



THE MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM
COMO-HARRIET STREETCAR LINE
EXCELSIOR STREETCAR LINE

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January 9, 2010

POLICY No. 7

COLLECTIONS POLICY

1.0 General

1.1 Policy. The Minnesota Streetcar Museum is a non-profit educational corporation organized in Minnesota whose mission is to preserve and communicate to the public the experience of electric surface public transportation history in Minnesota and the Upper Midwest. This mission is achieved through community outreach activities, historic research, member and public education and events, operating exhibits, publication, static displays, and publications and specifically includes the acquisition, conservation, restoration, operation, interpretation, and maintenance of artifacts relating to its mission.

1.2 Items covered by this policy. This policy is intended to cover items of historical significance, as described in section 1.4 below. It is not intended to cover equipment, structures, tools, vehicles, tools, or other items of a support nature that are used to maintain, operate, preserve, or restore the historic items in the collection.

1.3 Period of collection. The period conforms to the region's history as territories and states of the United States, generally 1850 to the present.

1.4 Scope of collection. The scope of the collection is urban public transit vehicles, including streetcars, interurban cars, other electric railroad equipment, and buses as well as artifacts, electronic data, photographs, and structures related to urban public transit and electric railroading. These are restricted to Minnesota and the Upper Midwest, although components from other places may be used where crucial to restorations.

1.5 How items are collected. Items may be purchased by the Museum, donated to the Museum, or purchased with funds loaned to the Museum by members or other interested parties.

1.6 Authority over the collection. The Board of Directors is responsible for the collection, including all acquisitions, dispositions, and loans, and for the collection's condition, documentation, and usage. The Board may, and generally does, delegate these responsibilities to committees or the General Superintendent. When such delegation occurs, the committee or the General Superintendent is responsible for reporting activities and the state of the collection to the Board. The Board may intercede at any time to decide upon an acquisition, disposition, or other matters relating to items owned by the Museum.

WE MAKE MINNESOTA'S ELECTRIC RAILWAY HISTORY COME ALIVE!



2.0 Acquisitions

2.1 Policy. The Museum will generally attempt to acquire valuable artifacts, but may restrict new acquisitions if:

- 2.1.1 their acquisition threatens the funding for operating exhibits;
- 2.1.2 inadequate proper storage is unavailable; or
- 2.1.3 the item stands a good chance of deteriorating to an unacceptable degree before restoration can be undertaken.
- 2.1.4 Exceptions to these considerations may be based on the value and rarity of the item and its relevance to the collection.

2.2 Authority over Acquisitions. The Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for all acquisitions through its approval of an annual budget and operating plan and a long-range plan. Committees and the General Superintendent are responsible for reporting activities and the state of the collection to the Board. The Board may intercede at any time to decide upon an acquisition.

2.3 Procedures. Bequest, exchange, field collection, and purchase may all be employed as means of acquisition. Title is generally obtained free and clear without restrictions as to use, although exceptions may be permitted by the Board.

2.4 Acquisition criteria. Acquisitions will meet the following conditions:

- 2.4.1 The item is relevant to and consistent with the mission, activities and purpose of the Museum.
- 2.4.2 The present owner has clear title.
- 2.4.3 The Museum can provide proper care, protection, and storage that insure the item's availability for the Museum's purposes.
- 2.4.4 All ethical, legal, and moral implications of the acquisition will be considered. The potential donor of an item will be informed in advance that the item may be disposed of if it fails to meet the Museum's needs in the future.
- 2.4.5 Sufficient funding for acquisition transportation and initial storage will be available before the acquisition.

2.5 Appraisals. Museum staff or members may not give appraisals. Staff or members may assist a donor in locating a qualified appraiser. Donors will obtain their own independent appraisal for income tax purposes. Acceptance of an item at its appraised value does not imply endorsement of the appraisal. Staff or members may, as a public service, provide informal artifact identification for the owner's personal information, not to be used for past or future commercial transactions. The owner understands that this is only an informal opinion.

3.0 Dispositions

3.1 Policy. An item may be disposed if it is not relevant to and consistent with the activities, mission, and purpose of the Museum or if sufficient similar items exist in the collection to make the item redundant.

3.2 Authority over Dispositions. The Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for all dispositions through its approval of an annual budget and work plan and a long-range plan. Committees and the General Superintendent are responsible for reporting activities and the state of the collection to the Board. The Board may intercede at any time to decide upon a disposition.

3.3 Principles.

- 3.3.1 The disposition will be in the best interest of the Museum and the public it serves.
- 3.3.2 Priority will be given to placing the item in another appropriate tax-exempt public institution by exchange, gift, or sale.
- 3.3.3 If not appropriate for another institution, the item will be disposed of in such a way as to maximize its cash value to the Museum.
- 3.3.4 Items will not be returned to the donor unless that arrangement was specifically made at the time of acquisition.

3.4 Criteria for disposition. Items to be disposed will meet at least one of the following criteria.

- 3.4.1 Item is outside the scope of the Museum's activities, mission, and purpose.
- 3.4.2 Item is deteriorated beyond usefulness or economic repair.
- 3.4.3 Item is a duplicate of another item in the collection.
- 3.4.4 Item cannot be properly cared for.

3.5 Types of disposition. Exchange, sale, trade, transfer to another organization, and outright destruction are all employed.

3.6 Restrictions. The Museum will make a reasonable effort to determine that it is legally free to dispose of the item. Conditions of the acquisition will be observed unless deviation is authorized by a court of law. Items with restrictions will not be disposed of until reasonable efforts are made to comply with those restrictions. In the event of questions regarding restrictions, legal counsel will be sought. Required documentation will be completed, including notification of the general public, heirs, lender, etc.

3.7 Procedure for disposition. Disposition of any item, if not a direct Board action, will be accompanied by a memoranda to the Board Chair describing the item, its history within the organization, reasons for disposition, date of disposition, and other relevant information. If the matter is considered by the Board, it will be recorded in the meeting minutes. The completed disposition memoranda will be permanently retained by the Secretary. Proceeds from the disposition will be allocated to a fund within the Museum at the direction of the Board.

3.8 Ethics of disposition. Disposed items will not be given or sold privately to Museum members, employees, officers, members of the Board, or independent contractors, unless care is taken to avoid any arrangement that could be interpreted as being a conflict of interest or an attempt to profit at the Museum's expense.

4.0 **Incoming Loans**

4.1 Incoming loans Policy. Loaned items may be accepted from individuals or other institutions for exhibit, research, or restoration purposes. Items not owned by the Museum and maintained, operated, repaired, or stored on Museum property will be considered loaned items and will be covered by the terms of this section.

4.2 Authority over incoming loans. The Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for all incoming loans through its approval of an annual budget and work plan and a long-range plan. Committees and the General Superintendent are responsible for reporting activities and the state of the collection to the Board. The Board may intercede at any time to decide upon an incoming loan.

4.3. Regulations. The loan will be for a specified period of time. There will be a completed loan agreement executed with signatures of both the Museum and lender. The forms will be retained by the Secretary as part of the permanent record.

4.4 The Museum will provide reasonable care for loaned objects and will employ the same precautions exercised with its own property. This care extends to moving and transportation of the item. Mutual agreement will be reached with the lender regarding insurance, in any of the following ways at the Museum's discretion:

- 4.4.1 the lender provides a certificate of insurance naming the Museum as additional insured or waiving subrogation against the Museum;
- 4.4.2 the Museum will insure items under its policy for the amount indicated on the signed loan agreement. The policy will include the usual exclusions for loss or damage due to gradual deterioration, natural disasters, etc.; or
- 4.4.3 the signed loan agreement will constitute release of the Museum from any liability in connection with the loaned property.

5.0 Outgoing loans

5.1 Outgoing Loan Policy. The Museum may lend items from its collection to other institutions, private companies, or individuals for educational or other purposes that serve the Museum's mission and purpose. Items may be placed in the homes of individual Museum members for safekeeping or if necessary to further some Museum project. Chartering Museum equipment shall not be considered a loan and shall not be covered under this policy.

5.2 Authority over outgoing loans. The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for all outgoing loans through its approval of an annual budget and work plan and a long-range plan. Committees and the General Superintendent are responsible for reporting activities and the state of the collection to the Board. The Board may intercede at any time to decide upon an outgoing loan.

5.3 Criteria for loaning.

- 5.3.1 The loan will in some way further the mission and purpose of the Museum.
- 5.3.2 Security and conservation measures will meet the Museum's requirements.
Conservation concerns include, if appropriate, handling, installation techniques, light levels, proper encasement, relative humidity, and temperature.
- 5.3.3 Loans will be for a specified period of time, subject to periodic review.
- 5.3.4 The borrower will observe the Museum's regulations governing loans.
- 5.3.5 Loan requests may be denied if not in the best interests of the Museum.

5.4 Regulations.

- 5.4.1 The borrower will insure the loan under its own policy and forward a certificate of insurance to the Museum, will reimburse the Museum the cost of insurance, or the borrower will agree to assume liability for loss or damage in lieu of insurance.
- 5.4.2 The borrower will arrange and pay for shipping by approved methods in both directions. The borrower will pay all costs of preparing items for shipping. The Museum may require its own courier accompany the item at the borrower's expense.
- 5.4.3 Items on display will be protected and secured by approved methods. Breakage, damage, vandalism, or other loss will be reported by the borrower immediately.
- 5.4.4 The object cannot be altered by the borrower without the express written permission of the Museum.

5.4.5 The item may not be used for commercial purposes without the express written permission of the Museum.

5.4.6 No objects may be re-loaned by the borrower to another person or organization.

5.4.7 The Museum will receive appropriate credit for all items on loan.

5.4.8 Appropriate forms will prescribe procedures for all loans. A complete record of all loan transactions will be kept by the Secretary as part of the permanent record.

5.4.9 Any variations from these regulations will be approved by the Board of Directors.

5.5 Ethics of outgoing loans. Loans will not be made to Museum members, employees, officers, members of the Board or independent contractors, unless care is taken to avoid any arrangement that could be interpreted as being a conflict of interest or an attempt to profit at the Museum's expense.

6.0 Other Artifacts or Items in the Museum's Custody

6.1 The Museum may have custody of items for purposes of informal identification, use in a publication, or other short term purpose. Such items will not be subject to the documentation, insurance, and liability provisions of this policy.

6.2 The Museum may also have in its possession unclaimed loans or items with an unknown history. Unclaimed items are considered abandoned property under Minnesota law. The Museum will attempt to identify and return such items as required under state law.

6.3 Should items remain unclaimed, they may be formally acquired or disposed of as required by this collections policy.

7.0 Collections Care and Documentation

7.1 Policy. The Museum will create a data base that records and describes its collection and will create policies regarding the on-going documentation and maintenance of collection inventories and records.

7.2 Process of registering and cataloguing. Committees and the General Superintendents will prepare inventories of historic items. The Board shall designate a Collections Secretary who will be responsible for creating and maintaining the inventory. The file on each item will include pertinent information on the item's acquisition and status (acquisition date and source, condition, location, significance, and status as part of the Museum's program). A current copy of the inventory will be kept by the Secretary.

7.3 Care. The Museum will act in a responsible manner to ensure the best possible physical care of all items. Items in the permanent collection not on exhibition will be housed in such a manner as to ensure their preservation, systematic access, and easy retrieval. Items will be insured for their replacement value if operated as part of a Museum exhibit.

8.0 Collections Accessibility

8.1 Policy.

8.1.1 Exhibits will be open to the public. Non-exhibited items will be accessible to all Museum members although access may be restricted to selected members and officials for security reasons. In these situations, members may have access by appointment.

8.1.2 The permanent collection and records are available for legitimate examination, inquiry, research, and study by responsible parties as determined by the Board.

- 8.1.3 A copy of this collection policy will be made available to every Museum member, and on request, to any donor, prospective donor, lender, prospective lender, or other responsible entity or person.
- 8.1.4 A requesting party may be required to fill out an access form. Persons requesting access will be supervised at all times, unless specific permission to the contrary is granted by the Chair or the General Superintendent.
- 8.1.5 Limitations to access will include donor stipulated closed files and donor anonymity.
- 8.1.6 Reference to this policy will be printed on all Museum forms for deeds of gift, temporary receipts, and loans.
- 8.1.7 Access, reproduction, and use of the permanent collection may involve fee charges established by the Board in advance or in response to a specific situation.

9.0 Ethics

9.1 MSM Members and staff will derive no personal monetary benefit from their access to the collection, and will assert no personal privilege over the acquisition, disposition, or use of any item.

Reviewed and approved by the MSM Board of Directors at its meeting on March 14, 2006. Again reviewed and approved at its meeting on January 9, 2010.

ATTEST:

James A. Vaitkunas
Corporate Secretary