

GAR Commission—City of Aurora
Meeting of February 16, 2022
DRAFT Minutes

Present: Commissioners Gerald Butters, Michael Collins, Janice Lindley, Jared Ploger, Phil Pogue, Michael Sawdey (Chair), Al Signorelli, Mary Ann Signorelli. City of Aurora: Eric Pry, Curator.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Curator Pry provided updates on a number of items:

- An assistant has been hired for the museum: Katie Blair, who has relevant background in setting up youth activities.
- We have approximately four months left to expend the IDNR grant that has been covering many of the recent renovations to the Hall.
- The Sentry statue is being reassembled and will be used to make a mold to cast a bronze replica to be mounted in the original position atop the Hall. The original, which is too fragile to expose to the weather, will be displayed in the lower level of the Hall.
- Bid notifications have been sent out for the reproduction chandelier; a meeting with prospective bidders is scheduled. The reproduction will reflect the few details we have from the early photographs, filled out with period-appropriate elements.
- Restoration work on the wall paintings in the Angel Room is complete. The restorers will also conduct a scan of other areas to try to determine if any other paintings remain under the heavy coats of paint in the Hall (for possible later restoration).
- A question remains whether to restore the original painted backgrounds around each painting (estimated at \$5000). There is also the question of changing to green wall color in the Hall to a more neutral tone.
- Curator Pry raised the question of acquiring a military display item such as a tank or field gun for the area around the Hall; it was noted that space is an issue. There are government programs to facilitate acquiring obsolete items for display. There was discussion of the possibility of doing large displays at a location other than the Hall itself.
- Signage text review: Curator Pry had previously circulated draft text for five outdoor signs, to explain to the public the history, purpose, and context of the Hall. Review by Commissioners suggested that the amount of material on the exterior signs be reduced, to promote casual readability by passers-by, while providing more detailed information inside for visitors to the Hall. Outdoor signs are metal, and Curator Pry said he would investigate lighting.
- With the completion of renovations to the lower level, various community and veterans groups can now begin to hold meetings in the Hall. The 36th Illinois group is meeting there and American Legion Post 1944 may begin meetings as well. The City is still in the process of determining the maximum capacity for the building.

- Museum store project: Discussions are in progress with City departments to determine how this can be done. This is one of several ways in which funds could be raised for the support of the museum. Selling of memorial bricks is also under consideration.
- To accommodate meetings in the lower level, additional tables and chairs need to be ordered. Commissioners expressed a preference for lightweight folding tables to facilitate setup for various configurations in the space.

Items were identified for the next regular meeting (March 16, 2022): A report on deacquisitions from the collection, and election of officers as required by the City (Vice-Chair and Secretary).

There being no further business before the Commission, adjournment was moved by Commissioner Pogue, approved, and the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael R. Sawdey, Chair