

PRESIDENT REPORT

BOARD MEETING MAY 11TH 2024

Friends of the Viking Ship NFP

Momentum – It might appear to many Friends that we are a slow-moving organization with years passing without any observable progress, however, taking a step back, the accomplishments over the past few years have been plentiful and shaped a strong momentum for our cause. From the re-discovery of Freya at the Chicago Museum of Science of Industry (2021), the restoration of Freya by Third Coast Conservation (2022), the year-long Viking Voyage exhibit at the Geneva History Museum (2023), a continued year-long display of Freya at the Geneva Public Library (2024), the boat soup application of a thirsty Viking (2023), the re-discovery of the Viking's Faering at Vesterheim, the National Norwegian American Museum in Decorah, Iowa (2024), the new Viking-shelter cover, provided by Midwest Ground Cover, LLC (2024), to the continued expansion of Private Tours, enabled by Dave Nordin and team (2024). All of this would not have happened without tremendous support from the Board, our donors, members, and collaborative businesses and museums in Chicago and Geneva. We certainly have tail wind!

Please refer to the 2024 organizational goals for the following commentary.

Permanent location – Bennet Street negotiations continue in slow motion. We have entered round two with a concrete offer based on two consistent property appraisals and expect a response from the seller shortly. We will bring negotiations to a close in May and hope the seller will be realistic and accept the reasonable price proposed.

The Faering – A formal request was sent to registrar Jennifer Kovarik at Vesterheim on March 7th for the repatriation of the Faering to the Friends of the Viking Ship. Vesterheim's collection committee met on March 21st and voted to formally remove the rowboat from the collection and transfer it to the Friends of the Viking Ship. The next steps are to get approval from the President/CEO, Chris Johnson, and subsequently the Board of Trustees, all expected to happen in May. Smooth sailing thus far!

Search for original Viking artifacts – Searches among Norwegian American organizations in Illinois and Chicago have not turned out any artifacts or new potential sources for such, but the search is on-going. Two original shields in fair condition are on display at Norway Museum in Sheridan, Illinois, and a dialogue about their repatriation to the Friends of the Viking Ship is ongoing.

The licensing of a museum grade artifacts registry – Andrew Woods has identified a couple of professional software applications under consideration. An internal whitepaper has been developed to identify critical features required. Potential grant opportunities exist to at least cover 50% of the application licensing and its implementation cost.

Open days execution – Open days brochures have been distributed to various businesses in Geneva, highlighting the display of Freya at the Geneva Public Library. We have plenty of brochures and I will ask board members to help distribute them in their respective suburbs. We would like to cast a wide net to capture incremental visitors to the our already successful Patch advertising. Our open days are under way with three new docents. It appears we are staffed for the season.

We are still in search of a Treasurer and a Media & Outreach Relationship lead. Please search your network for candidates for these two non-paid positions.

Bjorn Rektorli
5/8/2024