

PROCEEDINGS OF THE JOINT MEETING “LISTENING SESSION”
BROWN COUNTY EDUCATION & RECREATION COMMITTEE
of the BOARD OF SUPERVISORS,
NEVILLE PUBLIC MUSEUM GOVERNING BOARD, and
BOARD OF DIRECTORS of the
NEVILLE PUBLIC MUSEUM FOUNDATION

Pursuant to Section 19.84 Wis. Stats., a special meeting **Listening Session - Brown County Education & Recreation Committee of the Board of Supervisors, Neville Public Museum Governing Board, and Board of Directors of the Neville Public Museum Foundation** was held on June 14, 2011 at the Neville Public Museum – Museum Place, Green Bay WI

Rolf Johnson, introduced himself as the new director of the Neville Public Museum, thanking those who attended this museum listening session, noting the incredible potential the museum has moving forward. He asked for input, ideas, advice, thoughts, and passions as to what the community would like to see in the future. Johnson pointed out the role the museum can play in public education, as well as economic development and stimulus.

- I The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jesse Brunette at 6:10 p.m.

Education and Recreation Committee Roll Call:

Present: Brunette, Clancy, Carpenter, VanVonderer

Excused: VanderLeest

- II. **Museum Governing Board Roll Call:**

Kevin Kuehn, Chairman, Kramer Rock, Jesse Brunette

Excused: Hoops, Joski, Wetzel

- III. **Board of Directors of the Neville Museum Foundation Roll Call:**

Kramer Rock, Jim Kalny, David Pamperin, Carol Jones, Jerry Mader

Excused: Rivett, Ford, Bruss, Harden, Hoslet, Horak, Salmon

Also Present: County Executive Troy Streckenbach,
Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt, Museum Director Rolf Johnson
Supervisor Carole Andrews, Other Interested Parties

- IV. **Approve/Modify Agenda:**

Motion made by Supervisor Carpenter and seconded by Supervisor Clancy to approve. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Museum

1. **Comments from Chairman Jesse Brunette:**

Chairman Brunette explained that the purpose of this meeting is allow the public to address the three collective groups who are responsible for making decisions regarding the funding and operation of the Neville Public Museum, along with County Executive Troy Streckenbach. He stated they are interested in opinions

on admission charges, whether exhibits are informative and entertaining, ideas for future exhibits, etc. Brunette stated the vision of the Neville is bright and he hopes that renewed optimism will make the Neville a premier cultural institution in Northeast Wisconsin.

2. Information Gathering from Members of the Public concerning the Future Development of the Neville Public Museum with follow-up questions from Panel Members:

Nancy Mamalta – Stated she has noticed a difference in the museum within the last two months in the area of communication, specifically articles in the press on new events and activities. She suggested consideration of children’s activities during the summer months.

Harry Meyer – Suggested that the museum consider a weekly publication in the Green Bay Press Gazette describing activities, similar to what is done by the Brown County Library. He agreed with the suggestion by Ms. Mamalta regarding summer activities for children.

Jim O’Rourke – Stated he is a realtor with Olejniczak Realty with one of his jobs being to explain the history of Green Bay to people who are thinking of relocating and taking jobs in this city. One thing he likes to do is to show how Green Bay fits into the national picture with regard to development of the country. O’Rourke indicated he would like to see the museum be a gathering place for stories of the history of this community.

Randy Westberg – Stated that the museum is an “undervalued” asset to the Green Bay area. He is a member of the Neville Geology Club, noting that 2012 will be the 50th anniversary of this club and many activities are planned.

Randy Phillips – President of the Neville Geology Club. Stated he has been associated with the Neville for over 30 years. He pointed out that although the Museum is part of the cultural quality of the community, it is at times seen as a “cash cow”. In the past the County has had a responsibility to maintain the museum, with the Foundation responsible for exhibits. At this time that responsibility has shifted, and it is unclear just who is responsible for fund raising, etc. From an education standpoint, Phillips opined that the cost of museum access is growing beyond what the average school child and family are able to pay, suggesting family rates be considered.

Jim Sanderson – Noted that the museum is in possession of a chronological photography collection, asking that effort be made to have a more permanent display. In addition, he pointed out that on visits he has made to the museum, he has found security to be an “overkill”, feeling like he was being followed. Sanderson stated he would like to see a more relaxed environment.

Mayor Jim Schmitt – Thanked the committee and the Museum Board and Foundation for holding this listening session. Stated that the public needs to understand how important the museum is and how it can help economic development, how it can attract higher wage earners, what it does for community pride, etc.

Supervisor Carpenter suggested that the Mayor and County Executive Streckenbach consider a marketing spot which would show cooperation between the City and the County. Both agreed they could work together, along with other business leaders and educators in the community.

Kevin Kuehn – Speaking as Chairman of the Museum Governing Board stated that the bottom line is a shortfall of money. He indicated that a way to help that situation would be for more of the public to join the Museum Foundation at \$50 a year. He asked that attendees urge their friends and family, service organizations, etc. to do this.

Kramer Rock – Thanked all those who attended explaining that the Museum is working in collaboration with UWGB, and hopefully St. Norbert to determine what the public would like the museum to be. Past surveys show that the public is interested in a museum in the Green Bay community.

Rolf Johnson – Museum Director for approximately two months, Mr. Johnson stated it is recognized that this is a period of profound change within the socio economic environment, political environment, and educational system. There are some museums throughout the country that are being closed. Johnson indicated that museums are a “value proposition” and several things must be done to succeed, i.e. to offer value, to look beyond tradition, to be relevant, and to incorporate new technologies. He pointed out the importance of involving youth with focus in areas of geology, astronomy, and history. Johnson expressed great enthusiasm over the fact that in 2015 the Neville will be 100 years old. He sees this as an opportunity to move the institution forward.

3. **Closing Comments:**

Chairman Jesse Brunette closed the listening session with his thanks to all those who contributed to the meeting, stating that although somewhere along the way the public perception of the museum has deteriorated and opportunities have been lost, sessions like this will help to develop a new strategic plan.

4. **Such Other Matters as Authorized by Law:** None

Motion made by Supervisor Carpenter and seconded by Supervisor VanVonderen to adjourn at 7:00p.m. MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Rae G. Knippel,
Recording Secretary