

Annual Meeting Closing

Thank you, David. Thank you for your thirty years of service to the Museum. I look forward to working with you in the future and know that you will continue to be an ardent supporter of the Museum.

Good evening everyone. Thank you all for making the effort to attend this year's annual meeting. I know that we all have become accustomed to technology to reach out to friends, to stay informed, and to attend meetings, but it is not ideal. One cannot take a stroll through the gardens, be the first to view an exhibit, or greet friends on the terrace on a warm summer evening, but we are here together. Tonight, we have heard about the Museum's successes in the past 12 months all the while understanding the challenges that lie in front of us.

So, I too would like to commend the staff at the Museum for all that they have done since the Museum closed. There was no doubt that each member of the staff would find a way to do their job in this new environment. There was no doubt that the collective body of such a creative team would find ways to bring the Museum into people's living rooms. Faced with the loss of fundraising events the Development Department has become inventive and adaptive. Curatorial has been preparing for upcoming exhibits. The gift shop has continuously posted revenue. [I recommend sending care packages to friends.] The Museum and its artwork are secure. Under a cloud of uncertainty, everyone has forged ahead all while worrying about their health, their families, and their economic wellbeing. To all of you, thank you. We appreciate all that you have done. It is your creativity, spirit, and loyalty that will lead the Museum through this period. Thank you, Becky for navigating us through this storm. We are fortunate to have you at the helm and we appreciate everything that you do.

Just about a year ago we began the process of developing our next Strategic Plan. The plan would have built on the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan and established the direction for the museum for the next four years and the groundwork for the future. Everyone was energized with the prospect of fulfilling the Master Plan. With the hiring of the Winkler Group we conducted interviews and surveys, many of which included you. We were preparing for a board retreat to establish our strategic priorities when the Museum closed. Shortly thereafter the Governor shut down most of the State to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Strategic planning paused. Nearly everything around us paused. And when the pause lasted more than two weeks, life as we knew it started to change. A pandemic changes the world.

How does the pandemic alter the future of the Florence Griswold Museum? We do not exactly know the answer to this question. However, with careful stewardship of our resources, both human and capital, we will survive the temporary museum closure. But

what is next in the post COVID world? How has the landscape of the world changed? How has the landscape of museums changed? Our mission to foster the understanding of American art, with emphasis on the art, history, and landscape of Connecticut will not change; how we achieve our mission may change. Sustainability and the visitor experience have always been priorities for museums and will continue to dominate the conversation in the post-COVID world, but the conversation will be different considering the challenges that face us. Tonight, Becky alluded to the preparations underway to reopen under new safety guidelines. The situation is fluid and will require flexibility and adaptability on everyone's part, but we will adapt.

I choose to be optimistic about the future of the Museum. We are led by an Executive Director who rises to a challenge and is already charting a course forward. The staff is loyal, talented, and tireless. We are a board of trustees who is committed to the success of the Museum. We will create and implement a strategic plan that rises to the challenges and secures our future. I see a museum that will once again be full of people, both young and old enjoying the permanent collection and engaging new exhibits. I see artists painting alongside the Lieutenant River and people on the porch enjoying lunch. I see the completion of the Master Plan. It just may take more time to get there.

Tonight, I ask all of you who love the Museum and recognize how important it is for us today and in the future to continue to be supportive. The museum needs all of you—trustees, staff, volunteers, and members. There is much to be done.

Thank you and I look forward to working with all of you.

Is there any other new business?

At this point I would ask for a motion to adjourn the 2020 Annual Meeting.

Is there a second?

Motion carried.

Thank you again for being here this evening. Be safe. We will all see each other soon.