

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FRIENDS OF POPLAR HILL MANSION

October 16, 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 August Open Board Meeting of the Friends of Poplar Hill Mansion was called to order on Wednesday, October 16, 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 September 18, 2019 Open Board Meeting Minutes. Hearing no corrections, the September 18, 2019 Open Board Meeting Minutes were approved.

III. Reports:

A.) Chair: Ginny Hussey

1.) No Report.

B.) Treasurer Report: Chair Sharon Murphy

- 1.) See written reports for exact numbers.
- 2.) There is \$4,444.54 in the operating account.
- 3.) Sharon mentioned the Stanley Morris has been paid for his services in tax preparation for the Friends. He billed \$250. Betsy asked to see a copy of the taxes and it was explained that because the Friends maintain less than \$50,000 a year, a 990 EZ is filed which is a postcard, there is no long form to be filed and it is filed online, but Betsy would like to see a hardcopy. Betsy also wanted to Sharon to ask how much Mr. Morris charges per hour as to accumulate a bill of \$250.
- 4.) Betsy went to Comcast and they gave her the information for the person to contact. They also told her that the Friends need to stay as a business account, but there might be the possibility that the cable portion may be able to be reduced. Betsy also suggested that the Friends look at Verizon instead of Comcast.

IV. Curator Report: Sarah Meyers

- 1.) Donations/Acquisitions: None
- 2.) Total Guests since last report: 86 guests
- 3.) Additions to the calendar: December 2, 2019 Eastern Shore Delegation Luncheon; September 26, 2020 Wedding
- 4.) Changes to the calendar: October 18, 2020 VIP Reception for Genealogical Conference Cancelled.
- 5.) Curator Remarks:
 - a.) Sarah reported that another travel writer visited the Mansion and will do a write-up on a syndicated blog.

- b.) WBOC aired the piece about the Haunted History for a series they are doing in October. The segment lasted about 5 minutes. They also put in a plug for the Halloween Party. In addition, a small paranormal group came and did an investigation of the house including radio personality, April Brilliant who is an on-air personality for WBOC 106.5. She said she will also give a plug for the upcoming Halloween events.
 - c.) Sarah is leading a group of City employees and friends for a Haunted Walking Tour of Downtown Salisbury and up to the Mansion.
 - d.) Sarah had a fundraiser on Facebook so people can donate money to the Friends of Poplar Hill Mansion. All the money that is raised is going to go to the cost of the festival. Since she is turning 40, she is asking people to donate \$40 with the goal of raising at least \$500. Sarah reported that she not only met her goal, she surpassed it and was able to raise \$600. Sarah suggested that all the Board members should follow suite as it would be a great way to raise some money for the Friends with minimal effort, especially if the Board are the ones raising the money for the locked in the Stocks event at the festival, as suggested by Sharon in previous meetings.
 - e.) Sarah created a new PowerPoint presentation entitled Surgery in the Early 1800s: A Case Study with Dr. John Huston of Poplar Hill Mansion. She premiered it during a Daughters of the War of 1812 meeting and it was well received. Sarah suggested, based on the Board's discussions from previous meetings, that it would be something new to promote to outside organizations who were looking for speakers on unique and interesting topics.
 - f.) Sarah also reported that she was preparing for the Genealogy Conference this coming weekend and updated an old preservation video she had created years before with new pictures to show the updated exhibit spaces.
- 6.) Discussion Curator Report:
- a.) There was a discussion that Sarah have to check with the Board about what organizations are allowed to rent the Mansion for events. Betsy suggested that the Board should have a say in who is allowed to rent the Mansion and if they deem it too controversial or they know that the person would not be a good fit to rent the Mansion, they should have the final say. Seeking clarification, Sarah asked if the Board was asking that they approve every single rental. Sarah also argued that ultimately, the City has final say in who rents the Mansion as the property owner and the building is a public building open to any person or entity who wishes to rent it. If certain people are allowed and others not, it would open up liability issues. Tom said it was less about permission and more about the Board wanting to know how the Mansion was being used. Carol suggested that renters sign a contract to show that a transaction took place to take away the burden of responsibility in case a controversy should arise. Sarah informed everyone that there is already an application and contract to sign by all renters and always has been.
 - b.) Nancy asked why there was no charge for the DAR Knitting group that comes to the Mansion every month. It was explained to her that the group consists of 3 or 4 women who come and make lap robes for veterans in nursing homes. The group in no way impedes the daily business of the Mansion. Also, since they are making blankets for veterans, it is good publicity for the Mansion and shows the City that the Mansion is being used for something that benefits the community.
 - c.) Carol suggested possibly doing a guest speaker series on Sundays to help draw visitors to the Mansion. The speakers could touch on topics pertaining to history and other topics relevant to the Mansion.
 - d.) Carol also suggested possibly if Tom, who speaks fluent Spanish, would be willing to offer a tour on Sunday in Spanish. This might draw in a new audience if advertised. Carol also suggested making a video or brochure in Spanish to reach out to that community during

days when a non-Spanish speaker was at the Mansion. Sarah also said it would be another publicity and advertising opportunity to get more possible rentals, especially for an event like a Quinceañera.

V. Committee Reports:

A.) Membership: Tom Truitt

- 1.) Progress is continuing.

B.) Hospitality: Jeanne Mears

- 1.) The Halloween Tea on October 24th and Halloween Party on the 25th. Only 12 tickets have sold so far for the tea. Sarah would like to see 20 seats sold. Advertising has gone out. Tom asked if volunteers were needed for the Party and Sarah said yes. Jeanne brought up possible concerns with the wording of the menu items for the Halloween Tea. Some Board members thought the names given to some the menu items were not appealing. Jeanne said that she did not know the menu beforehand and apologized for confusion or if the menu offended.
- 2.) The new Gillis-Grier B&B will be offering teas and Betsy is concerned that there will be competition to our teas. Carol wanted to also know if she was also planning on becoming an event space, like for wedding rentals.

C.) Publicity: Scott Rall

- 1.) Sarah mentioned that it would be nice to put a brochure for the new B&B in our wedding packets as a selling point for brides.
- 2.) Scott mentioned that the Genealogy conference is this coming weekend. Again, help in tabling at the booth was requested. The question of banners also was brought up. Carol suggested checking with Minuteman Press, as Parsons' Cemetery used them to make banners.
- 3.) Carol brought up the question of doing advertising again in the Salisbury Independent for their Bridal Edition. Carol made a motion that the Friends once again take out a half page advertisement in the Independent not to exceed \$350. Scott seconded.
- 4.) Betsy once again asked about exposure on PAC14. Sarah said she sends them all the publicity, but they do not always publish the events. Sarah also brought up that PHM used to have a monthly segment with the former Chair to do a 20-25 minute show and have a "conversation" and that works best with another person. She asked if any Board member would be interested in doing that.
- 5.) Sarah also mentioned that Metropolitan Magazine wants to do a free article and advertisement for the upcoming Yuletide Open House and requested pictures. Sarah asked Board members if any of them had photos of that event from the past few years, since Sarah is usually at the Salisbury Christmas Parade that day and is not at the Mansion to take photos. Nancy said she did and would bring them to Sarah. Betsy suggested looking through the archives to get photos, and Sarah explained that she was hoping for more recent photos to reflect all the updates to the house. Jeanne suggested that moving forward, one person be appointed to take photos at each event to ensure that pictures are being taken.
- 6.) Sarah also said that she received an email from Wicomico Tourism about getting information into the hardcopy book they publish every year.

D.) Acquisitions: Carol Smith

- 1.) None.

E.) Mansion Improvements: Betsy Wolfe

- 1.) Betsy asked about the repair work. Sarah reported that she and Matt McAllister have been playing phone tag to make the arrangements. Betsy said that she will try to call him.

F.) Garden: David Scheid

- 1.) Sharon and her grandson, Tyler, have come out to weed some of the beds.
- 2.) Betsy is concerned about the boxwoods in the front of the house not getting enough water.

G.) Budget & Finance: Sharon Murphy

- 1.) None.

VI. Old Business

- A. None.

VII. New Business

A.) Board Renewal Elections (written ballot):

- a. Sharon Murphy: No Discussion 6 Yes 0 No
- b. Shanie Shields: No Discussion 7 Yes 0 No
- c. Carol Smith: No Discussion 6 Yes 0 No
- d. Betsy Wolfe: Discussion about the term of service as stated in the Bylaws, which stipulate that a Board member may not serve more than 12 years on the Board. Sarah brought up the point of order that Betsy has served on and off the Board for more than 20 years. Betsy and Nancy suggested changing the Bylaws, which were just updated in 2017. The Board decided to continue with the vote. 6 Yes 0 No

B.) Tour of the Manion: Postponed

VIII. Adjourn:

The Chair asked if there were any further business. Hearing none she called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sharon made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Carol. The meeting was adjourned at 1:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sarah Meyers
Curator
Recording Secretary