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GRESHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY STRATEGIC PLAN, 2024-2029

Approved 7/31/2024

Mission

The Gresham Historical Society preserves and shares our community's past to enrich its present and future.

Vision

The Gresham Historical Society will be a center for the community where all may gather to learn and find inspiration in the history and culture of the Gresham area.

Values

Curiosity

We respect and seek out different perspectives to enhance our understanding of events in history. Various perspectives provide richness and depth in our programs and activities.

To achieve a breadth of cultural perspectives we must:

- Listen attentively
- Solicit and respectfully incorporate nontraditional versions of history in programs and exhibits

Collaboration

We partner with the greater community to understand needs, address concerns, foster inclusivity, and provide compelling programs and materials.

We reflect a collaborative approach when we:

- Graciously accept input even if it changes the focus or meaning of a program or initiative
- Engage in respectful dialogue to clarify understanding

Stewardship

As stewards of historic facilities and archives, we are entrusted with the responsibility to manage these resources for the benefit of the community. We are trusted when others believe in and are willing to rely on our integrity and ability.

To be worthy of trust we must:

- Consistently adhere to the highest ethical and professional standards
- Collaborate with those we serve as we make our decisions
- Communicate clearly, forthrightly, and fully

Strategic Priorities, Goals, and Deliverables

Operate with Excellence and Creativity

Pursue museum best standards and practices for collections care

- Optimize collection storage methods within physical and financial constraints
- Follow standards for data gathering, storage, and security to enhance the intellectual care of collections
- Digitize sensitive and/or high-value collection items for long-term preservation and increased public access
- Responsibly facilitate and manage public access to historical resources in the museum's care
- Pursue best practice for safe and secure display of collection items in rotating museum exhibits

Manage facilities for enduring use

- Maintain the 1913 Gresham Carnegie Library in accordance with standards for National Register listed properties
- Restore the physical integrity and historic authenticity of the 1931 Zion Church
- Manage the grounds surrounding both buildings to enhance their beauty, sustainability, and invitingness
- Tie historic buildings together physically and/or conceptually

Establish and follow internal standards of operation

- Create and biannually audit core documents including disaster plan, collections management policy and plan, interpretive plan, bylaws, code of conduct, and policies and procedures
- Educate staff, board, and volunteers about core documents and how all are responsible for upholding them
- Seek new ways to activate organizational mission, vision, and values

Engage the Community in Events and Programs

Develop and provide meaningful, equitable education activities

- Continue to offer professionally written and curated exhibits on a variety of topics and themes in Gresham-area history, at no cost to the public
- Engage the public, particularly children, with supplementary activities
- Leverage the resources in the museum collection and archives to make history tangible to our audience
- Pursue new opportunities for collaboration with diverse local and regional groups to deliver high quality programming
- Seek new ways to reach our community, including online and traveling exhibits

Conduct programs with rigorous standards

- Offer free and low-cost opportunities for all ages to engage with history around our community, including tours of Downtown Gresham and local cemeteries
- Host and facilitate educational speaker programs, inviting speakers from diverse backgrounds

Provide fulfilling and purposeful opportunities for volunteers

- Foster professional development through volunteering and internships
- Integrate volunteer opportunities in all programs and operation levels to attract and engage volunteers of all interests and backgrounds

Enhance the museum's impact and resources***Secure GHS's financial future through strategic development***

- Pursue grants for strategic initiatives in keeping with the above goals
- Cultivate and increase member/donor base through outreach and attentive stewardship
- Seek opportunities to obtain a proportional share of funding from the OHS Levy
- Increase the profile of the Museum Store by inventory building and active promotion

Conduct engaging fundraising events

- Build on the success of existing yearly fundraisers, including the Plant Sale, Speakeasy, and Christmas at the Museum
- Pursue new opportunities and partnerships to bring a breadth of activities to the public

Broaden access to GHS's resources

- Expand online presence by maintaining an informative and professional website
- Stimulate interest in local history and museum programs through regular updates on Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms
- Improve methods for online and onsite research

Expand our virtual audience through creative and compelling web content

- Continue to develop and promote the *Voices of Gresham* podcast to explore themes in the community's lived history
- Develop presence on YouTube with engaging video series, including mini-documentaries and interviews
- Expand and cultivate online collections via Northwest Digital Heritage public portal

Advocate for historic preservation at the local level

- Recommend properties to Gresham Historic Resources Subcommittee for local register
- Stay apprised of threats to historic buildings, properties, and landscapes
- Inform public of advocacy opportunities