

Strategic Planning Committee
Wednesday, November 5, 2025, 12:00 PM
Virginia Museum of Natural History
All-Virtual



Present: Dr. Melany Clark (Chair) Dr. Art Evans (BOT)
 Ms. Lisa Carter (BOT) Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director)
 Mr. Ryan Barber (Staff) Mr. Jonathan Martin (Staff)
 Jennifer Whitlow (Staff)

Not Present: Cathy Hincker (BOT)

WELCOME

Dr. Clark welcomed those in attendance and opened the meeting at 12:00 noon. She thanked the staff and the committee for their extensive work. A quorum was found to be in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Evans made a motion to approve August 9, 2025 minutes which was seconded by Ms. Carter. Motion carried.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Dr. Keiper reviewed the proposed 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, emphasizing various objectives and a proposed timeline for each one.
- Further strengthening the usefulness of the Strategic Plan, Dr. Kieper wants to develop a quick glance mechanism in his quarterly Board Report that can be used to evaluate each objective. One such way to do so is the creation of a "dashboard". The goal of the dashboard is to allow readers to visualize the status of each objective. In turn, objectives lacking forward progress will have the benefit of quick recognition and allow board members to use their expertise to help staff work through barriers which prohibit completion.
- This concept is a work in progress. Ms. Carter recommended adding additional clarification bullet points to objectives identified as red (not progressing) or yellow (has challenges – working slowly) category. Dr. Evans agreed and recommended a very brief summary accompanying each arrow. Dr. Clark noted that we may want to pilot this tool with the committee by choosing a single objective portrayed in this visual way. Dr. Clark also offered the idea of indicating a percentage of completion for each objective as a way to judge progress.
- The committee engaged in a brief discussion and arrived at a consensus to add more information about what was accomplished in 2025 to the Strategic Plan. One solution is to add a brief synopsis (Building on Success) section to the plan and embed a link to the previous Strategic Plan.

Projected VA Budget

- Mr. Martin spoke about the commonwealth's economic state and what the agency can likely expect in the future. Our current allocation from the state is 3.8 million. With COLA increases we expect 3.9 million in the next fiscal year.

VMNH-F Support

- Mr. Barber spoke about moving the objectives identified in the Strategic Plan forward through collaborative funding. Members of the foundation are excited to support many new initiatives and to move projects forward that have stalled due to lack of monetary support.
- Dr. Keiper told the committee that the museum plans to use 100% of interest income received from the Frank Mariels donation to establish the Young Explorer's Center and the Petra Exhibit.
- Thereafter, the foundation will allocate the spending of 5% of interest income each October to support mission. Any interest income over 5% will be reinvested.

OPEN DISCUSSION

- Dr. Keiper informed the committee that we are pursuing information about a museum App to enhance visitor experience. The price of development and launch is around \$5K with an additional \$600 per month subscription to run the app for 3 years. We hope to submit a funding request to the Tobacco Commission and to the Harvest Foundation to help support this endeavor.
- The app should provide an experience beyond what is on the website. Additionally, analytics are also available and useful. Dr. Evans asked about including publication links on the app. Ms. Carter expressed high praise for developing an App but asked the museum to continue with traditional methods of communication throughout the galleries.

ADJOURNMENT

As the meeting was ending, committee members once again expressed appreciation for the work done thus far on the Strategic Plan document.

Dr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 12:50PM.