

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FRIENDS OF POPLAR HILL MANSION

November 20, 2019

Open Board Meeting Minutes

Present: Board Chair, Ginny Hussey, Board Vice Chair, Jeanne Mears, Treasurer, Sharon Murphy; Board Members: Betsy Wolfe, Tom Truitt, Carol Smith, David Scheid, Loudell Insley, and Nancy Robertson; Curator & Recording Secretary, Sarah Meyers

I. Call to Order:

The November Open Board Meeting of the Friends of Poplar Hill Mansion was called to order on Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 12:00 p.m. by Board Chair Ginny Hussey.

II. Approval of Minutes:

The Board Chair asked if there were any corrections or additions to the October 16, 2019 Open Board Meeting Minutes. Hearing no corrections, the October 16, 2019 Open Board Meeting Minutes were approved.

III. Reports:

A.) Chair: Ginny Hussey

- 1.) Ginny reported that the Friends did not receive the research grant from MHT. The Friends will continue to look for other funding opportunities.
- 2.) Ginny announced that the December meeting of the Friends will be a short special meeting in order to elect a new Chair as her tenure ends. This will be the only business. After the special meeting a pot luck lunch will take place for the Board.
- 3.) Ginny reported that she attended the Genealogy Conference.

B.) Treasurer Report: Chair Sharon Murphy

- 1.) See written reports for exact numbers.
- 2.) There is \$4,512.24 in the operating account.
- 3.) No further discussion.

IV. Curator Report: Sarah Meyers

- 1.) Donations/Acquisitions: Fountain Pen with wooden handle, Wax Stamp, Wax stick
- 2.) Total Guests since last report: 160 guests
- 3.) Additions to the calendar: None
- 4.) Changes to the calendar: None
- 5.) Curator Remarks:
 - a.) Sarah tabled at the Genealogy Conference both days. She also did the set-up and break down of the booth. The booth was in a great location on a corner and PHM got a lot of positive feedback for the appearance of the booth. Wicomico Tourism considered it a success. For the vendors, there was a rush first thing in the morning and one right after lunch, but most of the attendees went to the talks. They had over 150 people register and more show up at the door. Feedback will be used by Wicomico Tourism to make improvements.

- b.) Sarah spoke to Dawn Manyfeathers, with the Nanticoke Indian Tribe, and they agreed to come to our festival next year.
 - c.) Sarah did the prep work for the Halloween events at the Mansion. The Halloween Tea had a smaller attendance than expected, but was still successful. The Halloween Party had a decent turnout. Sarah thanked everyone for their help and contributions.
 - d.) Sarah attended a grant seminar from the Maryland Historical Society. This is the first time they have offered the Pathways grant. It is for an amount between \$10,000-\$20,000. This is a non-capital grant that can be used for operations and marketing. This would be a good opportunity for the Friends to pursue an aggressive marketing campaign which could include hiring a graphic artist to design new logos, the new banner(s) that have been discussed, and also do advertising. A letter of intent is due the end of this week and the grant is due December 3. This is a non-matching grant (however, bonus points are given if an organization does provide a match to some of the funds).
 - e.) Sarah also attended the latest Lower Shore Humanities Network meeting sponsored by Maryland Humanities. Their next grant round is coming up in March. Again, this would be another opportunity for the Friends to look for grant money to sponsor research and an exhibit for the African-American history if we do not receive the funds from the MHT grant for which we applied. The grant award is \$10,000 and they also have mini-grants available.
 - f.) MHT interest meetings for their capital grant round are happening now throughout the state. The Eastern Shore meeting is Thursday, Nov. 21 in Denton. This is a mandatory meeting for organizations wishing to apply for grants. Sarah will be attending on behalf of the City.
 - g.) The city has also sent out an RFP for the kitchen siding. There is a potential contractor coming out to take a look at the kitchen on Thursday morning. The City is working on getting emergency funds for this project and it will also be discussed more during meetings with Tom Stevenson.
 - h.) There has been a lot of advertising from the Newtown Neighborhood Association for the upcoming House Tour that is in conjunction with the Yuletide Open House. PHM gets the benefit of this advertising without it costing the Friends anything. Newtown has a billboard donated by Clear Channel on Rt. 13 (right next to Ponzetti's) which features the Mansion right in the middle. They also had a big write-up in Coastal Style magazine, which again mentions PHM. PAC14 is coming to the Mansion on Tuesday, Nov. 26 at 2:30 to film a promo for our Holiday events.
 - i.) Sarah mentioned the teas being held at the Gillis-Grier house. They are only doing them on Sundays and can only accommodate 8 people at a time. She does not think it will be much competition to PHM teas as the Board was originally concerned. Betsy mentioned that the Gillis-Grier house is also looking to rent out for other events.
- 6.) Discussion Curator Report:
- a.) Carol asked about who visits the Mansion and asked to include that on the report next to the number. Sarah pointed out that anytime a person walks through the door, that person is counted as a guest, including Board members. Sarah is the only person who does not get counted in the guest count.
 - b.) Carol asked to make applications for events available to the Board so they can see what kind of events are being held at the Mansion. Sarah said that the applications are always available upon request.
 - c.) Carol requested to see the PowerPoint Presentation Sarah created about Surgery in the early 1800s.

V. Committee Reports:

A.) Membership: Tom Truitt

- 1.) Progress is continuing.
- 2.) Betsy suggested sending out a postcard reminder for membership.
- 3.) There were about 40 members in 2019.
- 4.) Loudell asked about incentives for membership. Tom explained some of the membership benefits. Loudell suggested having a special event for members. Originally there was a discussion of a Valentine's event, but it morphed into a Spring Fling to be planned by the Membership Committee.

B.) Hospitality: Jeanne Mears

- 1.) The Halloween Tea on October 24th and Halloween Party on the 25th. Only 12 tickets sold. There were people who had reserved and then cancelled. Sarah did not take a commission on that tea. The Halloween Party brought in \$100 in donations, but there were expenses of about \$50. The total profit for both events was \$176.00.
- 2.) The Holiday events are coming up. December 8 is the Yuletide Open House from 10-4. The Tea with Santa is December 14 from 1-4. The cost is \$5.00 per person. Everyone is asked to bring in something for the holiday events.
- 3.) Carol asked about advanced payments for events such as teas. Sarah said it was hard to take advanced payments because PHM does not accept credit cards. PHM had a PayPal account, but hardly anyone used it. PayPal requires a person to be linked to the account with a social security number. Ginny explained that was common practice. There was a brief discussion as to whether PHM should require advanced payment. The fear is that some people do not make a reservation until just a couple days before or even the day before and they do not have time to mail in a payment. Also, a lot of people prefer paying at the door and we do not want to turn people off to the events by requiring more work from guests.
- 4.) Carol suggested having a sign on the table for upcoming events with membership applications inviting guests to become members.

C.) Publicity: Scott Rall

- 1.) Sarah mentioned the billboard and advertising for the Holiday House Tour.

D.) Acquisitions: Carol Smith

- 1.) Betsy asked if a thank you needed to be written to the person who donated the pen, stamp, and wax. Sarah said that she had donated those items.
- 2.) Betsy has acquired fireplace utensils for \$61.48. She also mentioned looking through the Ball & Ball catalogue for other items and possible hooks. Sarah reiterated that permission needed to be received from MHT to attach anything to the fireplaces.

E.) Mansion Improvements: Betsy Wolfe

- 1.) Betsy reported that Matt McAllister is slowly but surely working on the chairs and repairs. He cannot get to the polishing due to time constraints, but Jody (Holly Ridge Antiques) is coming in to do that.

F.) Garden: David Scheid

- 1.) None.

G.) Budget & Finance: Sharon Murphy

- 1.) None.

VI. Old Business

A. None.

VII. New Business

A.) Ginny's term as Chair is ending and a Nomination Committee is needed to select a new Chair. Tom, Nancy, and Sharon volunteered to be on the Nomination Committee.

B.) Carol brought up needing an Audit Committee. As a point of order, Ginny pointed out that it is actual a Review Committee rather than a true "Audit." Carol and Tom offered to do the review for the year. They also offered to work on the Code of Ethics.

VIII. Adjourn:

The Chair asked if there were any further business. Hearing none she called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Betsy made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Loudell. The meeting was adjourned at 12:49 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sarah Meyers
Curator
Recording Secretary