Shaping the Future

Strategic Plan 2019/2023

Strategic Plan 2019/2023 | ADOPTED BY THE GENEVA HISTORY MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS August 28, 2018
SUMMARY

The Geneva History Museum is determined to increase community support and to thrive in the future. A critical first step was the development of a strategic plan that took into account the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing GHM. The plan includes three strategic issues with accompanying goals to be accomplished over a five to ten-year period. This plan is a path to transform the organization into a sustainable educational institution, collaborating with other likeminded entities and reaching people all over the world through integrated technologies.

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Strategic Planning Process

In December of 2017, the Board of Directors and Director of GHM engaged Executive Service Corps of Chicago (ESC) to assist in the development of a Strategic Plan.

This plan is a template for action, to unify the organization and align it for progress toward the goals spelled out herein for the next five to ten years. At the time this Plan was approved by the Board, the Board and staff reached clear understandings about the approval requirements relating to the actions and expenditures contemplated by or implied in the Plan. Plan progress is reviewed periodically at Board meetings, and expenditures will be approved through the budget process.

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee consisted of: Gloriann Campbell-President of the GHM Board of Directors, Eleanor Hamilton-First-Vice President, Terry Emme-Executive Director, Gayle Meers-Museum Technician, and Jessica Strube-Museum Curator. The entire Board and all staff members participated in an all-day strategic planning retreat in April of 2018 and the work groups tasked with developing the goals and action plans that address each of the identified strategic issues. Early on in the process, all the Board and staff, along with approximately 20 other donors and key stakeholders were interviewed to assist in identifying the strategic issues. GHM is grateful to all who contributed to the success of this project.
Organizational Culture

Mission
The mission of the Geneva History Museum is to preserve and share Geneva's evolving story while inspiring and engaging the community.
We will accomplish this by...

Collecting: Acquiring material on Geneva's history in all forms from past to present.
Preserving: Caring for the artifacts in our collection for present and future generations.
Researching: Sharing our unique resources with researchers across the world.
Educating: Inspiring and engaging visitors through programs and exhibitions.

Vision
Our vision is to be an accredited, sustainable Museum, connecting globally as the premiere source of Geneva's history.

Core Values
Stewardship - We are committed to providing the highest level of care for objects the Museum holds in perpetuity.
Authenticity - We provide links to history through well documented collections, accurate interpretation and reliable scholarship.
Ingenuity - We apply limited resources in innovative ways to maximize the effectiveness of our programs and the efficiency of our operations.
Engagement - We invite community involvement in our exhibits, programs and collection development, and build partnerships with organizations and individuals.
Our Story

In 1963, dedicated citizens formed the Geneva Historical Society to preserve local history and educate the community. Artifacts were cataloged and stored in private residences and exhibited in storefronts. A Museum Committee was formed in 1961 to raise funds for a building. After years of searching existing buildings, they made a deal with the park district and city to build the first Geneva History Museum in Wheeler Park. This building was expanded twice, in 1972 and in 1990.

As newcomers began to outnumber longtime residents, the Historical Society recognized the need for flexible space and a more central location. In 2004, the organization, renamed the Geneva History Center, conducted a successful capital campaign to purchase a two-story building in the heart of Geneva's historic district. The building was renovated to create two exhibition galleries, storage areas for collections and archives, a research room, a meeting room and offices. The organization has always operated on voluntary donations and does not receive public funds.

In 2013, while participating in the Museum Assessment Program, it was discovered that the word Museum best represents the activities and services of the organization. In June 2014, the name became the Geneva History Museum, operated by the Geneva Historical Society.

The Museum celebrated 10 years in this building in August 2014 with a grand reopening of the redesigned Main Gallery, “Geneva’s Story,” our permanent exhibition. Group Programs and Geneva on Wheels tours by van, trolley and bicycle were also developed to bring the Museum out into the community.

In 2014 the Museum started the Standards of Excellence Program for History Organizations (SEPs) offered by the American Association for State and Local History which provides benchmarks against nationally recognized standards.

With a goal of national accreditation, the Museum began reviewing and revising its core documents for the American Alliance of Museums in 2015 and continues to make improvements to meet Best Practices. In 2017, the Museum was awarded a Collections Assessment for Preservation grant from the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation which provided a site visit by a conservator and an architect who created a prioritized list of goals to improve the facility.

In 2017, the Museum was voted one of the “Best Museums in the Suburbs” by The Daily Herald and one of the “Best of the West” area Museums by West Suburban Living Magazine.

After completing all of the five SEPs, the American Association for State and Local History chose the Geneva History Museum as their national SEPs Spotlight in 2018 as an example of how SEPs is helping organizations take a leap forward by improving policies and practices, opening lines of communication and setting goals for a bright future.
Strategic Plan
2019/2023

Key Strategic Initiatives

Accreditation

The American Alliance of Museums describes the benefits of accreditation as "the museum field's highest mark of distinction, and indicated that a museum is operating at the highest professional level, admirably caring for collections and having a significant and measurable impact on the community." The Geneva History Museum (GHM) staff and Board of Directors understand the significance of accreditation, but this needs to be better communicated to the community and other stakeholders to gain their support of the endeavor.

Goal 1

Communicate to stakeholders by January 2019 regarding the value of being an American Alliance of Museums accredited history museum.

Geneva History Museum (GHM) needs to better identify and communicate the benefits that accreditation will bring to the community and obtain the support of all significant stakeholders.

Objectives

- Identify, prioritize and create materials to communicate to stakeholders by end of 2019 regarding the value of being an AAM Accredited History Museum.
- Create a timeline for meeting with stakeholders and schedule presentations to community organizations before January 2020.

Goal 2

Become an accredited history museum through the AAM by year-end 2023

The GHM staff and Board of Directors have been working towards becoming an accredited history museum through the AAM since 2014. At that time, the Museum began reviewing and revising the five mandatory core documents required by AAM as part of the accreditation process. To date, the Mission/Vision and Code of Ethics have been approved. The Collections Policy was submitted and returned by AAM for revision. This document will be submitted upon Board approval.

Objectives

- Staff will work on revisions to Collections Policy and resubmit to AAM by January 2019.
- Members of Board of Directors will work with staff on completion of Emergency/Disaster Plan to submit to AAM by January 2020.
- GHM aims to have all five documents approved by AAM and to submit the completed pre-accreditation self-study to AAM by January 2021, with accreditation granted by July 2023.
Finance/Fundraising/Building & Grounds

The Geneva History Museum will thrive with financial stability. A rigorous process for creating, monitoring, and evaluating both short term (monthly/annual) and long term (3-5 year) financial plans will improve budget forecasts and provide more realistic outlooks for addressing potential shortfalls via fundraising. These financial plans will include capital needs for the Museum building and grounds, as well as increasing staff to deliver this strategic plan.

Goal 1
Achieve financial sustainability by 2023.
Financial sustainability is one of GHM’s keys to success.

Objectives
- Board of Directors will develop and approve a five-year Budget forecast by January 2021.
- A sub-committee of the Board Development Committee will create a fundraising strategy to increase annual donor contributions by 10% by July 2022 to reach an adequate level of financial support as an interim step.
- The Board of Directors and sub-committee of the Board Development Committee will concentrate on increasing the balance of investments to $6-million by July 2023. At this level, the investments will generate enough interest income to provide financial sustainability for GHM during the 2024-2029 strategic period.

Goal 2
Increase Museum staff and compensation packages by 2023.
The current GHM staff of two full-time and three part-time people are able to do an amazing job of work. Financial plans should include any additional staffing resources to grow and deliver this strategic plan.

Objectives
- Executive Committee will review, document and propose a staffing plan that increases hours, updates compensation packages and includes job descriptions by January 2021.
- The July 2022 GHM operation budget will include increase in compensation and additional staff.
- The Board of Directors will hire the recommended additional staff by July 2023.

Goal 3
Develop long-term facilities and technology plans by 2023
Thanks to community support, a Capital Campaign provided GHM the ability to
own and renovate the building; however this comes with responsibilities of ownership. To continue to be good stewards of the structure that houses the Museum’s collections, the building needs to be maintained. These financial plans should include capital needs for building and grounds to deliver this strategic plan. Technological advances are also required to provide better communication, increase data storage capabilities and to secure the environment at the Museum.

Objectives

- The Buildings and Grounds Committee, with staff assistance will revise a long-term facilities maintenance plan by January 2019.
- An ad-hoc committee from the Board of Directors will create a long-term technology plan by July 2019.
- The Collections Committee will seek outside services to create a Collections & Archives Redesign Plan and include in Strategic Plan to be developed in 2023.

Board Development

Geneva History Museum needs to focus on intentional Board recruiting of targeted skill sets currently missing from the Board as well as re-invigorating the committee structure and implementing best practices in Board goal setting and self-evaluation. Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of Board and Staff and an understanding of the communication channels between Board and Staff are critical to the implementation of the strategic plan.

Goal 1

Develop and implement a GHM Board of Directors training program by February 2020.

Formally introducing new GHM Board Members to their roles and responsibilities, and reiterating the same to current members will facilitate the success of the organization.

- Research and document the Board of Directors training program other museums use for their board members.
- Tailor Board training program to GHM needs.
- Implement training program with current GHM Board Members by July 2020.
Goal 2

Develop and implement a recruitment and succession program for GHM Board of Directors by February 2020.

GHM currently has 14 seated directors on its Board. A maximum of 17 members is allowed according to GHM by-laws. Future recruitment will focus on gaining targeted skill sets currently missing from the Board. Deficiencies will be determined by the Executive Board by surveying current members and documenting their findings.

- Research and document skills needed for GHM Board of Directors.
- Tailor Board recruitment program to GHM needs by January 2020.
- Seek new GHM Board Members based on recruitment needs.
- Develop a succession plan for GHM Board positions and committee chairpersons by July 2021.

Goal 3

Develop a succession plan for GHM Executive Director position by February 2020.

Having a succession plan in place for the Executive Director position is critical for the seamless operation of GHM during a transition period.

- Executive Board will research and document succession plan best practices for Executive Director position.
- Tailor and implement Executive Director succession plan best practices to meet GHM needs by July 2022.