Dr. Walters represents the Science Museum in numerous ways. He announced a gift made to the Nottoway Indian Tribe on her behalf and expressed the intention to continue collaborating with her.

Director's Report

Mr. Conti shared the following:

- Last year saw record-breaking attendance, reflecting strong public interest in the Science Museum.
- The Northern Virginia Science Center aims to secure a construction contract by the end of the year.

- The Science Museum's new laser system, approved after a nine-month FDA process, has enabled popular laser shows, including a sold-out Pink Floyd show two weeks ago, with a Taylor Swift show scheduled soon.
- A mockup of the Avian Sundial, a northern mockingbird-themed sculpture, was shared as a new feature on The Green.
- Preparations are underway for the Science Museum's 50th anniversary celebration in 2027.
- A review of campus changes highlighted the campus circa 2008, the addition of the Dewey Gottwald Center (2017), and current progress on the master plan.
- Today's discussion focuses on The East Green, a five-acre area.
- Emphasizing a solid process, the Science Museum interviewed several firms and ultimately selected Marvel as the landscape architects.
- Staff emphasized a collaborative approach, encouraging open participation and valuing all ideas.

East Green Charette with Marvel

Mr. Tyler Silvestro, a landscape architect with Marvel, presented the firm's history, including its specialization in adaptive reuse and expertise in creating dynamic public spaces. He highlighted Marvel's work with Studio Two Three, the James River Park System, and Mayo Island, expressing enthusiasm for the East Green project with the Science Museum. He emphasized the importance of immersive, experience-focused public spaces, aiming to create a similar experience on this historically rich site.

Mr. Silvestro reviewed key elements of the site analysis, noting the impact of drainage, circulation, greenery, and surrounding developments, as well as the significance of the Broad Street extension, train sheds, and the former Workers' Compensation building site. He invited the Board of Trustees to consider priorities, discussing the importance of balancing density of use with areas for both reflection and gathering.

Dr. Winn raised the idea of blending indoor and outdoor spaces in a biophilic manner, an approach Mr. Silvestro supported. Ms. Bradford shared thoughts on the community's rapid growth, the dwindling availability of outdoor spaces, and the need for the project to reflect the museum's values. Ms. Falls suggested adding a water feature for its calming effect, a sentiment echoed by Dr. Walters, who highlighted water's role in supporting wildlife.

Board members discussed additional design considerations, such as Ms. Amin's proposal for child-friendly areas, including interactive play spaces and a central destination area. Mr. Venkatchalam shared his experience with park development, and Ms. Amin further suggested incorporating active elements, like European-style playgrounds, to foster a sense of play and challenge. Mr. Mills emphasized the interplay between design and user engagement, while Ms. Burgin underscored the importance of flexibility to adapt the space for future needs.

Ms. Bradford asked Mr. Conti about the project's timeline, to which he noted that securing funding would be essential and that Mr. Silvestro's guidance would help refine the vision. Mr. Mills suggested phasing the project if the budget exceeds the proposed \$10 million. Ms. Malysko described the desired atmosphere as playful, sustainable, educational, relaxing, safe, and inviting, urging that these qualities extend outdoors.

Mr. Mills inquired about opportunities for ongoing idea-sharing, and Mr. Gottwald recommended incorporating educational elements tied to Virginia's notable innovators. Ms. Ramirez saw a chance to highlight local natural resources and educate guests about the James River. Ms. Burgin asked how the community might be involved, and Mr. Conti responded that broader community input would be invited at the appropriate stage. Mr. Silvestro concluded with plans to engage local residents through tables and consultations.

New Business

Mr. Mills asked for any new business.

Adjournment

With no additional new business heard, Mr. Bentley made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Venkatchalam. Mr. Mills called for a vote which passed unanimously without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be on January 16, 2025.