

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 2, 2015

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commission

FROM: Kenneth Fields, City Manager

RE: Reopening of the Lake Wales Depot Museum

SYNOPSIS: The Lake Wales Depot Museum can be reopened under City operation until it can be transitioned to the Lake Wales Museum Association, a new non-profit. This will require the hiring by the City of a Museum Executive Director for the balance of this fiscal year and next fiscal year.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City assume operation of the Depot Museum and hire an Executive Director until such time as the Lake Wales Museum Association can take over full responsibility for operation of the museum, fund raising and organization of a volunteer base.

BACKGROUND

The Lake Wales Depot Museum has been closed since it was determined that the Historic Lake Wales Society was no longer capable of operating it in a responsible manner and the City needed to be assured that the Museum and its contents were preserved. At that time, a citizens' task force was formed to help develop a plan for the Historic Society to reformulate itself and allow it to move forward as the Museum's operator. Unfortunately the task force was unsuccessful in its efforts to bring the Historic Lake Wales Society up to current standards for a non-profit organization that would utilize public funds and the Depot Museum has therefore remained closed.

Since then, many of those involved in the task force effort have formed the Lake Wales Museum Association, a new non-profit for the purpose of eventually assuming operation of the museum, fund raising in a transparent and professional manner, and organizing a support group of volunteers to involve the whole community in preserving Lake Wales heritage.

Since the Museum's closing, it has become apparent that the record keeping and preservation of the Museum's contents has not been consistent and up to modern standards with many items misplaced or not locatable at this time. As a result, before the Museum can be reopened, the entire existing collection must be inventoried and curated to identify those items that are truly relevant to the Museum's purpose of preserving Lake Wales' history, and which can be returned to their donors or otherwise displayed in an alternative venue.

The dual goals of establishing an accountable and well organized operating entity and curating the inventory can best be accomplished by hiring a professional Executive Director who can work with the new Museum Association to rebuild the Museum and its support.

OTHER OPTIONS

Leave the Museum closed.

FISCAL IMPACT

Hiring an Executive Director and reopening the Museum for the balance of the current fiscal year is estimated to cost no more than thirty five thousand dollars (\$35,000.00). A very preliminary estimate of the cost for all of fiscal year 2016 is one hundred twenty five thousand dollars (\$125,000.00).

ATTACHMENTS