

COMMITTEE NOTES

**Ad Hoc Committee Meeting on Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc.
Kansas City Public Library
Board of Trustees
January 14, 2011**

The Ad Hoc Committee on Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc. of the Board of Trustees of the Kansas City Public Library, pursuant to official notification, met Friday, January 14, 2011 at 3:30 p.m. at the Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc., 1722 E. 17th Terrace, Kansas City, Missouri.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Olivia Dorsey (Chair)
Rose Marie Bell
Leon Dixon
Billie Howard Barnes
Jonathan Kemper (ex officio)

STAFF PRESENT:

Crosby Kemper III, Chief Executive
Henry Fortunato, Director of Public Affairs and Communication
Cheptoo Kositany-Buckner, Deputy Director
Heather Pedersen, Administrative Officer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Christopher Leitch, Trustee- Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc.
Barbara Peterson, Chairperson- Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc.
Kimberlee Ried, Trustee- Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc.

Dorsey called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m.

C. Kemper reported that the Black Archives state tax credits are complete and the funds are in the mail. The total amount of tax credits is about \$800,000 and about \$400,000 is not already committed. Approximately half of the \$400,000 is available as cash and the rest is structured as reserves that decline every year over the next five years. C. Kemper reported that it appears that the earmark that would have brought another \$400,000 to the Black Archives is not likely to happen. Additionally, the proposed shared executive director position with Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center did not go through. C. Kemper stated that the loss of this potential income set the budget back to having one to two years of minimal operating funds after opening and that more money would need to be raised and the Black Archives should continue to try to build itself into the City budget. Soliciting funds from the community to underwrite the executive director position is the first priority, although the Archives could be run without an executive

director if necessary by using the money already raised to support Library personnel who would run the Archives for scholar use.

J. Kemper arrived at 3:54 p.m.

Kositany-Buckner reported on the status of exhibit development, stating that there are currently two main exhibits. The story of African Americans in the greater Kansas City area is going to be developed and unveiled as part of the grand opening of the Archives. The Alvin Ailey exhibit will be unveiled in November and will be tied in with the annual Ailey Camp.

Discussing the collection, J. Kemper recommended laying out the direction of scholarship over the next five years and planning a symposium of some kind to bring scholars in to talk about current trends and the community. C. Kemper commented that the Archives might want to consider whether there are documents in any of the other major collections of the region's African American history that would fill gaps in the Archives' collection and then investigate whether these materials could be housed at the Archives. Dixon added that the Rhonda Montgomery collection might worth researching in this regard.

Leitch reported that the Collection Development Committee has received the report on phase one and two of the weeding and re-housing of the Archive's collection and will present this information to the Black Archives Board. The Committee will utilize the recommendations from the report in making decisions about how to proceed with the collection. Leitch commented that nearly all of the collection is currently in the Archives building and that assessment revealed that a significant amount of the collection is high quality.

Peterson arrived 4:07 p.m.

Peterson reported that the grand opening event for the Black Archives is scheduled for June 18th as part of the Juneteenth celebration and that the details of the event are still being worked out. J. Kemper recommended that a planning committee be put together in February or March with a chair responsible for a budget and finding underwriting for the event.

Kositany-Buckner reported on the status of the building interior. The security surveillance and key-card system are installed and working. The Archives will have a business DSL line with a virtual private network and the Library will provide web services for the Archives, allowing for a more robust hosting and back-up service by utilizing the Library's existing services. Most of the furniture has been ordered and what is not already in place should arrive on Tuesday, January 18. The walls in the exhibit space will probably be repainted as part of exhibit development and the Board Room design is being reconsidered to accommodate the decision to make it a multi-use space for Board meetings and use by researchers.

Peterson reported on the status of the executive director search. The announcement of the position has been posted on the Archives website, the Library website, and with several professional organizations. The Board has assembled a Search Committee, chaired by Taylor Fields, that will be responsible for responding to applicants and setting up initial interviews. The Committee has received about 17 applications from all over the country and the search will continue through the rest of the month to broaden the applicant pool before starting the screening process. The Search Committee has discussed the possibility of using an employment agency to help find qualified candidates and perform background searches, if funds are available for this service. The goal is to have the

position filled by April to allow time for orientation prior to the grand opening. Kositany-Buckner added that funds from the John Hope Franklin fund would be used to fill a special collections librarian position and an administrative staff position. There is also a plan to work with universities in the area to put in place a long-term internship program.

Leitch offered to give the Black Archives Committee members a tour of the reorganized collection following the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.

Olivia Dorsey, Chair
Ad Hoc Committee

Date