

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
FRIENDS OF POPLAR HILL MANSION

August 19, 2020

Open Board Meeting Minutes

**Present:** Board Chair, David Scheid, Board Vice Chair, Jeanne Mears, Treasurer, Sharon Murphy; Board Members: Ginny Hussey, Betsy Wolfe, and Carol Smith; 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, August 19, 2020 at 12:01 p.m. by Board Chair David Scheid.

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes of the June meeting of the Friends of Poplar Hill Mansion could not be presented due to technical difficulties. They will be presented at the September meeting for approval.

**III. Reports:**

**A.) Chair: David Scheid**

- 1.) David talked about the new Children in the 1800's Exhibit. We have acquired a new collection of miniature items from Margaret Reed full of tea sets and a cabinet to house the items, PHM has also purchased a print and reproduction painting, small chair with needlepoint seat, a doll bed, and a small Delaware made trunk. We are still waiting for the showcase to arrive. Sarah is working on signage/labeling for all the artifacts. There is also an interactive component with reproduction toys. The exhibit will bill located in the second floor hallway.
- 2.) Covid-19 update: Everything is still in a holding pattern and the Mansion is following the same guidelines. David and Sarah have a meeting scheduled with Ben Baker and will discuss if there are changes and how soon those changes will take effect.
- 3.) David spoke about the ADA accessibility for the Mansion. There is just enough room within the two small bathrooms to turn it into one large ADA restroom, complete with an access button for an automatic door near on the wall as soon as you enter the Keeping Room from the main hallway. The contractor would also like to build the ramp out of the Trex material (composite wood) which will have more durability and longer life span. Sarah is awaiting the final scope of work from the contractor and will submit the paperwork to MHT for approval. Sarah is also working with the City Engineer (who is also on the City Historic Commission) to make sure everything is workable for the bathroom since the work will affect a load bearing wall.

**B.) Treasurer Report: Chair Sharon Murphy**

- 1.) Sharon paid the annual liability insurance of \$900.
- 2.) There is approximately \$2037 in the operating budget.

**IV. Curator Report: Sarah Meyers**

- 1.) Donations/Acquisitions: Collection of miniatures from Margaret Reed
- 2.) Total Guests since last report: 80 guests

- 3.) Additions to the calendar: Wedding October 17.
- 4.) Changes to the calendar: Cancellations due to COVID-19
- 5.) Curator Remarks:
  - a.) Sarah gave a brief Covid19 update. The Governor paused Stage III of reopening, which still limits capacity. Using outdoor space, groups and events can have up to 50 people as long as social distancing is still in effect and face masks are worn. It is currently no more than 10 guests at a time inside the Mansion, although that may change by the end of August to allow more capacity (25-30).
  - b.) Sarah gave a brief construction update. The siding is now installed. The contractor is working on the steps this week and hopefully he will be finished by the end of the week.
  - c.) Sarah said the City has also approved a budget for the ADA Accessibility. Working with the same contractor, they are developing a scope of work for a ramp and bathroom renovation. I have received preliminary drawings and it looks good.
  - d.) Sarah has had an uptick in wedding inquires in the past month. Couples have had to reorganize and reconfigure their weddings due to the pandemic. A lot of them have scaled back on their attendance to have about 40 people. Now they are looking at smaller venues to accommodate their smaller weddings. One bride who had cancelled her wedding reception here, has changed her mind and their wedding is back on, with a lot less guests. I have also booked another wedding on October 17. Both are planning everything to be outside. Bookings have also started for next year.
  - e.) Sarah mentioned the new showcase, riser, and textile storage boxes were all ordered and received except for the showcase. A shelving unit (now located in the nursery closet) was purchased for the archival boxes which will keep the textiles in a conditioned space, rather than the attic or basement.
  - f.) The Mansion received a large collection of miniatures from Margaret Reed. Thanks to Loudell, she decided PHM would be the perfect location. She has been collecting these items most of her life. The collection includes: multiple miniature porcelain tea sets and other porcelain dishes, Early American Pressed Glass items (i.e. sugar and creamers, covered butter dishes, compote dishes, cruet set, and two punch bowl sets with cups), flatware with bone handles, tin cookware, bed warmer, beverage urn, and a child size display hutch. The upstairs hallway will be turned into an exhibit about Children in the 1800s.
  - g.) Sarah updated the website with a new DONATE function on the Homepage and on the Giving pages. People can now donate to the Friends of PHM online using their credit cards. When you click on the link on the Homepage, it opens a new tab to a secure site called Charity Navigator.
- 6.) Discussion Curator Report:
  - a.) Carol suggested the possibility of the Mansion renting porta-potties for the weddings.

## **V. Committee Reports:**

### **A.) Membership:**

- 1.) No report.

### **B.) Hospitality: Jeanne Mears**

- 1.) The committee met and decided to cancel most of the public events for the rest of the year.
- 2.) There was a discussion about possibly doing a yard sale as a fundraiser. The Board would solicit donations for items to sell at the yard sale. It was also suggested that we go to the Garden Club and ask if they would like to also participate by having a plant sale.

**C.) Publicity:**

- 1.) Carol suggested reaching out to the local media about doing stories of how Covid19 had affected local museums using PHM as a case study to help advertise the museum.

**D.) Acquisitions: Carol Smith**

- 1.) None.

**E.) Mansion Improvements: Betsy Wolfe**

- 1.) Betsy sent a thank you to Mrs. Reed for her donation.
- 2.) Betsy will reach out to John Robinson about the Eli terry and Sons clock and find out the repair status. She will also reach out to Matt to inquire about the chairs taken for repairs last November.

**F.) Audit Committee: Carol Smith**

- 1.) The review is still not done yet.

**G.) Garden: David Scheid**

- 1.) The weeding and pruning will hopefully be completed soon. David hopes to enlist the help of former students and the Garden Clubs.
- 2.) A limb fell on the large boxwood on the side garden nearly splitting it in half.

**VI. Old Business**

- A. The appeal letter has been written. The Board will need to vote on sending it out. Sarah created a mailing list of 4,000 names to mail it to. The final price will be determined by whether the Friends can get an authorization number from the USPS for bulk non-profit mailings. Sarah will be applying for that number.

**VII. New Business**

- A.) Events for the rest of the year have been canceled.
- B.) Discussion about whether or not to have the Yuletide Open House. The Garden Club told Sarah that they would still like to decorate. The Board decided to move forward with that event following all necessary guidelines. Betsy also suggested possibly posting pictures of the arrangements online and having people vote for their favorite as another way to engage the public without the public visiting the Mansion.

**VIII. Adjourn:**

The meeting adjourned at 12:36 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sarah Meyers  
Curator  
Recording Secretary