Public Meeting

The future of the Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent

Wednesday, February 27, 2019
David Rasner
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
The Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent
The mission of the Atwater Kent Museum is to use this extraordinary collection that reflects Philadelphia’s rich history and the diversity of its people and neighborhoods to engage Philadelphians and regional visitors to explore the past to better understand the present.
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The Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent
Museum Highlights & Timeline

- 1938-1980’s – Founding and Early Years
- 1990’s-2000 – Challenges and Changes
- 2000-2010 – Actions and Strategies
- 2010-Present – Proposed Solutions and Plans
The Collection

Quaker dolls

George Washington’s chair

Wampum Belt

A Saturday Evening Post cover from the Curtis Museum

Philly the dog

Joe Frazier boxing gloves

O.V. Catto obituary

Abraham Lincoln’s hat
The Collection

7,500 Printed works on paper
42,000 Photographs
2,000 Drawings
1400 Paintings
13,000 Science, service, health-related objects
110 Linear feet of manuscripts
6,000 Articles of clothing/textiles
5,000 Dolls, toys and games
1000 Military-related artifacts
4500 Furnishings and household accessories

A fire hat, CIGNA collection
Mule and horse by Edward Muybridge, Commercial Museum
Eugene Michener’s cornet
WW II Album
“Leticia Penn’s” doll
A Collection of Collections

- Historical Society of Pennsylvania
- Balch Institute
- Curtis Publishing Museum
- Commercial Museum
- CIGNA Insurance
- Friends Historical Association Collection
Challenges of Collection

A portion of the files containing information about the PHM Collection.
Opportunities of Collection

• Immigration
• Race relations
• Urban Development

A Chinese immigrant family in Philadelphia.

Engel and Wolf’s Brewery

John Brown’s Pike
Rosalind Remer, Ph.D.
Vice Provost & Executive Director
Lenfest Center for Cultural Partnerships
Drexel University
Proposed Plan: Transfer the Collection

- The City to transfer the collection to Drexel University, which would become the owner and fiduciary trustee of the collections.
  - Keep the collections in Philadelphia
  - Increase accessibility
  - Ensure they are intact to tell diverse stories
Proposed Plan: Drexel’s Action Steps

• Complete Collections Evaluation

• Develop an Active Collections Loan Program

• Develop a Digital Portal to the Collections for Collections Discovery
Proposed Plan: Collection Evaluation

• Drexel will establish a Collection Evaluation Committee to advise on the historical value of the objects in the collection.

• The Collection Evaluation Committee will recommend objects in the collection to be deaccessioned.
Proposed Plan: Ensuring Continuity

• A Transition Oversight Committee will be established. This Committee will provide input and deliberation on any items considered for deaccessioning, and recommend items for deaccessioning from the collection to Drexel’s Board of Trustees, in accordance with Drexel’s deaccessioning policies.

• The committee will also advise on the development of the loan program and the establishment of the Digital Portal.
Why Drexel?

• A safe harbor for the collection
• Increased digital and physical access to the collection
• Programs & Partnerships
Why Drexel?: Drexel University’s Collections

The Drexel Collection

Drexel University Archives & Special Collections

Robert and Penny Fox Historic Costume Collection
Why Drexel?: Drexel University’s Collections

The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University

The Legacy Center Archives & Special Collections (College of Medicine)
Why Drexel?: Educational Programs

Arts Administration & Museum Leadership
How will Drexel Support Stewardship of the Collections?
David Rasner
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
The Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent
Available March 1st

• Outline of the proposed plan
• Public Meeting PowerPoint
• Frequently Asked Questions
• Comments on the plan are due March 20th
Thank You