



NEW HANOVER COUNTY

CAPE FEAR MUSEUM

814 Market Street, Wilmington, NC 28401

P: (910) 798-4370 | F: (910) 798-4382 | CapeFearMuseum.com

Kate Baillon, Interim Director



August 3, 2023

Dear Members of the Local Government Commission,

We, the Cape Fear Museum's Advisory Board, are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the co-location of our museum and the library in downtown Wilmington. As community leaders appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, our primary goal is to provide advice and guidance to the museum.

By moving the museum into heart of downtown, we envision a significant increase in visitorship, improved opportunities to showcase the region's history, artifacts and STEM exhibits, and a functional space for the growth of our museum as a cultural and learning destination. A downtown location will expand the accessibility of the museum to create an inclusive cultural and learning hub.

The combination of the museum's well-researched, artifact-rich, and hands-on learning experiences with the library's extensive resources and archives will breathe new life into not only the museum and library but also the entire downtown core. This is likely to encourage visitors to spend more time in downtown Wilmington, supporting local restaurants, stores, and stimulating our local economy.

The proposed purpose-built museum will provide an additional 10,000 square feet of exhibition space, focusing on the history and STEM-related aspects of our local region. As the region's only science center, it means a remarkable 244% increase in immersive, hands-on STEM-based learning opportunities within the museum. Moreover, the educational space within the museum will more than double, enabling us to better serve local and regional school groups. Being within walking distance of Cape Fear Community College will create valuable opportunities for students to engage with the museum.

An innovative, state-of-the-art museum, paired with a modern library, will offer individuals, couples, families and students in our region and state with an enhanced cultural and educational experience, while also encouraging them to support local businesses. Establishing this cultural hub downtown will draw tourists from far and wide, leading to increased foot traffic and patronage for local establishments. Consequently, this influx of visitors will stimulate job opportunities in the hospitality, retail, and tourism sectors, ultimately bolstering our overall

employment rate. We firmly believe this project aligns with recent developments, including the CFCC Wilson Center, Live Oak Amphitheater, River Place, and the Gateway project to transform downtown Wilmington into a place for families to live, work, and play.

We urge the Local Government Commission to support the co-location of a museum and library on this county-owned block in our downtown area. By investing in our cultural infrastructure, we invest in the economic future of our city, our county, and its residents to create a prosperous and culturally enriched workforce and region for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana Crater". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Dana Crater, Board Chair, on behalf of the Cape Fear Museum Advisory Board

Rick Andrews
Dana Crater
Ben Ivey
Eileen O'Malley

Susan Barbee
Stephen Fortlouis
Kevin Maurer
Jhaniqua Palmer

Gwen Brown
Lucy Holman
Stewart Moon