

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FRIENDS OF POPLAR HILL MANSION

February 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, Tom Truitt, Carol Smith, Shanie Sheilds, and Loudell Insley; Curator & Recording Secretary, Sarah Meyers

**I. Call to Order:**

The February Open Board Meeting of the Friends of Poplar Hill Mansion was called to order on Wednesday, February 19, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. by Board Chair David Scheid.

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

The Board Chair asked if there were any corrections or additions to the November 20, 2019 Open Board Meeting Minutes or the December 18, 2020 Special Board Meeting Minutes. Hearing no corrections to the November 20, 2019 Open Board Meeting Minutes, they were approved. The December 18, 2020, had the correction to strike out that the grant had been submitted and the Genealogy conference notification (both took place in November), and the Special Board Meeting Minutes were approved.

**III. Reports:**

**A.) Chair: David Scheid**

- 1.) David reviewed his goals as the new Chair of the Friends.
  - a. His number one goal is to raise awareness of the museum and the Friends within the city and to the residents of the city and getting repeat visitors.
  - b. He would also like to get a display case for the second floor to do the rotating exhibits the Friends have talked about in past meetings.
  - c. He would like to see more interpretation of the children in the Nursery on the second floor using games, toys, and costumes (possibly mannequins).
  - d. He wants to develop a furnishing plan using the 1828 inventory as the guide to be sure not to add things that were not here during the time of Dr. Huston and create the stories to interpret using what artifacts are already housed in the museum.
  - e. He would like to approach the grounds in the same manner, being methodical in the development as to what stories to tell and how it related to the greater area around the Mansion, such as the Newtown and former Georgetown neighborhoods.
  - f. He would like to get more of academics from SU involved at the Mansion.
- 2.) David spoke to Robert Smith with the SU Theater Department about possibly doing some make-up on the mannequin of Dr. Huston in the Surgery Room to age him and give him a more appropriate wig.
- 3.) The announcement was made that the City has moved up the timeline for the ADA ramp. It will now be done at the same time as the siding and should be completed by the end of 2022. Betsy made the comment that she would like to see a lift and was informed that MHT has already said no to a lift and will only approve a ramp to the main door of the Mansion. David also commented that this shows a continued commitment from the City to see things improved at the

Mansion and is a positive step. Loudell commented that it will be great publicity as the work happens when it is completed and we can do a “Grand Reopening” ceremony.

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

- 1.) See written reports for exact numbers.
- 2.) There is \$4,606.98 in the operating account.
- 3.) One question from Betsy about a payment in December, and Sharon explained it was a commission payment from items sold in the gift shop.
- 4.) No further discussion.

**IV. Curator Report: Sarah Meyers**

- 1.) Donations/Acquisitions: Raffle Items
- 2.) Total Guests since last report: 783 guests
- 3.) Additions to the calendar: New Events for 2020
- 4.) Changes to the calendar: None
- 5.) Curator Remarks:
  - a.) Sarah attended the Lower Shore Humanities Council Network (sponsored by the National Humanities Alliance and Salisbury University Fulton School of Liberal Arts and the Maryland Humanities Council). They also talked more about their grant opportunities. Since the Friends did not receive the MHT research grant, the Maryland Humanities would be a great resource. She spoke to their grants director briefly and she seemed very intrigued and excited about the possibility of doing more research on the African-American experience at PHM. Maryland Humanities really likes partnerships and are more likely to give grants to organizations who partner with other groups. This would be an ideal opportunity for the Friends to partner with Chipman. The grant would be for \$10,000 and is due in March.
  - b.) Sarah and Ginny applied for a marketing grant from the Maryland Historical Society. This is the first time they have given grants in many years (due to restoration of funds from the Governor’s office which advocates, like me, go up to Annapolis and request). It was a very long and tedious grant, but we get bonus points for certain criteria, such as geographic diversity and it being an anniversary year for the Mansion. The grant is for marketing, so would include development of a new logo, new promotional materials, banners for tabling events, and a special event for the 225th Anniversary. The Friends will find out if they have received the grant in late March or early April.
  - c.) Sarah, along with other volunteers, decorated the Mansion for the holiday season. The day of decorating, PAC 14 (Creig Twilley) came to do a brief commercial to be aired for the upcoming holiday season events, where he filmed the decorations and arrangements. The ladies also once again had their luncheon at the Mansion, where they donated \$50 to PHM with a thank you card for all we do. WBOC came by to do a piece which aired on Christmas Eve. Charlie Paparella and Paige Marley (WRDE) were the hosts. The spot only lasted about 3 minutes, but they filmed for over 2.5 hours. Charlie showed an interest in returning for future segments. Both of them seemed to really enjoy the tour she gave them.
  - d.) Sarah got the Mansion set up for the Tea with Santa by arranging the tables in the rear dining room and setting up the chairs. She also got the furniture moved in the parlor to get it set up for Santa. We had a great attendance this year due to some really good publicity. Tyler Murphy took all the photos and when she mailed them out, she enclosed a membership card (like the ones in our brochures) in each envelope to encourage people to become new members.

- e.) The City Procurement Officer and a Contractor come out to do an estimate for the Kitchen siding. Sarah will submit the necessary paperwork to the easement committee at MHT for approval. If approved, work will begin in late spring to have it done. The same contractor is also working on an estimate and scope of work for the rest of the house: entire first floor must be resided with beaded siding, Dutch repairs to the second floor, repair/replace (where needed) of the shingles, reconstruction of the front porch, and repair and installation of the shutters. The work would probably be broken into phases. The estimate would be used for the CIP for Council as well as possible grant opportunities.
- f.) Sarah and the Hospitality Committee had a meeting to determine this year's events. New ideas include: a Community Curator Event, where people are invited to come to the Mansion to show off and discuss their collections as part of a community outreach program; Wine Under the Stars, where we would work with a local winery and do a wine tasting event in summer; and a Pirate Day on Sept. 19, which is International Talk Like a Pirate Day, where we would do kid's activities in the morning, an educational lecture about Pirates of the Delmarva Peninsula in the afternoon, and have a fundraising party in the evening. The Committee also decided to try a Holiday Tea in December to take advantage of the Mansion being decorated.
- g.) Sarah met with Amy Zaprowski at the Downtown Visitor's Center. Once the construction is done downtown, I offered to come in and set up an exhibit for them with any artifacts found from the construction. This could also be an opportunity to create a rotating exhibit space, like the Wicomico County Visitor's Center does, which Poplar Hill Mansion could also use from time to time to help draw in visitors to the Mansion.
- h.) Sarah resubmitted a wedding venue advertisement for the Bridal Showcase edition of the Salisbury Independent. The ½ page ad cost \$299 and the special edition should be published this month. It will be the same ad that we had last year.
- i.) Sarah and David met with Nancy Mitchell, Salisbury's Poet Laureate to discuss collaborations for National Poetry Month in April. She has a friend who has written and performs a one woman play about Emily Dickenson that she thinks would be a good backdrop for PHM to host. Nancy also seemed very excited about the prospect of having other events and a possible lecture series at the Mansion. She suggested hosting poetry slams to try and draw in younger audiences.
- j.) Ladies from the Wicomico Iris Society came to visit. The founder, Ana, who is 93, came to the garden to see what needs to be done and said that she would like to bring some ladies up this spring and try to clean up the beds, see what irises are there, and do some replanting.
- k.) Sarah will be attending the SMA conference this week.
- 6.) Discussion Curator Report:
  - a.) Betsy commented how wonderful the PAC14 Christmas special was.
  - b.) Loudell suggesting downloading videos featuring the Mansion to use for promotions and in displays/exhibits.
  - c.) Carol also mentioned creating our own videos like the one done for the Surgery Exhibit. Sarah commented that we could especially do something similar for the Second Floor displays, which would satisfy the ADA requirements. That video could be shown downstairs and posted on the Friends website.

## **V. Committee Reports:**

### **A.) Membership: Tom Truitt**

- 1.) Spring Fling – April 18 which is a Saturday from 5:00-7:00 p.m. It will be a cocktail party type of event with appetizers and beverages. The invitations are going to be done by MinuteMan Press. Betsy contacted them and got prices. It will be \$117.62 for 100 invitations.
- 2.) Betsy made the motion to approve the expenditure of \$117.62 for the invitations. Carol seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3.) The next committee meeting will be March 5 at 12:00.

**B.) Hospitality: Jeanne Mears**

- 1.) The Sweetheart Tea was February 15. There were only 15 people present. The profit was \$162.73 after expenditures for food and decorations. It was decided to continue with the tea so we can keep the teas going and make sure people know we are doing them again after the kitchen was closed for a year to do renovations. The people who came were very happy and several said they would like to come back.
- 2.) The next event is March 20, which is the St. Paddy's Party at 7:00 p.m. There will be live music, refreshments, and beer. There will be a bartender to check IDs.
- 3.) Jeanne made a motion to approve the \$250.00 expenditure to pay the musicians for the St. Paddy's Party. Loudell seconds. The motion was unanimously passed.
- 4.) The committee met to plan events for this year, which are listed on the Curator's Report and the website for the Friends.

**C.) Publicity:**

- 1.) Sarah mentioned the wedding advertising in the Salisbury Independent.

**D.) Acquisitions: Carol Smith**

- 1.) Carol donated a miniature portrait. Betsy made a motion to accept the miniature. Loudell seconded. The miniature was accepted.

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

- 1.) Betsy would like to see the Mansion do new displays and she spoke with David about doing floral arrangements throughout the house to change monthly.
- 2.) Matt McAllister has still not returned the repaired chairs to the Mansion or done other repairs. Betsy said she would call him and find out the status. Jody, who waxed the furniture has suggested removing any heavy items from drawers in the furniture.

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

- 1.) Carol has not started the review yet, but will be working with Tom and meeting with Sarah and Sharon to complete the review. She expects it to not take very long, especially the inventory aspect because the past two years were spent making sure every item on the inventory was reviewed.
- 2.) Carol, Tom, and Loudell will also be working on an Ethics Document for the Friends, which is best practices.
- 3.) Carol requested that each committee chair submit a written report/brief summary to her to include in the annual review.

**G.) Garden: David Scheid**

- 1.) David has spoken with the garden clubs and they are all anxious to come out and help.
- 2.) The City has approved installation of metal edging along the driveway to help contain the pea gravel.

- 3.) There might possibly be a design change for the herb garden. David is having his students look into new designs.
- 4.) David will be looking at the trees on the property, especially after losing two trees in 2019. There may be a need to remove more and/or find suitable replacements.

**H.) Budget & Finance: Sharon Murphy**

- 1.) Sharon has requested that each committee submit their requested budgets to her.

**VI. Old Business**

- A. Betsy asked if there was news from MHT about installing hooks on the mantels. Sarah said that she had emailed them, but have not received word. She also said that the Easement Administrator had accepted a new position and MHT was in a transition, so that might explain the delay.

**VII. New Business**

- A.) Betsy asked the purpose of the bulletin board. It was explained that it was to promote upcoming events to visitors. Betsy's concern was about the appearance.
- B.) David asked if the Mansion was required to post anything specifically by the City. Sarah responded that she did not know of any to her knowledge. Betsy asked about health department license or sales tax certificate. Sarah explained that the Friends do not get a license from the Health Department since the kitchen is a "Special Events" kitchen and the sales tax certificate does not need to be posted, but is available upon request (it is kept in the gift shop cabinet).

**VIII. Adjourn:**

The Chair asked if there were any further business. Hearing none he called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Betsy made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Shanie. The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sarah Meyers  
Curator  
Recording Secretary