

2020 Key Accomplishments & Noteworthy Achievements City of Lacey Historical Commission

Approved by the Historical Commission on December 16, 2020

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

New Lacey Museum Project & Depot Trail Amenity

- Lacey City Council and the Historical Commission held a joint work session February 6.
- KMB Architects presented a cost analysis for the museum. Two paths became clear, working within the grant amount or requiring additional investment to renovate the existing building. Knowing it would be difficult to fundraise for the higher amount, it was determined that the new museum would be built in a smaller footprint on a different location on the site.
- The Commission reviewed and approved the schematic design, which was brought to a joint worksession with Council on August 6, where Council approved the direction. The project was in Design Development through the end of the year.
- The Depot Trail Amenity, a reconstruction of the original historic Lacey train depot was completed in September.
- The adjacent train-themed playground was installed with volunteer labor from the Lacey Rotary Club, which also donated \$50,000 toward the project.
- Interpretive markers sharing the history of the train depot and the Lacey Plywood Company were installed at the historic location.
- The depot and playground are expected to open to the public January 1.
- The Commission approved the name for the new museum: Lacey Museum and Cultural Center.

Lacey Museum

Like everyone in the museum industry, the Lacey Museum had a challenging year in the face of a global pandemic. The museum was closed for most of the year, but for the month and a half the museum was open (February 6 – March 12), there were 63 visitors. Although it looked promising, there is no way to know if the success of 2019 would have carried the momentum of 2019 through to 2020.

- The 2020 History Talks! Speaker Series saw **272** participants This compares to **264** participants in 2019. This was a very successful year for the series even with the challenges. January and February talks were held in person and then the rest of the season was canceled. The 2020-21 season began with virtual presentations.
- **5** new acquisitions were reviewed and approved by the Commission. This represents approximately **40** new items.
- **4** volunteers gave **78** hours to the museum, a tenth of what is usual in a normal year. Volunteers stopped working in March and were not allowed to return in 2020.
- Work continued on cataloguing the museum's collections into the museum's database. **120** records were entered. Most of that work was halted when volunteers stopped working mid-March. Staff focused on digitization, particularly because this is how the public was going to engage with the museum's collection for some time. There were **5,041** photographs or scans attached to the database in 2020. (This number is somewhat inflated since there were a number of duplicates created during the database migration process.)

- **550** searches were conducted on the online collections portal in 2020 (up **10%**).
- Staff spent **140** hours (or 17.5 days) filling **34** customer service requests. Although this time is **more time** than was spent last year, the number of requests is just **under half** of the number in 2019.
- The in-person events that had been planned for 2020 were canceled due to COVID-19.
- The Commission reviewed, updated and approved the 10-year strategic plan for the museum.
- The City hired a consultant to develop a new museum logo and website.

Lacey History Month

- Mayor Ryder proclaimed September as Lacey History Month and staff accepted the proclamation on behalf of the Commissioners. At the same meeting, the City acknowledged August as Women's Suffrage Month in celebration of the 100th anniversary of women getting the vote in the United States.
- Marisa Merkel received the 2020 Historian of the Year award.

Grants

- The City was awarded a \$10,000 Thurston County Heritage grant to continue work on cataloguing the Lacey Leader negative collection. To date **3,260** records (representing 12,228 strips and 53,400 images) have been entered for this project. This project is nearing the end of cataloguing which is expected to be complete in 2021. Digitization was the main focus of staff this year and so far **6,967** images have been scanned and **1,843** attached to the database. The City applied for a \$5,000 grant (the maximum allowed) to continue this project in 2021.
- The City applied for a \$607,709 Heritage Capital Grant to fund a portion of preparing the new museum site for construction, including removal of the existing warehouse building.
- The City submitted a Nisqually Tribe Charitable Funds request for \$11,990 to pay for LEED Commissioning for the new museum project.

Historic Properties

- The Jacob Smith House gutters were in disrepair. The Commission reviewed the issue and determined that they should be patched. In the meantime, staff will research a historically appropriate replacement.
- Commissioners Black and Thirtyacre are working on writing a revised nomination form for the Jacob Smith House to make future design reviews clearer.
- The Bowker House owners requested a change in siding materials. The change was approved by the Commission.

Other accomplishments not on the 2019 Work Plan

- Commissioner Jim Keogh joined the Commission. The Commission said goodbye to Commissioner Dr. Jeff Crane and youth representative Seiji Naotsuka.
- The Lacey Historical Society offered to pay for an interpretive marker at the Jacob Smith House. The Society is working with staff to accomplish this.