

Policies of the Plainfield Township Historical Commission

MISSION of the Plainfield Township Historical Commission

Our mission is to provide the citizenry of Plainfield Township an opportunity for deeper understanding and appreciation of the history of Plainfield Township, Hale and surrounding areas through programs and publications. This may be accomplished by the following activities:

- Identify specific sites and locations of a historic nature in the community.
- Promote and encourage citizens in the collection, preservation, interpretation and publication of Hale area history through educational programs, published written articles and related historical activities.
- Provide the means to accept, collect, define, catalogue, conserve, retrieve and display items, artifacts, relics, curios and other property, real or personal, of historical significance to Plainfield Township and its surrounding area.
- Coordinate and further programs with area historical societies and local historians.
- Work with neighboring historical societies and associations within the surrounding counties and the State of Michigan for the furtherance of these goals.
- Cooperate with individuals, organizations or institutions on a local and state-wide manner on projects and activities that will promote and sustain interest in history: and,
- Promote public support for the collection, preservation and protection of Plainfield Township and Hale Area history.

VISION of the Plainfield Township Historical Commission

The Commission's vision is "To be the community's repository for property and artifacts representing the history of Plainfield Township."

SCOPE of the Plainfield Township Historical Collection

The Plainfield Township Historical Commission (hereinafter Commission) is the collecting agent for items that are held in perpetuity for the Township of Plainfield, Iosco County, Michigan, and its citizens. Collections are accessioned, documented, and cataloged objects of both cultural and scientific significance. All collections may be used for research, educational programs, and exhibition. A loan policy has not been effected, but may be developed and added to this statement at an appropriate time. All donated materials are owned by Plainfield Township, under the auspices of the Commission and the Plainfield Township Trustees.

ACQUISITION POLICY

The Commission acquires specimens primarily through donations. Supplemental methods may consist of bequest, transfer, and exchange, or purchase as may be limited by procedural guidelines. All such acquisitions are for the express purpose of collecting, preserving, studying and exhibiting materials illustrating the history, genealogy and cultural heritage of Plainfield Township and the surrounding area.

The Commission will not acquire any cultural materials known, or suspected to be, illegally exported from their country of origin, or illegally excavated in the United States. All potential acquisitions will be evaluated in terms of their provenience documentation, previous ownership and possible value as an addition to the Plainfield Township collection.

All collections are made in strict compliance with federal and state laws. All associated documentation; including any such records generated during acquisition of articles for the collection are an integral part of the collection and will become the property of Plainfield Township once the items are accessioned into the Commission's permanent collection.

Gifts, bequests, exchanges and purchases must be the legal property of the donor, institution or dealer making the offer and the source must have the legal authority to dispose of the specimens proffered. The Commission's Acquisition Committee, and the Plainfield Township Board of Trustees must approve acquisitions and exchanges when value of the object(s) reach certain levels. Artifacts or collections that fall outside the scope of collections may be rejected for accession. This is a decision that is made by the Commission's Acquisition Committee in consultation with the relevant curator.

The Commission, or its personnel, cannot provide appraisals of any gift or bequest. Nor will the Acquisition Committee or the curatorial staff authenticate cultural materials known or suspected to be illegally exported from their country of origin, or make available Commission collections or equipment to assist such determinations by others. Personnel affiliated with the Commission are not permitted to use such association to make similar collections for private or commercial purposes or to develop similar private collections. Any articles claimed to be of value in excess of \$5000 must have accompanying third party appraisal documentation.

POLICIES for the DISPOSAL of MATERIALS

In an effort to handle properly the collections entrusted to the Commission we wish to propose guidelines for disposal of collection materials. In doing so, we accept the following statements from the Committee on Ethics of the American Association of Museums in its 1978 Report on Museum Ethics:

“The physical care of the collection and its accessibility must be in keeping with professionally accepted standards. Failing this, museum governance and management are ethically obliged either to effect correction of the deficiency or to dispose of the collection, preferably to another institution.

No collection exists in isolation. Its course generally will be influenced by changes in cultural, scholarly or educational trends, strengths and specializations developing in other institutions, policy and law regarding the traffic in various kinds of objects, the status of plant and animal populations, and the desire to improve the collections.

In the delicate area of acquisition and disposal of museum objects, the museum must weigh carefully the interests of the public for which it holds the collection in trust, the donor's intent in the broadest sense the interests of the scholarly and the cultural community, and the institution's own financial well-being.

Objects collected by the museum should be relevant to its purposes and activities be accompanied by a valid legal title, preferably unrestricted but with any limitations clearly described in an instrument of conveyance, and be properly catalogued, conserved, stored, or exhibited. Museums must remain free to improve their collections through selective disposal and acquisition and intentionally to sacrifice specimens for well-considered analytical, educational or other purposes. In general, objects should be kept as long as they retain their physical integrity, authenticity and usefulness for the museum's purposes.

When disposing of an object, the museum must determine that it has the legal right to do so. When mandatory restrictions accompany the acquisition they must be observed unless it can be clearly shown that adherence to such restrictions is impossible or substantially detrimental to the institution. A museum can only be relieved from such restrictions by an appropriate legal procedure.

When precatory statements accompany the acquisition, they must be carefully considered, and consultation with the donor or his heirs should be attempted in order to finitely define any restrictions.

In disposing of an object, due consideration must be given the museum community in general as well as the wishes and financial needs of the institution. Sales to, or exchanges between, institutions should be

considered as well as disposal through trade. In addition to the financial return from disposals, the museum should consider the full range of factors affecting the public interest.

While the governing entity bears final responsibility for the collection including both the acquisition and disposal process the curatorial and administrative staff together with their technical associates are best qualified to assess the pertinence of an object to the collection or the museum's program. Only for clear and compelling reasons should an object be disposed of against the advice of the museums' professional staff."

With these statements in mind, we propose the following guidelines for the disposal of materials for the collections of Plainfield Township Historical Commission, Iosco County, Michigan.

A donor's wishes regarding the possible future disposal of an object / collection should be determined at the time the gift is made; these can be ascertained by use of a standard set of questions to be drawn up by the commission's curatorial staff / acquisition committee.

Reasons for disposal of collections include; inability to care properly for a collection; inappropriateness of a collection with regard to a collection's programs or purposes; unnecessary duplication; irredeemable loss of a collection's scientific, historic, or aesthetic value due to physical deterioration or loss of essential documentation. In considering disposal the following two principles should be taken into account:

- Complete research collections should be disposed of as single units rather than dispersed.
- Items of research / public value should remain in the public domain so far as this is possible.

Curators should be able to exchange specimens with other institutions and to provide specimens to other institutions, when appropriate.

Funds gained through disposal should be used for curatorial purposes, specifically, to improve substantively the quality / quantity of the remaining collections of the museum. (Fund raising is not considered a valid reason for disposing any part of a collection.)

No Commission member or Plainfield Township Trustee may privately purchase or otherwise obtain or retain objects that are a part of the museum's collection.

Proposals for the disposal of valuable objects / collections which include a statement of plans for the use of money obtained are to be approved by the curatorial staff, the Commission, and given final approval by the Plainfield Township Trustees.

In the event rescission of Plainfield Township Ordinance #45 disestablishes the Commission, the collection should be maintained under direction of the township trustees, or the maintenance of the collection assigned to other such groups or organizations as have knowledge and experience with the curation of such collections.

DEACCESSION POLICY

The collections of the Commission are held in trust for the people of Plainfield Township, Iosco County Michigan by the Plainfield Township Trustees. The disposal of any part of the collection must be considered a serious step. Deaccessioning must therefore follow a deliberate and established procedure and take place in an open and public manner. Any deaccessioning of items will be done in compliance with applicable state and federal law, and will be consistent with standard accepted American Association of Museum policies and procedures.

No artifact in the Commission's collection shall be considered for deaccessioning unless it meets at least one of the following criteria:

- The object(s) fall outside the scope of the Commission's collections;

- The object(s) have been improperly or erroneously accessioned into the permanent collections (i.e., equipment needed for the operation and security of collections, federal or state owned collections);
- The object(s) have decayed or decomposed beyond reasonable use and repair or that by their condition constitute a hazard to other objects in the collection or to Commission personnel;
- The object(s) can not be properly cared for and housed;
- The object(s) lacks authenticity or are so lacking in documentation as to render them valueless for purposes of scholarly research or public education;
- Object(s) whose transfer is mandated by applicable state or federal law;
- Other unique or special circumstances relating to the source, acquisition or continued curation of an object that renders its transfer of major benefit to the Museum and its mission.
- The destruction of individual items for credible, scientific analysis is not considered a formal deaccessioning, and may be only permitted at the direction of the curator and the acquisition committee. All data generated by the destruction of specimens will be added to the collections' documentation.
- In considering removal of object(s) from the Commission's permanent collection, the following two principles should be taken into account:
 - Complete research collections should be disposed of as a single unit rather than dispersed.
 - Items of research/public value should remain in the public domain as far as this is possible.

The Commission, as a legal unit of the Plainfield Township, Iosco County, Michigan is subject to the guidelines and policies of property disposition as defined by Michigan Compiled Laws 41.2(3). Initial recommendations to deaccession shall originate by the curator or the Acquisition Committee in consultation with the curator.

Recommendations are presented in writing to the Board of Trustees. Recommendations must include a description of the object(s) being considered for deaccession (with photo-documentation if needed), a rationale for the deaccessioning, and the proposed disposition of the object(s) once they are deaccessioned.

The curator will draft a statement describing the object(s), the rationale for deaccessioning, and the intended final disposition of the object(s). With the concurrence of the acquisition committee and approval of the Commission, this documentation will be sent to the Township Supervisor, for presentation to the Township Board of Trustees as an item of the agenda for the subsequent Trustee's meeting.

If during said meeting of the board there have been no adverse comments, the deaccessioning is deemed approved.

At approval, deaccessioning can proceed.

All internal records of the collection will be modified to indicate deaccessioning with the date of disposition clearly written. All documentation pertaining to the deaccessioning will remain part of the collection's (Commission's) permanent records.

The Commission is required to dispose objects according to then current legal requirements, but will attempt to keep objects within the public domain, when appropriate. The following channels of disposal are recommended:

- Exchange or transfer for fair value within the immediate area
- Disposal to other local museum collections through exchange or transfer will be considered before considering disposal to other types of collections within the State of Michigan.

- Exchange with or sale for fair value to public museums or collections, within or outside of the boundaries of the State of Michigan.
- Public auction.

If the object to be disposed of has been declined by other area museums and subsequently by institutions in the museum community outside the county of Iosco, Michigan the preferred means of disposal is sale at public auction. The sale must be recommended by the acquisition committee and the Commission, and must be approved by the Plainfield Township Trustees.

RESTRICTIONS on DISPOSITION

Disposal of museum objects may not be to private individuals without specific and explicit approval of the Plainfield Township Trustees. No member of the Trustees, or officer of the Commission is eligible to purchase objects deaccessioned from the Museum. In conformance with the American Association of Museums, proceeds from the sale of collection materials can only be used to purchase objects appropriate to the Commission's mission or supplies to enhance the storage conditions of current collections.

AMENDMENT and ADOPTION

These policies may be amended by action of the Plainfield Township Historical Commission in the normal order of business at any scheduled meeting, or at any special meeting which may be specified for such purpose.

These policies have been modeled after the Policies of the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology. These policies, as amended, are adopted during the Historical Commission general meeting of 20 Sep 2010

Signature / Jerry Hewitt, Chairman _____ /s/ Jerry Hewitt

Amendments:

06 Aug 2010 Revised to include cleanup and clarification of Acquisition and Disposition of articles.

10 Sep 2010 Added "purchase" clause into acquisition policy.