

Midwest Miniatures Museum Strategic Plan Summary (9/30/2018)

The Midwest Miniatures Museum is a young institution, founded in 2007. It's in the process of professionalizing its operations and management, using the American Alliance of Museum's Framework for Museum Excellence as its guide.

In 2017, the museum's board chair contracted with museum consultant Timothy J. Chester from The Museum Group (<https://museumgroup.com/timothy-j-chester/>) to assist and guide the governing board in managing this process. After hiring a professional museum administrator with formal museum studies training and experience, the board resolved to brainstorm key issues and aspirations and to adopt a resultant strategic plan. On August 30, 2018, Chester facilitated a board and staff retreat that utilized a S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to review the museum's status and to develop and prioritize strategic imperatives.

At that meeting, the board whittled its myriad ideas and aspiration down to three core strategic goals, which were formally adopted to serve as the institution's guide to planning for several years. Each goal is accompanied by the sequential objectives needed achieve the goals. They are:

- ❖ Plan for and relocate the Museum to a more urban area of Michigan
 - Form advisory task force
 - Study and formalize space needs
 - Conduct Property Search analyzing location's amenities and assets
 - Lease/buy
 - Plan for adaptation
 - Plan relocation
 - Develop new exhibit plan
 - Move!
- ❖ Strengthen Museum's organizational infrastructure
 - Continue to transition from all volunteer to staff led operations
 - Identify Board policies and procedures that need review and/or adoption
 - Tighten fiscal accountability and transparency
 - Initiate public relations & marketing plan with emphasis on social media
- ❖ Professionalize the Care and Management of the permanent collection
 - Review status of inventory, cataloging and photography
 - Digitize collections records; visually document collections
 - Implement cloud-based data storage via Collective Access
 - Plan for rehousing the collection in accord with best practices

The third goal relates directly to this grant request. The board realized and affirmed at its retreat that its rich collections form the heart of the institution and constitute its most valuable

resource. The care and accountability for the collection are at the heart of the governing board's trustee responsibilities and have direct bearing on the other two strategic goals. Moreover, only with cataloging completed via an accessible platform can collections rehousing, exhibition development, and program planning develop. Indeed, addressing collections care and documentation is an absolutely first step before responsible and knowledgeable museum relocation planning can occur.

The announcement of the IMLS Small Museum granting opportunity with a focus on collections care and management was fortuitous and seemed tailor-made to fit with the museum's strategic goals. Midwest Miniatures Museum staff and board will be using the newly adopted strategic plan as its dashboard to measure progress at each board meeting, and the plan will be tweaked as needed to address accomplishments, opportunities and impediments.