



Waynesboro City Council Agenda Briefing

Meeting Date:	December 9, 2019	Staff/Council Member(s): Michael G. Hamp, II City Manager; Gregory E. Hitchin, Director Economic Development and Tourism
Agenda Item #	10	
Resolution#		
Department:	City Manager / Economic Development	
Subject:	Support of Waynesboro Campus of the Virginia Museum of Natural History	

Background: Since 2011, the Waynesboro City Council, Economic Development Authority (EDA), the Center for Coldwater Restoration, and Staff have been working with the Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) in Martinsville to locate a Waynesboro Campus in downtown. The City Council and EDA along with private contributions have helped fund a number of studies to determine the feasibility of such a center. Key findings of those studies include:

- It is financially feasible and the regional market could support a Virginia Museum of Natural History - Waynesboro Campus, conceived as a 25,000 square foot facility including exhibits focused on the natural history of the Shenandoah Valley and Blue Ridge region. Specific features of the facility would include:
 - Exciting, creative exhibits interpreting the local environment and natural history using some of the 10 million artifacts currently housed in Martinsville;
 - Environmental classrooms supporting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and providing an opportunity for some 63,000 K-12 students in the region to explore and learn;
 - A 'playscape' interactive area for early childhood learning;
 - Publicly viewable laboratories where curators and university partners will have an opportunity to work and learn;
 - A resource for partners in public programs and scientific research that will include the Wildlife Center of Virginia, James Madison University, and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.
- It is estimated that the center would attract between 45,332 and 85,832 visitors a year that include both residents in the region, visitors to the Valley and tourists traveling on the Blue Ridge Parkway and Skyline Drive.
- The facility's total annual economic impact is estimated to be over \$2,000,000 and includes all direct, indirect, and induced impacts and 20 jobs.
- It is estimated that the Virginia Museum of Natural History - Waynesboro Campus will be an investment of approximately \$22,000,000 to construct and equip.
- It is estimated that a corporate and public philanthropic giving campaign will provide a minimum of \$2,000,000 towards the project with the remainder coming from State and local government funds.

It should also be noted that the VMNH is deemed an "institution of higher learning", and according to the Code of Virginia, one of its purposes is to "coordinate an efficient network in Virginia where researchers and the public can readily use the natural history material of the Museum, its branches, Virginia's institutions of higher education and other museums."

The Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Directors has determined that the VMNH Waynesboro Campus should be located in the open municipal lot at the intersection of Arch Avenue and West Main Street. The Downtown location, which is only 3.5 miles west of the South Entrance to the Shenandoah National Park with 300,000 travelers per year, will augment an already culturally rich area with the Moss Gallery, the Waynesboro Cultural Heritage Center, the Wayne Theatre, and the Shenandoah Art Center, plus the recreational attributes of newly renovated Constitution Park, Southern Preserve, and the South River.

Current Situation: With the outstanding support of our local state delegation to the General Assembly, Senator Hanger and Delegates Bell and Landis, the FY 19 Commonwealth budget included \$250,000 to begin "engineering and architecture" work for the Waynesboro campus.

Council will receive a presentation from Dr. Joe Keiper, Executive Director of the Virginia Museum of Natural History on the current status of the project.

City Manager's Recommendation: The development of the Virginia Museum of Natural History - Waynesboro Campus would provide an incredible economic and cultural benefit to Waynesboro's Downtown, the community generally and the region. The Museum Board and Executive staff has made a funding request for the construction of the campus to be included in the Commonwealth's FY21 budget and it is crucial that the City go on record to demonstrate our willingness to be a financial partner. It is my recommendation that the City Council adopt a resolution of financial support for this project.

Suggested Motion(s): Move the adoption of a resolution of support for the Virginia Museum of Natural History - Waynesboro Campus.

Attachments:

1. Resolution of Support

CITY COUNCIL OF WAYNESBORO, VIRGINIA



RESOLUTION

**VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY – WAYNESBORO CAMPUS
INCENTIVE PACKAGE**

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Waynesboro is committed to Downtown Development and the growth and expansion of the community's economy, and is specifically committed to creating a rich and inviting central business district characterized by a range of cultural events and resources, and

WHEREAS the City Council is equally committed to establishing Waynesboro as a regional tourist destination taking full advantage of the natural and historic resources of the Shenandoah Valley, and

WHEREAS the Virginia Museum of Natural History is deemed an institute of higher learning and one of its purposes is to coordinate a network in Virginia where researchers and the public can readily use the natural history material of the Museum, and

WHEREAS the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History is exploring the opportunity to establish a museum in Waynesboro to further its mission of interpreting Virginia's natural heritage within a global context in ways relevant to all citizens of the Commonwealth, and

WHEREAS the Virginia Museum of Natural History meets its mission by conducting novel research on Virginia's natural and cultural resources, maintaining an encyclopedic collection of specimens and artifacts representing the Commonwealth, and engaging the public via educational experiences and world-class exhibits that enhance science literacy, and

WHEREAS conducted studies conclude that a Virginia Museum of Natural History-Waynesboro Campus would attract between 45,000 and 85,000 visitors annually and once established the Museum would provide resources supporting elementary, secondary and post-secondary education and research, and

WHEREAS the Virginia General Assembly appropriated \$250,000 for engineering and architecture work for the Waynesboro Campus in the FY 19 budget, and

WHEREAS the Virginia Museum of Natural History-Waynesboro Campus, as a proposed state capital outlay project, has substantially complete architectural and engineering plans and as is deemed "ready for bid,"

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Waynesboro authorizes an incentive package, to be provided in annual installments reasonably associated with the project construction schedule, totaling \$1,000,000 in combined direct financial contribution, in-kind support, and real property and that such incentive package is contingent on the “new build” construction of a Virginia Museum of Natural History Campus in Downtown Waynesboro, and financial support of not less than \$7,000,000 provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia and successful private fundraising for the project. Further, the City Council expresses its continued support for the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History and their interest in establishing a campus in Waynesboro and encourages members of the General Assembly to appropriate state funds for the construction of the Waynesboro facility.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of Waynesboro requests the General Assembly authorize approximately \$18 million in capital outlay funding in FY 21 to support the Virginia Museum of Natural History Campus in Downtown Waynesboro, and that this Resolution be communicated forthwith to the honorable members of the General Assembly who represent the City of Waynesboro and the Shenandoah Valley.

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned Mayor and Clerk of the City Council of Waynesboro, Virginia hereby certify that the foregoing constitutes a true and correct copy of a resolution entitled Virginia Museum of Natural History – Waynesboro Campus Incentive Package, adopted by the City Council at a meeting held on December 9, 2019.

[seal]

ATTEST:

Clerk, City Council
City of Waynesboro, Virginia

Mayor, City Council
City of Waynesboro, Virginia