

# Public Meeting

**The future of the  
Philadelphia History Museum  
at the Atwater Kent**

**Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

# David Rasner

Chairman of the Board of Trustees  
The Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent



## Mission

The mission of the Atwater Kent Museum is to use this extraordinary collection that reflects Philadelphia's rich history and the diversity of its people and neighborhoods to engage Philadelphians and regional visitors to explore the past to better understand the present.

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# David Rasner

Chairman of the Board of Trustees  
The Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent

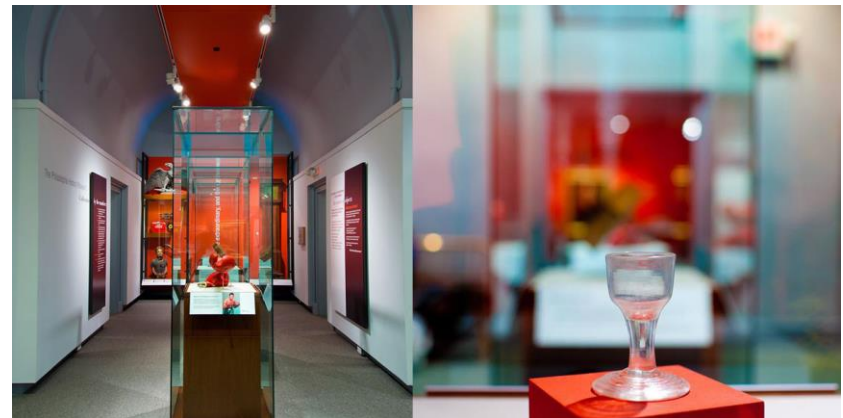
# Jeffry Benoliel

Vice Chair, Board of Directors  
The Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent



# Museum Highlights & Timeline

- 1938-1980's – Founding and Early Years
- 1990's-2000 – Challenges and Changes
- 2000-2010 – Actions and Strategies
- 2010-Present – Proposed Solutions and Plans



# Page Talbott, Ph.D.

Consultant  
Talbott Exhibits & Planning

# The Collection



Quaker dolls



George Washington's chair



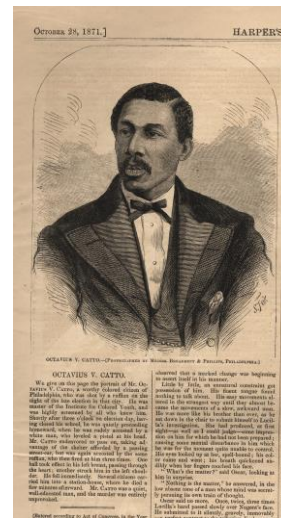
Philly the dog



Wampum Belt



A Saturday Evening Post cover from the Curtis Museum



O.V. Catto obituary



Joe Frazier boxing gloves



Abraham Lincoln's hat

# The Collection

**7,500** Printed works on paper

**42,000** Photographs

**2,000** Drawings

**1400** Paintings

**13,000** Science, service, health-related objects

**110** Linear feet of manuscripts

**6,000** Articles of clothing/textiles

**5,000** Dolls, toys and games

**1000** Military-related artifacts

**4500** Furnishings and household accessories



*A fire hat, CIGNA collection*



*Mule and horse by Edward Muybridge, Commercial Museum*



*Eugene Michener's cornet*



*WW II Album*

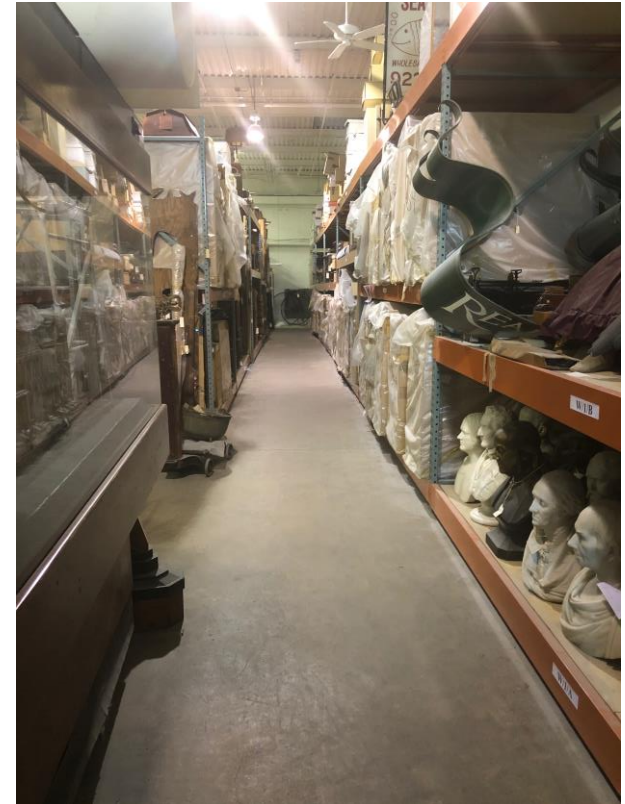


*"Leticia Penn's" doll*



# A Collection of Collections

- Historical Society of Pennsylvania
- Balch Institute
- Curtis Publishing Museum
- Commercial Museum
- CIGNA Insurance
- Friends Historical Association Collection



# Challenges of Collection



*A portion of the files containing information about the PHM Collection.*

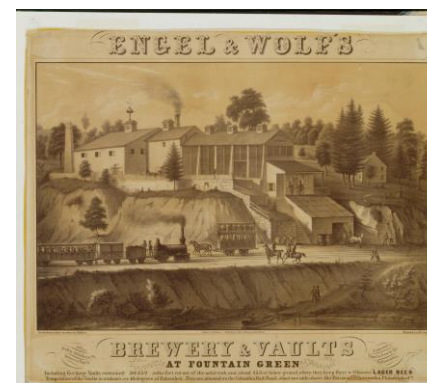


# Opportunities of Collection

- Immigration
- Race relations
- Urban Development



*A Chinese immigrant family in Philadelphia.*



*Engel and Wolf's Brewery*



*John Brown's Pike*

# Rosalind Remer, Ph.D.

Vice Provost & Executive Director  
Lenfest Center for Cultural Partnerships  
Drexel University

# Proposed Plan: Transfer the Collection

- The City to transfer the collection to Drexel University, which would become the owner and fiduciary trustee of the collections.
  - Keep the collections in Philadelphia
  - Increase accessibility
  - Ensure they are intact to tell diverse stories

# Proposed Plan: Drexel's Action Steps

- Complete Collections Evaluation
- Develop an Active Collections Loan Program
- Develop a Digital Portal to the Collections for Collections Discovery

# Proposed Plan: Collection Evaluation

- Drexel will establish a Collection Evaluation Committee to advise on the historical value of the objects in the collection.
- The Collection Evaluation Committee will recommend objects in the collection to be deaccessioned.

# Proposed Plan: Ensuring Continuity

- A Transition Oversight Committee will be established. This Committee will provide input and deliberation on any items considered for deaccessioning, and recommend items for deaccessioning from the collection to Drexel's Board of Trustees, in accordance with Drexel's deaccessioning policies.
- The committee will also advise on the development of the loan program and the establishment of the Digital Portal.

# Why Drexel?

- A safe harbor for the collection
- Increased digital and physical access to the collection
- Programs & Partnerships

# Why Drexel?: Drexel University's Collections



*The Drexel Collection*



*Drexel University Archives & Special Collections*



*Robert and Penny Fox Historic Costume Collection*



# Why Drexel?: Drexel University's Collections



*The Academy of Natural Sciences  
of Drexel University*

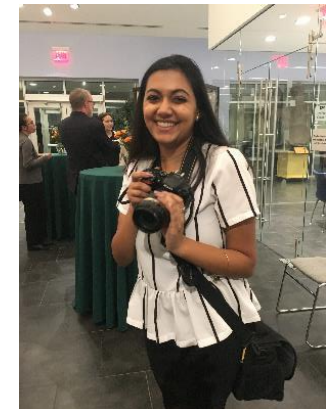


*The Legacy Center Archives & Special  
Collections (College of Medicine)*

# Why Drexel?: Educational Programs



## Arts Administration & Museum Leadership



# How will Drexel Support Stewardship of the Collections?



# David Rasner

Chairman of the Board of Trustees  
The Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent

# ***philadelphiahistory.org***

## **Available March 1<sup>st</sup>**

- Outline of the proposed plan
- Public Meeting PowerPoint
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Comments on the plan are due March 20<sup>th</sup>

# Thank You



**Atwater Kent Museum (Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent):  
Public Comments**

**1. Why did the Museum close?**

The Museum began facing financial challenges in the 1990's. The Museum's Board of Directors took steps to address these challenges by restructuring the Board to include more members of the private sector who could help with fundraising; changing from a free museum to charging admission; hiring an experienced Executive Director to develop programming to attract more visitors; and renovating the building (which was built in 1826) to improve the exhibit space. All of these changes led to incremental progress, but ultimately the Museum could not attract the funding to build programming that increased paying visitors and the donor base. The Board of Directors closed the museum to focus on identifying a partner with the resources and expertise to effectively implement the Museum's mission.

**2. What is in the collection?**

The collection includes more than 133,000 objects, including paintings, sculptures, photographs, articles of clothing, political buttons, furniture, books, drawings, sheet music, dolls, trading cards, and other artifacts that have been donated to the Museum by Philadelphians, other museums and institutions with the goal of preserving Philadelphia's history.

**3. Who owns the collection?**

The collection is owned by the City of Philadelphia and managed by the Board of Trustees of the Atwater Kent Museum.

**4. Who will own the collection after the proposed plan is implemented?**

The collection will be owned and cared for by Drexel University. The Atwater Kent Collection would be overseen by the Senior Advisor to the President for University Collections. The Senior Advisor reports to the President of Drexel University and the Provost. In addition, there will be an Oversight Committee for the collection that will include representatives of the City of Philadelphia, the Museum, and the Kent family.

**5. Why is Drexel University the right institution to oversee the collection?**

There are many reasons why Drexel is the best institution to oversee the collection. It has always been part of Drexel University's philosophy to include the study of the arts in its curriculum. Drexel is a collecting institution that owns seven distinct collections. Aside from the 18 million specimens and artifacts at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, there are more than 20,000 objects in the University's collections of fine, decorative and graphic

art. In addition, Drexel's College of Medicine stewards a nationally important archive on the history of women in medicine, and significant archival materials are also held by the Library and the Sound Archive. The University mounts approximately 12 exhibitions annually in four galleries on its campus that are free and open to the public. Drexel is a member of the American Alliance of Museums and adheres to the Alliance's standards in its care and management of its collections. Drexel University has the staff and expertise to oversee the collection and has run graduate programs in Arts Administration for forty-five years and Museum Leadership for six years. Drexel's Lenfest Center for Cultural Partnerships also provides Drexel with relationships with cultural institutions across the City, which will ensure that the loaning of objects from the Atwater Kent Museum collection is fair and equitable. Drexel University also has the expertise to digitize the collection and develop an interactive website to allow the public to access the collection.

**6. Philadelphia is known for its history. Why aren't the Trustees and the City working to find a way to keep the City's history museum open?**

The City of Philadelphia treasures its history, culture and heritage, and understands their important role in civic pride, education and tourism. The plan to transfer the collection to Drexel University is the culmination of almost two decades of effort by the Trustees and City to preserve the Museum. In the early 2000s, the Trustees considered ways to increase visitors and financial support for the Museum. They made millions of dollars in renovations to update the exhibition space and they renamed the Museum to better convey its purpose. Despite those efforts, the number of visitors did not increase and financial support for the Museum from private funders did not increase either. In the last few years, the Trustees and City officials explored ways to keep the Museum open in its historic building, but they could not reach agreement with an organization that would assume the costs of managing the collection and operating the building. The Trustees and the City are now prioritizing keeping the collection in Philadelphia and ensuring that it continues to be accessible to the public. They are making arrangements with Drexel to ensure that the stories reflected in the collection are communicated to current and future generations of Philadelphians and visitors.

**7. Will Drexel University tell Philadelphia's history through exhibits on its campus?**

Yes, Drexel University will use the collection to curate exhibits on its campus. The 133,000-piece collection will provide Drexel University with an opportunity to have rotating exhibits that are timely and relevant, and that convey the stories of Philadelphia's past and present. Drexel will also create a user-friendly online portal for digital access to the collection and interpretation of it.

**8. What types of organizations and institutions will be able to borrow items from the collection for their exhibits and programs?**

Drexel University's Oversight Committee will develop a loan program that will make the collection available to as many museums, historic houses, schools, libraries, and other institutions as possible for exhibits, research, or education. The loan program will be supported



by Drexel's technical expertise to ensure the safety of the objects and to develop meaningful exhibits. Drexel will digitize substantial elements of the collection, making images and information about the collection available online. This will allow museums, historic houses, schools, libraries, and other institutions to discover the vast content of the collection that is available to borrow on a short- or long-term basis.

**9. Who will make decisions about which organizations and institutions get access to the collection? And how will they make those decisions?**

Drexel University's Oversight Committee will include representatives of the City of Philadelphia, the Museum, and the Kent family that will work with the University to develop the loan program. The criteria for which organizations and institutions will have access to the collection and the process of how decisions will be made are components of the loan program development. The goal of the loan program will be to have as many collection objects on display in Philadelphia's communities and institutions as possible.

**10. Will the people responsible for decisions about access to the collection reflect the diversity of Philadelphia and the diverse stories the collection can be used to tell?**

Drexel University and the City of Philadelphia are committed to ensuring that the staff and the committees responsible for the collection will be a group of individuals of diverse backgrounds with history, education, and museum expertise.

**11. Who will decide what objects are removed from the collection, what will happen to the removed objects, and how will those decisions be made?**

All objects in the Atwater Kent collection will be evaluated by a diverse committee of professionals and experts, called the Collections Evaluation Committee, to determine each object's unique historic value. Any items determined to be of no historic value, a duplicate, or in poor condition, will be recommended to be "deaccessioned" – removed from collection. All collection objects recommended for deaccessioning will be reviewed by Drexel University's curators and the Oversight Committee. In addition, the items recommended for deaccessioning must be approved by the Senior Advisor to the President for University Collections. If the object is valued at more than \$10,000, Drexel University's Board of Trustees would also have to approve the deaccession.

Collection objects approved for deaccessioning will be first offered for free to non-profit institutions in Philadelphia. Objects unclaimed by non-profit institutions will be sold at public auction, with proceeds going directly to the care and maintenance of the collection and/or to purchase new artifacts to add to the collection.

**12. Will Drexel University continue to add to the collection to reflect Philadelphia's current and future history?**

Yes. Drexel University's Oversight Committee will develop a strategy for acquiring new items to add to the collection. In addition to adding objects that reflect Philadelphia's current and future history, the Oversight Committee will seek objects that fill a gap in the collection regarding Philadelphia's history.

**13. Can Drexel University sell any item from the collection?**

See answer to FAQ#11. To sell an item from the collection, the same process would have to be followed to deaccession an item and remove it from the collection. Any proceeds from the sale going directly to the care and maintenance of the collection and/or to purchase new artifacts to add to the collection.

**14. What will be the City of Philadelphia's role in the future after the proposed plan is implemented?**

The City will serve on the Collection Evaluation Committee and the Oversight Committee.

**15. Will the City and Drexel preserve the name and legacy of the Atwater Kent Museum?**

Drexel will identify the collection as the "City of Philadelphia Atwater Kent Collection at Drexel University."

**16. Will individuals and organizations be able to view the collection online for free?**

Yes. Drexel University will develop an online digital portal of the collection where anyone can see images and information on collection objects, submit questions about the objects, and request objects for loan.

**17. Will organizations and institutions have access to collection items that are not on exhibit but kept in storage?**

The storage facility is a secure off-site building and is not conducive to public access. Also, the digital version of the collection that will be online will provide 24/7 access to many collection items that are in storage. Researchers needing direct access to individual objects will be able to request access, and every practical accommodation will be made to honor those requests.

**18. Will there be resources and educational materials to help non-exhibiting institutions such as schools and libraries use the collection for education?**

Yes. Using art for educational purpose is a core part of Drexel University's philosophy. Drexel will provide technical assistance for non-exhibiting institutions such as schools and libraries who wish to use the collection for teaching. Eventually Drexel will also consider developing traveling "trunk" shows of certain artifacts and reproductions that would be available for use in schools.

**19. How will the day-to-day administration and management of the collection be staffed?**

The collection will be managed by professional and experienced museum curators and staff at Drexel University, including staff hired specifically to work with the collection. The curators and staff will report to the Senior Advisor to the President for University Collections. Drexel also has graduate students who are studying museum leadership and arts administration who may serve as part-time staff.

**20. Who will pay for the loan program, collection maintenance, and the staff for the day-to-day-administration and management of the collection?**

The City of Philadelphia has committed to provide financial support for the transition of the collection to Drexel University for five years. Drexel will pay for all costs associated with managing the collection after that period.

**21. What will happen to the Museum building?**

The Museum building located at 15 South 7<sup>th</sup> Street was given to the City of Philadelphia by the Atwater Kent Foundation in 1938. Under the deed from the Foundation to the City, since the Trustees closed the Museum building the Foundation has the right to re-acquire the building from the City. Foundation officials are fully informed about the City's proposed transfer of the collection to Drexel. Rather than re-acquire the building now, Foundation officials are discussing the building's future with the City.

**22. Will Philadelphians be able to volunteer to work with Drexel University on the Atwater Kent Collection?**

Drexel would welcome trained and qualified volunteers to work with the collection. A formal volunteer program may be developed in the future.

**23. Will Drexel engage in fundraising in support of the collections?**

Yes. Drexel is prepared to raise philanthropic and grant funds to support the collection, just as it does with its other collections.

**24. Many students from grades K-12 attended the Museum. How will students and teachers be able see the collection in the future?**

Schools and libraries throughout Philadelphia will be able to request objects in the collection through the loan program. Students and teachers will also be able to access information about items in the collection from the digital version of the collection which will be online. Drexel will

also consider developing traveling “trunk” shows of certain artifacts and reproductions for use in schools.

**25. What happens if Drexel University no longer wants to care for the collection, or it does not make the collection available to the public as intended?**

Drexel University or the City of Philadelphia will be able to file a petition in Orphans Court to transfer the collection back to the City of Philadelphia.

**26. What happens if a new Museum can be organized and funded to display objects from the collection?**

Objects from the collection will always be available for a short- or long-term loan for any museum, new or existing, that wishes to use the collection for exhibitions.

**27. What is the timeframe for the transfer of the collection, loan program, and access to the digital version of the Atwater Kent Collection?**

The formal transfer of the collection is contingent on the ruling from the Orphan’s Court. In the first five years following the transfer, the Collections Evaluation Committee and the Oversight Committee will work to develop the loan program and the digital portal.

**Public Meeting Q&A Notes**  
**The future of the Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent**  
**National Constitution Center**  
**Wednesday, February 27, 2019 from 6:00-7:30 p.m.**

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**Q1:** I would like to hear more about the organizational structure that will ensure the staffing is adequate and professional. How will integrity be maintained? Is it going to be part of these other collections? Is it going to be free floating?

**A1:** We are treating this collection as separate from our other collections, it will have its own identity. We're imaging something like the Atwater Kent collection at Drexel University. We haven't worked out all the details. We do know that we're going to need additional staffing to support this collection. We will be bringing in a full time registrar who will work with our curator of the Drexel collections. We will draw heavily on our full-time student coops as well as graduate students. There's no question that as we grow the program we're going to need to grow staffing as well. I also anticipate that we will work with an outside vendor to develop a digital component. Drexel has fabulous IT and digital ability but this is going to be a very big robust digital portal that is interactive and not only as a place just to find information. We know that's going to require staffing too. The good news is that President Fry is committed to raising funds to support all these activities including the staffing.

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**Q2:** Do you have any guess or rough estimate on how many items might be de-accessioned?

**A2:** My guess is that the number will not be terribly big because there has been some culling already but the standards for items remaining in the collection will require a bar that makes sense for the future. At this point we're in a fairly early stage. The collection storage area, which is enormous, is already filled to the gills and the whole of this collection will continue to grow. After all, 2018 isn't the end of Philadelphia's history. I'd say the answer is a balance between being good stewards of the current collection and making good decisions with the current collection while still making room for the future.

**Q2:** Will duplicates be candidates for de-accession?

**A2:** Duplicates are one of the areas that we will probably be looking at and also how these objects will be used in the future. We're looking at a broad range of uses. No longer are we looking just at what might be hung on a museum wall. An item could well be used in a historic house museum; for example, in a way it wouldn't be used in a more traditional sense.

**Q2:** My hope is that not too many items will be deaccessioned.

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**Q3:** My question is about a digital portal and whether it would be similar to the library of congress, where they are putting all of their items online so that they are available not only in Philadelphia, in the United States, but all over the world. I see that as part of the educational community worldwide. An item that we may have in a certain country, someone in that country could give us more information about it. So it could be an interactive idea to do that. I take it that you are considering that.

**A3:** Absolutely. It really would be a two way street, we want people to interact with what they find online as well as to find what's there. 10 years ago for the Benjamin Franklin Church Centenary we developed a website database of all objects related to Franklin's life that we used as we curated the big exhibition that travelled around the country and to France. Some maybe 300-400 items, so not big by comparison but beautiful photography of each item, provenance, interpretation, information about it. We have some experience producing this kind of thing but what I see doing a 2.0 version of this is to make it more interactive. To make spaces in the digital space for people to curate their own exhibits, to do projects. Certainly the images that we'd have would be open source. We'd want people to use them, we want as much interaction as possible. We want to learn from people things like "this looks like something my grandmother had," and "this reminded me of..." There will be information we can get just from people who may use the database. We want it to be a tool and not just a finding aid. Although a finding aid for a collection this size will be a fantastic thing.

**A3:** Furthermore, before everything gets digitized, we'd like to think that the inventory will be available to be searched online which is a pass-through before we begin the expensive and time consuming process of actually getting images up.

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**Q4:** I was a volunteer at the PHM. I'd just like to say a few words about what we lost and it may be unfair to put it on Drexel. It was a place where people weren't intimidated, so people who wouldn't normally come to a museum felt comfortable there. It was a place where swarms of school children came and touched stuff. They learned that museums were places for them. I don't know if it's fair or not to Drexel but keep that in mind that we lost a treasure when the museum closed.

**A4:** What I really love about that point is that we have been imagining how our loan program would work, we've been thinking about how we can bring history to where people are. So if it's local branch libraries, other places where people congregate, maybe we're bringing the history to them in a way that is also not intimidating and I think the spirit of that point is so important.

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**Q5:** I want to thank Drexel for making this extraordinary public-spirited effort. Thanks to Paige and Ros for the expertise that they've brought to this. The prospect of the city's collections probably catalogued, preserved, and made accessibly is a plan that's very attractive. But I don't think it's enough. I think that the strategic plan for the city's collections in which it waits for the possibility for someone else to come up with an idea for a museum while we keep it in storage and available isn't enough. The strategic planning for the future of this collection must certainly ensure its preservation, ensure its cataloguing

and digital access, but I think that the strategic plan for this city's history has to include something that resembles a museum to represent our history to the people of the world who's history we fundamentally changed not just in the 18<sup>th</sup> century but in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. We have a responsibility to our civilization to not just preserve this material but to put it out in the most potent way possible.

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**Q6:** Yes, absolutely, at some point we must have Philadelphia History Museum but in the interim we will not have that and that's very sad. What is the future of the existing Atwater Kent building? A very fine piece of architecture will stand empty. What idea, vision do you have for its future use?

**A6:** The Atwater Kent Foundation is involved in the discussion about the future of the building. One of the things that the city hopes—and we've heard this often—is that building is very important to the city of Philadelphia. It's always been a cultural institution, being the former Franklin Institute. We hope that in the future it will always be used for a public cultural purpose. Right now we are having discussions about the building; our prior focus was on the collection. Those conversations are underway but at this point we do not have specific plans about the building.

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**Q7:** 30 years ago I was a chairman of the museum. It was a kinder gentler period than looking at what we're facing now with some of the problems that we have today. We also didn't have Internet. Things weren't quite as tough in those days, the nature of museums and exhibits have as a whole changed. I want to first commend David Rasner and Jeffrey. This has been a very tough time for museums nationally, the whole concept has evolved at a different scale and we just don't have the same access to funds as we once had. We didn't have the Lenfest Foundation for which we're also grateful. We didn't have Drexel having such a large presence in the city. It is an appropriate place to have stewardship of the collection. What I did want to highlight is the opportunity for the children of our city to touch, to see, experience up close the nature of some of the artifacts that we have at the Atwater Kent. I took to my daughter's school some years ago an 18<sup>th</sup> century map of the country as they know it then. They wondered and marveled at it, wondered who touched it at the time. My grandchildren yesterday came to the Constitution Center (inaudible) and they want to see these things, they want to be a part of it. The environment was wonderful at the Atwater Kent. David did a wonderful job, taking responsibility.

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**Q8:** Back in the 1960s the Chicago History Museum was having financial problems. They needed to raise a large amount of money in a short time. What they did was catalogue the collection and for \$50 you got to adopt an artifact in the collection. They raised multimillions of dollars. That could be a way that the Atwater Kent could raise some funds. Also, since we have a number of people here, how about we

create a group called Friends of the Philadelphia History Museum who would volunteer to do what you guys need to get done.

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**Q9:** My family has been in Philadelphia for as long as they have been in America. I say thank you John Fry and Drexel for stepping up when nobody else would. That's number one here. From what I have heard tonight I am so happy that the collection will remain in tact and that it will be well stewarded. But a bell is not a bell if you can't ring it. I care a great deal that children, adults, people of all ages may have access to the actual objects. The thing I haven't heard a lot about tonight is about how we're going to connect the dots between this beautifully preserved collection and how people get to see it. It is very hard to promote these collections, we can see it online, but will we be fragmented Philadelphia's story?

**A9:** I have something to share about 2026 and the idea that we will be celebrating a very important milestone in our country's history and the idea that Philadelphia could lead the way by every single organization, every library branch, every you name it, places where we can tell parts of the story in such a way that we can create a kind of map of Philadelphia's history. You can imagine it on bus shelters, in maps on your phone, a sort of treasure hunt of Philadelphia's history. An opportunity to wander around that whole year, look at amazing artifacts in unexpected places. The great thing about the Lenfest Center at Drexel is that we have all these relationships with different organizations all over town. Our student's and faculty have relationships with them. We can work with them to find the right piece of history to display, we can offer technical assistance in interpretation as well as security, vitrines, the kind of things that you would need to be able to display something if you're not an organization that's normally in display business. We're really looking forward to that outreach. Will a story be diffuse? Probably, but I'm hoping through programs we can do together we will find ways to knit those things together. Each year we could send out new artifacts with new stories to tell. There's lots of great thought and ideas that could come out of it.

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**Q10:** I'm the executive director of the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations so I work with Brian and Kelly. I want to thank you guys for going on this process for trying to save what you can. But first and foremost I'm a Philadelphian, and it's important to recognize the loss, how sad some of the people are in this room for losing such an important institution. Moving forward, the most important thing for me is my dream of 2026, I think we need to preserve our Philadelphia civil rights history. I've always hoped that with this collection we could tell the story of Philadelphia's civil rights movements and all the fights and struggles that we've had through the collections and things that we don't have yet. In order to get to that place, a place of having a Philadelphia Museum again, is that we make sure that there is a diverse group of people who are de-accessioning the objects and also who are curating and telling the story of Philadelphia through our beautifully diverse eyes. There are a lot of people that aren't in the room tonight and this needs to be a museum for all of us.

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**Q11:** What's happening is similar to the crisis that we had some years ago when we almost had the loss of the Barnes. I think this is that moment of crisis that leaves us to reexamine and look at completely different pathways. It needs to be joined by the city of Philadelphia in a formal way. These artifacts are from Philadelphia. Drexel is a worthy steward, but Philadelphia is the owner of these artifacts and has to play a direct role. It's the city's responsibility. That's important to say particularly where we are now, where we look out the window and we see the very beginning of the history of the country, not just Philadelphia. We need to think of this as a place-maker, and there are underutilized resources. All of the museums in this area have available space that is underutilized. Part of this plan should include a consortium of all the public spaces right in this square mile because that's the logical place where these things can be seen, where the millions of tourists of Philadelphia every year can experience it, where all the people of this City could do the same thing.

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**Q12:** Unfortunately this proposal is completely the wrong thing. I published the op-ed in the Inquirer as I wanted to express the view that Philadelphia deserves a real history museum. Many people responded online, many responded directly to me. While I haven't checked the online things regularly, the last time I checked 100% of everyone endorsed the idea of a real history museum. I don't want schoolchildren to have to wander to the Philadelphia Airport to see William Penn's Wampum belt. I don't want to go to the King of Prussia mall to see George Washington's desk. I don't want to open my computer file to see these artifacts, I want all Philadelphians to be really able to see them. If Drexel thinks they can raise money in the future, if the city has money for 5 years of subsidy to Drexel, let us put that to a real museum. Right now, start a real siting of the potential places and opportunities to keep this collection in one piece, not scattered throughout the city. Philadelphia is the most historic city in the US, not just because of the constitution and independence hall but also because of everything else that happened here. It is a disgrace that we do not have the ability to create an excellent history museum.

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**Q13:** I have tried to preserve and save from destruction a number of small museums and collections. I want to remind people about the museum's brilliant idea of selling the collection. They raised a lot of money that way but of course it raised an international scandal. My point is: what will we do to prevent this from ever happening again? Have you considered repatriation of cultural artifacts?

**A13:** Repatriation of cultural artifacts is definitely something that we're going to need to take on and understand but we haven't gotten to that level of discussion yet. If this plan is approved and goes forward, committees are definitely going to take a close look at that. Drexel has very strict de-accession policies. We have no interest in really selling anything and the deaccessioning that we've been talking about is entirely about collection shaping, it's not about raising money. Drexel's deaccession policies would not allow this to happen. Any monies raised for the purpose of this collection would be segregated so the university would not be able to use the money associated with the sale of objects for any other purpose than to support the collection. As a collecting institution it's not what we do. We all remember the horror stories of those deaccessioning moments. It's something we feel we have

sufficient safeguards against given our professional affiliations, our standards, our de-accession policies. I feel very sure that wouldn't happen.

**A13:** I'd like to remind everyone what was stated in the presentation that any items that are de-accessioned will go to other cultural institutions in Philadelphia for free.

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**Q14:** Despite the very thoughtful presentation this evening I've come to the microphone with a few reservations. One of them is the shameful spectacle of the City of Philadelphia starving its history museum to reach this point. A second shame is the handing over of a public treasure, which according to you is of immense significance, to a private institution, however well intentioned that institution will be. My third concern is that this conversation has been all about the collection. I beg to differ. I think the collection is not a museum; a museum is a conversation not a collection. I came with one particular suggestion for the kind of history museum that this town needs and deserves and that is a museum of Philadelphia activism. We have one of the greatest histories of civic activism in the country, perhaps the world. I think that it's time for us, instead of retreating, to move forward and advance a program that will engage the citizens of this in celebrating the activism of their fellow citizens and the agency of those citizens ought to be exemplified.

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**Q15:** You mentioned in your presentation that one of Drexel's goals would be creating an active, robust loan program. But the PHM already had a loan program so I'm wondering what the plans are for maintaining those active loans during this transitional period.

**A15:** All loans that are active will remain active and will be honored. The main difference is that the loan program we're imagining is a little bit more interactive which is to say that currently just as with most museums loan programs, the idea is that you're asked for something, you lend it, it's a long to term loan, you do condition checking and so on. In our case we'd actually be reaching out to organizations that we feel would be a great fit for telling part of Philadelphia's story and working with them on interpretation, on best ways to display, and programs that would support the display. This we be, when we call it a robust loan program, it's shorthand for not just your average museum loan program but one were we really will be engaging in outreach to get items into places where people are. Absolutely, any outstanding loans that are out there, all the conditions of those loans remain in place.

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**Q16:** I'm the executive director of the Delaware County Museum Research Library and we're facing very similar circumstances as the Atwater Kent. Being in that situation I would to thank and applaud the board and Drexel and Paige for your dedication and expertise for taking this on. My comment is directed towards this passionate group of community members. I'd like to remind you of the importance of feeling that passion before a museum gets to the point of a museum having to close. I think the passion here is wonderful, but I want remind you that this is the last thing that the Atwater Kent museum wanted to do, it's the last thing the City of Philadelphia wanted to do. But I ask all of you,

how many of you have given in the past? How many of you have attended numerous openings? It's too late to complain now and say that it's going away. Where were you for fundraising and attendance over the last decade or two? I just wanted to remind you that this is on all of us. This is not just the City, it's not Drexel, it's not the board, it's us as well.

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**Q17:** I live in South Philadelphia and I'm very angry. People have spoken about the children. I first visited the Atwater Kent museum in about 1950 when I was 8 years old. I came with a class in my elementary school. I remember the visit very clearly. It was that visit that kindled an interest in Philadelphia history in me which has continued for over 60 years. In response to the previous remark, I have been a paying member of the museum for over 35 years and I have been there dozens of times each year to see what's going on and to support the program. Despite its unparalleled collection, the museum has never lived up to its potential because it has been chronically underfunded by successive city administrations. Mayors previous to Kenney have starved the museum of dollars. This has made it impossible to provide the kind of publicity and programming essential to breaking into audiences that a proper marketing program would attract. It took the administration of Kenney to actually shutter the place. This is a disgrace for the city as whole and for Mayor Kenney in particular. It is perfectly clear that a real PHM should be reopened and properly funded by the City.

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**Q18:** I'm a museum professional, I've worked in museum development an museum education and teaching museum studies for over 15 years. I've also worked as manager of school and youth programs at Atwater Kent for 3 years. I'd like to highlight a brief anecdote that hopefully will illustrate the potential of this collection and what it can do in physical space, digital space, and frankly what humans can do to help this collection. When I make an exhibit, I'm bringing together communities and those communities may not have wanted to be in conversation historically. In fact, they may have been in violent opposition. I was teaching numerous classes at Atwater Kent, one particular class was racially integrated. There were children who were friends with each other: this one girl was white and her best friend was African American. We looked at the Octavius Cato banner. I said he was killed by a person of Irish descent. The one girl said, I'm Irish, my family is Irish American and her best friend was African American. They looked at each other like "Oh my gosh." I said, you know, sometimes groups that don't have much start to fight with each other. Let's go into the other room and see the nativist banner and talk about what's happening to the Irish and let's talk about the Bible riots and Protestants versus Catholics. I even said to them, can we talk about my German-American Lutheran relatives and a fear of speaking German around WWI, WWII. And also my visiting German relatives and what they will and won't say about they were during WWII in the German and Nazi army or in Russian prisons. The ability to have those complex conversations in physical spaces that are about my country, my history, and all of our communities in an exhibit that was about the Philadelphia streets, that was about parades, protests, as well as sewers, and cobblestones, and melting pots. That's our collective story. I thank you for the work you've done, but I look for ways were we can do our best jobs to do that hard work together because it doesn't happen in segregated neighborhoods or class segregated neighborhoods and all the other ways that we are separate. There is something about public space that does that.

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**Q19:** I'm a student at Drexel University. I saw the digital media and I'm really fascinated by the idea of high quality photography being taken of the artifacts themselves. Have you considered taking high-resolution 3D modeled images of objects? This is one of my favorite things, recreation of props and historical events. Have you considered giving detailed descriptions like information about things like dimensions and materials used? Would that be included in this project?

**A19:** We get as much information as we can get on any object we want to be able to capture. If we have the capacity of funds to 3D model then we'd like to consider.

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**Q20:** Picking up on some comments people made on PHM being historically underfunded. Can you give us some numbers about its budget and how that roughly relates to other institutions? The other thing I want to know is, what happens to the building? Ms. Lee you said that you that it will be used for some constructive cultural purpose. But who actually has control of it? Is it the City? Will it revert back to Atwater Kent family? Who will make the final decision on the actual physical space?

**A20:** There are no specific plans for the building right now. We mentioned that it might revert back to the Atwater Kent foundation under the 1930 agreement. Right now they are working with the city, the sessions are fairly new to decide what will happen to the building. Kelly emphasized the cultural importance of the building and it's designated historic by the historical commission of the national register. Everybody wants to protect the building. We will do what is sensible with the building.

**A20:** The city annual fund for museums is roughly \$300,000 a year. It's hard for us to compare to other institutions. Generally speaking, all of our departments are underfunded by the city. I'm amazed at the ability for our institutions and workers in their ability to do incredibly great things without very much. I don't want anyone to leave here tonight thinking that the city does not value this museum. This was not an easy decision for us to come just like it wasn't an easy decision for the board to come to. None of us wanted to reach this point. We believe the importance of Philadelphia's history and we want to maintain it. We're trying to find the best path forward to maintain and tell the stories of the collection, tell the stories of our ancestors and bridge the gaps between communities. We're not anything without being able to tell our stories. I appreciate everyone's passion and concerns. We share those concerns.

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