

## SUFFOLK COUNTY VANDERBILT MUSEUM

### Board of Trustees

#### Minutes

A regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Board of Trustees was held in the Planetarium, Centerport, New York, on March 21, 2001.

**The following were in attendance:**

Dr. Steven Gittelman – President  
Gary C. Fischhoff – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Present  
Dr. Anthony Pecorale – Treasurer  
Marjorie Kossoy Fuhrmann – Secretary  
Bertram E. Seides – Trustee  
William Macchione – Trustee  
J. Lance Mallamo – Executive Director  
Todd Shapiro – Todd Shapiro Associates  
Maryann Zakshevsky – Staff  
Florence Ogg – Staff  
Rita Beckman – Staff  
Elizabeth McQueeney – Staff  
Bill Dieck – Staff  
David Bush – Staff  
Barbara Oster – Staff  
Ann Marie Pastore – Stenographer

**Absent:**

Carl Luecke  
Donna deLuca Periconi  
Robert LaBua  
Timothy Votapka  
Michael Broxmeyer  
Edward Hahn  
R. Douglas Shaw  
Susan LeBow

**(Dr. Gittelman called the meeting to order at 8:20 p.m.)**

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Due to the inclement weather we have a motion to cancel tonight's regular Board of Trustees' meeting, seconded by Marge. We will be holding an executive meeting. Is there anybody who has any comments for the Board? Can I have a motion to approve the minutes?

**DR. PECORALE:**

So moved.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

Second.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Any comments? The minutes are approved. Public Relations' Report.

**MR. SHAPIRO:**

We have a lot of tapes here.

**DR. PECORALE:**

While he's setting up, why don't we go forward? Development Committee, Carl is not here. We'll pass on that report, unless you have anything, Lance.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

Yes, the committee has decided to hold the "Cocktails with Cole Porter" event, which will be a major fundraiser for the year, and that will be held on Friday, August 3.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Anything else?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

That's all I was asked to report.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Let's go on to the Finance Committee, Tony Pecorale.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Yes, first we still have not received the audit report. When we do receive it, we'll see that Members of the Board have copies. We also have not received the County's audit report. When we do get it, it will be distributed to the Trustees. You have in your folders the actuals for January as well as the business plan for the year 2001. We'll go over that at the next Board Meeting.

May 14 is our hearing with the caterer. If anyone has anyone that might be interested in being a witness, contact Lance who will be in touch with Gary.

Membership is up. Our gift shop revenues are up from last year as well. Interesting to note is that the membership drive for members is doing exceptionally well. If there are any Members of the Board that are not members of the Museum, we would hope that you would join during this membership drive period. That's it, sir.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Thank you. Personnel Committee, Gary Fischhoff.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

The only thing I have to report is that one of our employees, the custodian who was recently hired, was terminated during his probationary period last week. That's all I have to report.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Any comments or questions? Thank you for that report. Membership Committee, Doug Shaw is absent.

**DR. PECORALE:**

I did that as part of my report.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Okay. Reaccreditation Committee, Bob LaBua is absent.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

And we have not had a meeting since the last Trustees' Meeting.

**DR. PECORALE:**

On the reaccreditation, just so it can be in the record, all of the items that have been received as donations from the period of time since our last reaccreditation have been added to our list and have been accessioned. That's a major job. That will be part of our report to the Reaccreditation Committee. That's been completed.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Okay.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

For the reaccreditation, all of the marine specimens are having their labels checked, making sure that everything is correct, and correcting any labels that need to be corrected. Over 800 items have been done already.

**DR. PECORALE:**

One thing, Marge, we should add for the record is that we will have to have a reappraisal prior to –

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

I was going to get to that when we got to Education and Exhibits. But you're right.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Marge, do you want to go back to your minutes?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

The brochure for the summer should be out and set for mailing by mid October. The spring break is all in order. We will be closed on Good Friday. I'm reporting that the winter break schedule was a huge success. Everything was fully booked.

Right now one of the concerns with the habitat area is they're trying to air condition the area. They are having a problem with the return airflow, so that's being investigated as to how to overcome that.

Invertebrates are being catalogued; any errors are being corrected.

The Planetarium is showing three shows a day, and it's very busy. Things are going well.

On June 30 it will be the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Planetarium. We will have an exhibit. Also we will have a new show on Mars called "The Trip to Mars." Another new show we have is called "Native American Moons."

As Tony has already said, all items acquired since the last reaccreditation have been accessioned. Florence has pointed out that we do need to update our appraisals. Our last appraisal was approximately seven years ago. Christie's has been contacted to do a walk-through and give us an estimate. The last time we had this done they estimated that a full appraisal would cost \$20,000.

The Museum will be part of the Long Island Travel Expo. As reported in previous months, the original plans for the house are now being encapsulated.

The next major project that Florence will take up is the ship model room, which was discussed yesterday. If anyone has any items from the 1939 to 1940's World's Fair, we're going to be doing an exhibit in the courtyard this summer for Living History concerning that fair.

A new brochure is being planned that will have an insert for special events. The mailing list is being updated based upon who has attended programs in the past.

A number of summer camps have already scheduled visits for next summer. It's what they call the Rainy Day Programs. All the Mondays in July are fully booked. I want to thank Tony for taking minutes for me.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Is that it?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Yes.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Any comments or questions?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Is there anything I missed, Tony?

**DR. PECORALE:**

No, I think that's it.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Thank you for that report. Bert, Buildings and Grounds.

**MR. SEIDES:**

I'd just like to say that as Chair of Buildings and Grounds that I will keep a general overview of capital improvements. When these plans are completed, we will be looking into where the Vanderbilt will be going next, meaning down the road, quite a bit down the road, to establish future capital growth areas and look for creative ideas for these new programs and to draw from staff and the other Board Members.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Okay, any questions or comments? Thank you for that report. Lance.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

As Marjorie said, we're getting ready for our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary here at the Planetarium this June. The staff has planned some great exhibits here for the lobby, so we will be continuing our upgrade of the lobby area over the next few months.

We have also made arrangements with our own staff and several volunteer groups to paint the exterior of the building and to renovate the garden areas and the terrace around it. If you notice, the fountain in the rose garden has been dismantled and is out being restored right now. There is scaffolding up there. I think it has a tarp over it. So we want that up and running. The pool isn't going to be worked on this year. The County will be doing that next year. The Museum is doing the fountain restoration itself. So we look forward to seeing that back up in the spring. It was really in very poor shape.

Our fencing project will be starting very, very shortly. Bill Dieck, our Director of Operations, and I met with the representatives from DPW last week to make the final arrangements for that. We're quite excited to see that happen. Our historic landscape plan is also in full swing with the master gardeners from Cornell back at work here for the past few weeks. We're now seeing the fruits of their labor from last fall with the 2,000 or so bulbs that were planted in and around the mansion. The project that they have assumed this year at our request – last fall they asked me if there was anything new we wanted them to do, and we told them the peacock pool. All

week our crew has been busy weeding the outlaw growth in that area and removing the leaves. The master gardeners have been planting a variety of spring bulbs that will take place in there. We hope to actually get the pool renovated and possibly have water in it by the summer.

We have an Eagle Scout who is coordinating a project to restore the little peacock building adjacent to it. That started last weekend. We have finally agreed to a restoration plan for the building. He will be using professional carpenters to do the work and restoring as closely as possible as per our designs. We're very excited to see that happening.

Stephanie Gress, our new Curator, is working out very well. She seems very much on the ball with looking at the collections she is charged with. We anticipate we'll be in a very good posture for reaccreditation later this year.

In May a couple of staff members and myself will be going out to St. Louis to the American Association of Museums' Annual Conference. I will be attending the Museum Theater Annual Meeting as well.

In that regard we're planning a special interpretive event that Marjorie talked about. Our special event this summer will be a Sunday morning brunch or a Saturday afternoon garden party near the Mansion, either in the turntable or the courtyard. We're calling it the 1939 World's Fair Radio Review. Our Living History Program this summer is going to shift up to 1939. We'll be recreating some of the famous personalities and acts that came to the fair. The premise will be that Mr. Vanderbilt has invited them out to Eagle's Nest to broadcast a live radio review. It will be very interactive with the audience, and we think it's going to be enormously popular and great fun to attend. So we look forward to beginning that.

We will be putting on the exhibit with the Queen's Museum, as well. We will be putting an exhibit here at the Vanderbilt on the 1939 World's Fair. This is our first professional association with the Queen's Museum, and we are certainly looking forward to it. That's my report.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

Lance, I have a question. When you say fences, are you talking about the chain link fences?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

The chain link fences will be coming down. We're putting up, I believe it's cast aluminum but it looks like wrought iron. It has a very beautiful design. If you've been to Central Park lately, it was a design that was replicated according to one first put in the park by Fredrick Law Olmsted in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It will be very, very appropriate here for the Vanderbilt.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

I'm sure it will be a big improvement.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

A major improvement. We'll also be putting up an access gate by the cabana in the parking lot. That walkway will lead from the corner of the cabana to the walkway that comes out by the columns.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

So you won't have to walk all around to get in there.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

You won't have to walk all the way around. To finish up the lighting project, both on the exterior and the interior, we're going to be adding some more exterior lighting down to the Mansion on the boat house road into the education center. With the curators we have come up with a new lighting system for the Memorial Wing where the lighting that was developed by the conservator was going to have two high heat output, and we've come up with a new plan for that in the past week. So that project should be ready to go out to bid in the next week or so.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

I have one other question. What's up with the boathouse construction?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

That project is going to be re-bid. The County has decided to not go ahead with the contract that the bid was awarded to. They're going to be re-bidding that contract in two parts, one for carpentry and one for masonry. That has been delayed somewhat.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

What's the story with the seaplane hangar?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

The seaplane hangar, I was told by DPW that the architect is going to be awarded very shortly. It's pretty much decided –

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

We're not going to lose the boathouse money by having to re-bid?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

No, absolutely not. The money is there.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

Is the scope of the project changed that we won't have enough money?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

No, I don't believe so. We had some problems with the contractor who was awarded the bid on another job here at the Museum. They think that this is beyond his capability.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

Because it's been on the verge of getting underway for so long, I'm disappointed to hear this. So it's going to be six months or so, probably, right?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

I don't think six months. I think it will be about another six weeks before the final designs are done because the architects have to redo that, take the masonry component out of the bid and prepare a new spec. Then it should be out to bid within a month after that. I would say by mid to late summer we should be under construction if we get a successful bidder. The only problem is that there are so many public projects out there right now to –

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

It's hard to find work –

**MR. MALLAMO:**

It's hard to find someone that's –

**MR. PECORALE:**

It's hard to find contractors.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

That may change.

**MR. PECORALE:**

Lance, do we still get the DWI people?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

Yes, we do.

**DR. PECORALE:**

Are we going to repaint the outer fence?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

The outer wall?

**DR. PECORALE:**

Yes.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

We just did the wall last fall, Tony. If you come by during the day, it really looks pretty good. We weren't planning on painting that this year. Right now we're repainting the Lancaster Room. That started Monday.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

Is the leak fixed?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

The leak is fixed. Bill, am I correct?

**MR. DIECK:**

Yes.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

We have been monitoring it for a period of time. So we will be re-plastering the ceiling, repainting the room, and re-gilding the woodwork there. So once we're done with that, then we plan to do the ship model room. I think as I indicated last time, we have re-painted the entire basement of the Mansion.

**MR. DIECK:**

In every building.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

In every building.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

The basement looked nice. I was there the other day.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

We're really in very, very good shape physically.

**DR. GITTLEMAN:**

Todd, are you still out there? While Todd is preparing, I'll give you my brief report. I want to thank the Board, Lance, staff, Todd Shapiro, Bob Gaffney, and everybody else who made the dedication to the Hall of Fishes not only one of the most special days in my life but a day that I'm still very moved by. I went there with my daughter this past weekend, and we saw the plaque up for the first time. I don't know; it just resonates in a way that I hope you all experience at some point. It's really wonderful, and I just want you to know that I'm very grateful for that.

Speaking of buildings, I need a building to store the dinosaurs in. We now have the dinosaurs on the way to us. We are seeking approximately 5,000 to 6,000 feet to store the crates in until we can start working on them. If anybody has an idea, we had a building, but, unfortunately, the County decided to demolish it. We had two buildings. The first one was condemned for asbestos and lead and the second one now is being demolished. So if anybody can come up with an idea, we need at least six months storage, if we could get it.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

It sounds dangerous.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

It wasn't us that did the asbestos.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

It sounds like a curse. You move it to one building, and they knock it down.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

But we really need help. They are literally in the trucks on the way, and we have no place – well, we have a place to put them, but it's really far from ideal. So if you know of a place with a good roof and doors that lock, please let us know because we're really hurting here.

On a separate issue, just in case somebody feels there is a conflict of interest, I want to bring this up, as would anyone else and under the terms anyone else would request. My family would like to have my daughter's – she's been a volunteer here and on June 2, 2002, my daughter Emily is having her bat mitzvah, and we would like to have it here. We are asking for the standard contract. We are paying all the normal fees. In fact, I'm paying higher than normal fees. I just wanted to bring this to the attention of my colleagues in case anybody views this as a problem.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

As long as it's an arm's length's transaction of any third party, I don't have a problem with it.

**DR. PECORALE:**

As the Treasurer, I just want to assure everyone that Mr. Gittelman will pay his fair share.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

In fact, one of the things that we have offered since we would need a tent is we have offered to pay the tent money in advance, which I believe was \$7,500. We felt that if we gave the tent money now, that perhaps the Museum could add the other \$5,000 it already has in its possession and with \$12,500 purchase a tent more appropriate for its use.

**DR. PECORALE:**

It makes sense.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

If anybody has a problem, please don't be shy. I just want to make sure that I have informed you of my intent and then we will go ahead. But we will pay full rates and we expect the Treasurer to enforce that.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

The only issue, Steve, about buying a tent, didn't we once look into it, and there were issues about having a license or trained staff to put a tent up? I mean, that's another issue.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I'm not suggesting that buying a tent is a good idea, but if you're going to buy a tent, we're willing to give you the money in advance rather than using it as a tent rental, which we're paying for some outside party. If you're intending to buy a tent, you now have \$7,500 more to use.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

We'll look into it, but I think we once looked into it, Lance, and there were some issues beyond the cost of the tent.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

I have the same recollection, Gary.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

I was hoping Doug Shaw was going to be here today. He did send me a fax late this afternoon that with the weather where he lives it's inaccessible when the high tide comes up. But Doug had indicated to me at the last meeting that he has a contact that constructed tents and would be very helpful in bringing my knowledge of tents up to speed. I would intend to contact Doug, and we'll meet with that person to see just what's involved.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

Obviously, if we could buy a tent and we have the extra piece on hand to manage owning one, it would be great.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

It would be great because we spend a fortune on tent rentals every year. If we owned that it would be fantastic. So we will pursue that.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

So if there are no objections to what I have just stated, I would like to turn it over to Todd.

**MR. SHAPIRO:**

It's been a pretty good month for public relations, as you will see in some of the videos and such. We have everything from George Washington's Long Island visit to the Hall of Fishes being dedicated to Dr. Gittelman. Those of you who were there, we had quite a large media turnout. There were about four cameras, about four weekly newspapers, two daily newspapers, and it was really quite an event. We have been really successful with the listings. If you just go through, you'll see we had the New York Times, three or four Newsday placements, to being on News 12 about five times this month. I think the media is definitely working. We're getting out a lot of good things that the Museum and the Planetarium are doing.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Did we get a list this month, because I don't see one in here?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

I got one.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

No, only some of us got it.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

What didn't you get?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

The whole thing.

**MR. SHAPIRO:**

I'm sorry. I apologize.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

That's all right.

**MR. SHAPIRO:**

Generally speaking, I think everything was really great, if you look at some of the tapes and some of the things we have here. We have seven tapes. I really don't know if you guys want to stay and watch seven tapes, so I'm just going to play the first two or three, if that's okay.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

If I could just add that you'll notice under television, the 2/23/01 Vanderbilt Museum on WLIW, we were supposed to be a ten or twelve minute segment of a half hour show. They were going to another site the same day, and when they got here, they just loved the place so much they said we're doing the whole show here. They called the other site and told them they weren't coming. It was a fabulous show. It's been on several times this month.

**MR. SHAPIRO:**

That's Channel 21, which obviously goes to New York City. The person who is the host, I remember about a year ago I wanted her to come here to do a piece and she was very stubborn.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

She thought she had done it already, everything there was to do.

**MR. SHAPIRO:**

Now she came here. She met Lance and some of the staff and some of the people here, she fell in love and found a new home, a great place to do other media events. I think she has advocated through Channel 21 over and over again. So let's roll the tape.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

What's WMBC?

**MR. SHAPIRO:**

WMBC, it's not a typographical error.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Is it Channel 55?

**MR. SHAPIRO:**

No, WMBC is a television station that's in New York City. It's almost like what News 12 is here. It's in Manhattan. It's called WMBC. They have a Long

Island Bureau base in East Meadow. They cover a lot of the events. They came here for the Hall of Fishes. They actually did two segments in two separate nights. I'd also like to, as we go into the spring and summer season, set up a meeting with some of the Trustees to sit down with them and get some guidance about some ideas that they might have, a future PR event, almost a brainstorming session, if that could be arranged.

**VIDEO PRESENTATION 8:50 P.M. – 8:55 P.M.:**

**3/2/01      WMBC                      Hall of Fishes Dedication to Steven Gittelman**

**2/27/01      News 12      Steven Gittelman Interview**

**MR. SHAPIRO:**

That's a long time for an interview. They don't usually spend that much time.

**MR. MALLAMO:**

And the visuals were great.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

There's so much coverage these days. They're really good to us.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Was that even us at the end?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

No, but –

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

The first one was, but the last one –

**MR. MALLAMO:**

I did one of those shows in the newsroom where they were all Old Westbury. I did one where it was all the Woolworth estate in Glenn Cove.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Wasn't that in the garden?

**MR. MALLAMO:**

Yes.

**VIDEO PRESENTATION CONTINUED 8:56 P.M. – 9:05 P.M.:**

**2/28/01                      News 12                      New Restoration Projects**

**2/28/01                      LI News Tonite                      New Restoration Projects**

**2/28/01**

**WLNY-TV**

**New Restoration Projects**

**3/1/01**

**WMBC**

**New Restoration Projects**

**MR. SHAPIRO:**

I'd ask if we could show the other three at the next meeting.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Sure.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

I'll second that.

**MR. SHAPIRO:**

It will keep us going for a while. The Channel 21 tape is a half hour.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

That's great. Okay, thank you so much, Todd, for that. It was great work. I certainly appreciate it. Unfinished business? None to my knowledge. New business? Establish a need for executive session; there has been no reason. Motion to adjourn.

**MR. FISCHOFF:**

So moved.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Second.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? We're adjourned.

**(Dr. Gittelman adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.)**

**SG/ap**