



## MINUTES

SEK Museum Alliance Meeting

February 12, 2024

9:00 am – Noon

Hosts: Gordon Parks Museum, Fort Scott National Historic Site,  
Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes, Fort Scott

Meeting Location: 2108 Horton Street, Fort Scott

Thirty-one people attended the SEK Museum Alliance quarterly meeting in Fort Scott. SEK Alliance Board President Leanne Githens opened the meeting with a welcome and a few announcements. The snow was unexpected and caused a few delays, but there were several that were attending an Alliance meeting for the first time.

Treasurer Jolene Born reported a balance of \$8,648.29 as of January 31, 2024. She received another membership for 2024 from Columbus to add to that. Leanne informed the crowd that this balance includes monies that will be used for several outstanding bills, so it's not all free and clear.

Gina gave a communications report, demonstrating the latest information on the website. Since so many new members were present, she gave everyone a quick tour to show the benefits of being a member, including directing visitors to museum websites or Facebook pages, and being able to put activities on the Calendar for tourists to see. Gina explained the new Special Interests tab, which has topics to choose from with links to towns with those displays. She encouraged museums to fill out the Special Interests form and get it back to her so they can be included on those pages. She also told everyone that there are rack cards and brochures on the front table, so be sure to pick some up and take them home.

Leanne reported on the 3-prong marketing project that has been underway: The website, Passport and Video. She took a moment to show everyone how to open the passport stamp – to find the small arrow on the bottom and twist, then pull the stamp out of its case.

Besides the video and updated website, Ray reported that the Passports are here. Everyone was instructed to pick up Passports if they ordered them, and we are asking them to deliver to neighboring museums, so we don't have to mail anything. *{Note: All of them were picked up! Thank you for helping us get them delivered!}* A press release was sent to news outlets from Wichita to Joplin, so the word is out. He reminded everyone that these are FREE TO THE PUBLIC. If anyone needs additional passports, he has an additional 1,000 available. He discussed the passport packet, and advised to document all people and passports, not just those that take a passport. This is valuable information that we can report on for other grants and tourism opportunities. He appreciated the SEK Tourism Region for their support and advised that they have indicated their financial help for us in the future.

Leanne provided an update on the video, stating that it is still in production. We would like to form a video marketing committee, to help get it sent to the right places for distribution. Anyone interested in being on this committee should let her know as soon as possible.

The changes to the By-laws were reviewed and requested changes were explained. The updates to the by-laws were approved by a unanimous acclamation vote.

A meeting survey had been sent out via email, and printed ones were available today. The survey has questions regarding the times and locations of future meetings. The results will be announced at the next meeting in April.

We next heard from Roger Pruitt from the Oak Grove School Historical Society. He gave an informative presentation regarding the Osage Trail Historic Byway Proposal. He needs volunteers to help develop a proposed route. The objective is to agree on a route and develop a list of things to see on the route. SE Kansas was the historic crossroads of the Osage

Trail. The benefits of the Byway will include state publicity and roadway signage, increased area tourism and local business income. The nomination process has several steps, and Roger shared the details. If anyone is interested on being on the committee, please let him know. He is particularly in need of volunteers from Labette, Wilson, Montgomery, and Neosho counties, but everyone is welcome to be on the committee. You can call or text him at 281-855-9818, and his email is: oakgroveschoolhouse.org.

Gila shared the Successes and Challenges from everyone. Some suggestions were to seek out retired educators for volunteers at your museum, have small training opportunities so volunteers don't feel overwhelmed, and look for fun things to do for your community to get exposure for your museum.

After the break, the Educational Program was presented by Kelli Orender from the Kansas Tourism Department. She shared some promotional videos that are on their website, as well as how they can be helpful to every museum. They provide a free city page, free listings & events. There are several grant opportunities: the attraction development, tourism marketing, signage, and the Sunflower Summer program. They can promote events for \$25. Check the Kansas Tourism Industry Facebook page, which is a useful resource for information. Marcia Taylor-Trump advised the Patterson Family Foundation gave out \$7Million last year.

Co-hosts Gordon Parks, Lowell Milken Center and the Ft Scott Historical Site all gave information about their attractions. The KMA convention is in Fort Scott this year and is Nov 6-8. Alliance members should consider volunteering to help with this event. A sandwich wrap lunch was provided for a donation.

The next Alliance meeting will be on Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at 9am in LaCyne. The Educational Program will be by Trae Johnson from the KS Historical Society.

Submitted by Gina McBride