

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FRIENDS OF POPLAR HILL MANSION

August 21, 2019

Open Board Meeting Minutes

Present: Board Chair, Ginny Hussey (late); Vice Chair, Jeanne Mears, Treasurer, Sharon Murphy; Board Members: Scott Rall, Betsy Wolfe, Tom Truitt, Loudell Insley, and Nancy Robertson; Curator & Recording Secretary, Sarah Meyers

I. Call to Order:

The August Open Board Meeting of the Friends of Poplar Hill Mansion was called to order on Wednesday, June 27, 2019 at 12:00 p.m. by Board Vice Chair Jeanne Mears.

II. Approval of Minutes:

The Board Vice Chair asked if there were any corrections or additions to the June 27, 2019 Open Board Meeting Minutes. Scott pointed out a clarification that the British Royal Marine Reenactors from the festival were not seeking compensation as it appears in the June minutes; he was pointing out the inequitable payment of both groups and stated that neither group should expect payment. Hearing no other corrections, the June 27, 2019 Open Board Meeting Minutes were approved.

III. Reports:

A.) Chair: Ginny Hussey

1.) Ginny was absent for part of the meeting and Sarah covered her topics of discussion in regards to the meeting with the City and the submission of the intent to apply for the MHT grant.

B.) Treasurer Report: Chair Sharon Murphy

- 1.) See written reports for exact numbers.
- 2.) There is \$5,050.97 in the operating account.
- 3.) Betsy had a question about the Comcast bill as it seemed high to her. It was explained that it was a bundle that included internet, phone, and cable (Sarah pays the cable portion of the bill).
- 4.) Sharon also shared the balance sheet for the Festival and there was a further discussion about the festival and how to improve it for next year. She mentioned that there were still outstanding invoices that have not been received so the balance may yet again change. Advertising was a major concern. A \$150 ad (boost of the event) was done on Facebook for a month. For next year, more advertising needs to be done. Betsy and Loudell suggested sending postcards to the membership and other targeted audiences. Betsy also suggested that we need to go after more sponsorships and Sarah agreed and stated that the festival had more this year and as the event grows over the years, hopefully more sponsors will come. Loudell also suggested that the Friends ask the City to do some sort of proclamation for the Festival and possibly ask the City officials to announce it during a Council Meeting. Jeanne brought up more ways to bring in an income. She mentioned that next year the Friends should charge a nominal fee to the vendors (\$10-\$25) to set up in the tent and that maybe the Friends could sell hot dogs instead of asking a food vendor.

IV. Curator Report: Sarah Meyers

1.) Donations/Acquisitions: 19th Century eyeglasses

- 2.) Total Guests since last report: 179 guests
- 3.) Additions to the calendar: None.
- 4.) Changes to the calendar: None.
- 5.) Curator Remarks:
 - a.) It was decided to cancel the Superhero Tea due to low RSVPs.
 - b.) Sarah reported that she and Ginny submitted the letter of intent to apply for the non-capital grant from MHT to prepare for a new exhibit about the enslaved people of PHM.
 - c.) Sarah gave a presentation to the Salisbury Rotary which garnered two new memberships. She also had the opportunity to meet the new Director of the Wicomico Library.
 - d.) Sarah attended the Old Line State Summit in Frederick, MD sponsored by Preservation Maryland which is a day-long conference about historic preservation and museums. She attended three sessions. One about doing a historic walking tour; a project that the City of Salisbury has talked about doing. She also visited the Steiner House, a contemporary of PHM and did a seminar about the documentation of historic buildings taught by MHT. Finally, she attended a session about using virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) programs at historic sites and museums and how to incorporate those systems into exhibits and the most cost effective ways of doing so.
 - e.) Sarah reported that PHM has lost two trees from recent storms.
 - f.) Sarah gave an update on projects the City is working on in relation to PHM. The front steps have been repaired and repainted, but due to budget cuts they cannot be completely rebuilt at this time. The kitchen siding still remains a priority and Tom Stevenson will be sending out an RFP in the near future to get estimates from contractors. Sarah did mention that Councilman Muir Boda visited the house and she pointed out the siding issue and he said that it may be possible to get some emergency funding. Also, the Mansion may be getting pea gravel around the house and more shells for the parking lot to replace the shells removed during the clean-up of the trees.
 - g.) Sarah also reported that she and Jeanne tabled at National Night Out.
 - h.) The Newtown Association is moving forward with the Holiday House Tour which is the same day as the Yuletide Open House on December 8th. The Mansion will be open 10:30-4:00 that day. Loudell talked about doing a silent auction and Sarah mentioned that now is the time to start soliciting business and gather items for the auction.
- 6.) Discussion Curator Report:
 - a.) Loudell asked about the planned exhibit about the enslaved people from PHM. She wanted to know if a list existed with the names of those who were enslaved to include in the exhibit. Sarah responded yes (the inventory from 1828). Loudell emphasized the importance of including those individual stories and Sarah agreed and explained that was the purpose of applying for the grant from MHT: to hire an expert to find those stories.
 - b.) Betsy asked if the irrigation system had been repaired and Sarah answered that it has been fixed. Betsy also inquired about who would be doing weeding in the gardens due to the absence of Garden Chair, David Scheid. Sarah said she had talked to both garden clubs (4 Seasons and Town and Country) and they said it had been too hot to come out and do the weeding, especially considering the age of most of their members. Loudell suggested the possibility of hiring someone to come out and do weeding and helping on the grounds during July and August when it is too hot for the volunteer garden clubs and possibly asking each club for a contribution to help pay for that effort.

V. Committee Reports:

A.) Membership: Tom Truitt

- 1.) The committee will be meeting to discuss a new initiative and joint effort between the Friends and the Somerset Historical Society to share our membership lists and start working together to reach a broader audience of people interested in becoming members. Tom would like to use the letter and benefits Teackle Mansion sends out as a model for PHM.

B.) Hospitality: Jeanne Mears

- 1.) See discussion about festival in the Treasurer's Report.
- 2.) The Superhero Tea has been cancelled. The next public event is October the 24th, the Halloween Tea and the Halloween Party the day after.

C.) Publicity: Scott Rall

- 1.) None.

D.) Acquisitions: Carol Smith

- 1.) None.

E.) Mansion Improvements: Betsy Wolfe

- 1.) The committee is trying to arrange for a gentleman to come to the Mansion and take a look at all the furniture that needs to be repaired and get a quote/estimate for repairs.

F.) Garden: David Scheid

- 1.) David suffered a massive heart attack. He is doing well and on the mend.

G.) Budget & Finance: Sharon Murphy

- 1.) None.

VI. Old Business

- A. None.

VII. New Business

A.) Carol has filed for City Council. Jeanne brought up a question if she will be allowed to continue on the Board. It is unknown.

B.) Ginny announced her second retirement from the City on August 31. She also said she was raising money for the Susan G. Komen Foundation and will be doing a 60mi walk. She was trying to raise \$2,300 and will be doing a yard sale and asked everyone if they had anything they didn't need to donate to her for the sale.

VIII. Adjourn:

The Chair asked if there were any further business. Hearing none she called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeanne made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Loudell. The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sarah Meyers
Curator
Recording Secretary