

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FRIENDS OF POPLAR HILL MANSION

September 18, 2019

Open Board Meeting Minutes

Present: Board Chair, Ginny Hussey; Vice Chair, Jeanne Mears, Treasurer, Sharon Murphy; Board Members: Betsy Wolfe, Loudell Insley, Shanie Shields, 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, September 18, 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 August 21, 2019 Open Board Meeting Minutes. Hearing no corrections, the June 27, 2019 Open Board Meeting Minutes were approved.

III. Reports:

A.) Chair: Ginny Hussey

- 1.) Ginny told everyone the MHT non-capital grant has been submitted and the Friends are now waiting to hear back to see if the Friends will receive it.
- 2.) Ginny asked if the November meeting should be cancelled due to possible scheduling conflicts. It was decided not to, so the Board can discuss the Holiday season events.

B.) Treasurer Report: Chair Sharon Murphy

- 1.) See written reports for exact numbers.
- 2.) There is \$5,263.26 in the operating account.
- 3.) Sharon mentioned that the liability insurance is due, which is \$900. There was a question about why the City does not cover this insurance when they pay for the all the other insurance. It was explained that the City covers the property insurance as they own the property. The liability insurance covers the Board's insurance in case of lawsuits and other issues specifically dealing with the Board of Directors and is not for the property or anything with the property. Betsy asked if it might be possible to divided the bill and pay quarterly or semi-annually rather than all at once. The Board has always paid it once a year all at once.
- 4.) Betsy again mentioned concerns with the Comcast bill and would like to see someone negotiate a better deal.
- 5.) Jeanne asked about the Friends' Sam's Club membership and if it is paid yearly because she has a lifetime membership. Sharon responded that it is paid yearly and Sam's Club no longer offers a lifetime membership option. Loudell offered the Board to use her membership, but that was unfeasible since the Friends have tax-exempt status.

IV. Curator Report: Sarah Meyers

- 1.) Donations/Acquisitions: None
- 2.) Total Guests since last report: 172 guests

- 3.) Additions to the calendar: October 18, 2020 VIP Reception for Genealogical Conference;
January 18, 2020
- 4.) Changes to the calendar: None.
- 5.) Curator Remarks:
 - a.) Sarah mentioned the addition of the VIP Reception for speakers at the Genealogical Conference. Wicomico Tourism asked if they could do the event at PHM. It should only be for about 20 people. Wicomico Tourism will give a donation of \$100 to PHM and they will also take of catering.
 - b.) Sarah reiterated that she and Ginny completed the grant application to MHT.
 - c.) 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.
 - d.) Sarah said that a travel writer visited the Mansion and will be doing a write-up on PHM and other sites throughout Wicomico County. The writer seemed to have a positive experience, so it should be a positive blog. Sarah will let the Board know when that is published.
 - e.) WBOC came to the Mansion to film a piece about the Haunted History for a series they are doing in October. When they air the segment they will also put in a plug for the Halloween Party.
 - f.) Sarah started 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. So far it has raised over \$200 and will run through October 10th.
- 6.) Discussion Curator Report:
 - a.) There was a discussion about what to do at tabling events that would encourage more children participation. Sarah said that when they did National Night Out, they had activities for kids such as a few games, coloring, and other activities that the Friends had at the Festival. Loudell suggested possible getting Legos for the kids to do construction. It was pointed out that Legos are not only messy, but could also be a choking hazard.
 - b.) There was a discussion about groups coming into the Mansion and rental fees vs. donations. Betsy suggested that all groups, even those just giving donations should be listed. Sarah said she lists the numbers in the report, but often does not list them as an official "event." This is done because they are giving a donation and no set amount is set, therefore again, they are not considered official events. Betsy wants them listed for posterity in case future members or the City look back at the Curator's reports, they can exactly how and who was using the Mansion. Sarah agreed to do so in the future.
 - c.) There was also a discussion about political candidates/organizations using the Mansion. A donation had always been asked for in the past. The Board wants a set amount to make sure there is an equal playing field and no sort of connotation of favoritism. The amount suggested was a \$100 rental fee.
 - d.) It was suggested that more outreach and advertising be done to Senior Living Communities to give talks and presentations or to arrange tours. Sarah said that she has done outreach in these communities and has been to Mallard Landing to do a lecture about PHM. Also, there has been tours from Mallard Landing, Lewes Senior Center, and several other senior centers to visit the Mansion. She asked the Board to help her do the outreach and possibly make arrangements if they have connections to the centers. Jeanne also reminded the Board that the Mansion is not ADA accessible so bringing in some senior groups would not be feasible. Sarah said that ADA accessibility is on the CIP, but everyone will have to be patient.

V. Committee Reports:

A.) Membership: Tom Truitt

- 1.) One renewal from Susan Peacock.

B.) Hospitality: Jeanne Mears

- 1.) The Private for the Accomack Women's Club happened on September 5th. The Friends took in \$572. The cost of food was \$179.16, leaving \$392.84 and after Sarah's commission, the net profit was \$274.99. The ladies also had a tour of the Mansion.
- 2.) The next event is the Halloween Tea on October 24th and Halloween Party on the 25th.

C.) Publicity: Scott Rall

- 1.) Sarah talked about what is going to be in the booth for the Genealogy Conference. There will be three tables with a small display case, the mannequin, also promotional items for the museum such as brochures and scrapbooks. She and Scott also looked into getting a vertical banner for tabling events. The banner would possibly include architectural renderings for details of the Mansion, such as the Palladian windows and crown molding. Scott is checking with an architect friend to find out if he would be willing to help on that project. The banner would also include a limited amount of info about the house, but not enough to overwhelm people. Shanie suggested using students from UMES pre-engineering department to help with the drawings.
- 2.) Sarah also asked for help tabling during the conference. The conference is from 9-5 each day. Ginny said she would help Saturday morning from 8-2 and Sharon said that would help on Saturday from 1-5.

D.) Acquisitions: Carol Smith

- 1.) None.

E.) Mansion Improvements: Betsy Wolfe

- 1.) The mantel clock is still being repaired by Robinson's. Betsy also asked about getting a barometer for the Surgery Room. Currently, Robinson's does not have one. Betsy asked that the Girondals be put in the Parlor until the clock is returned.
- 2.) Betsy reported the price quote for the repairs to the furniture. The dining room chairs will be the most tedious repairs and have to be taken off site. Each side chair will cost \$110 and each arm chair will cost \$140 to repair. All the other furniture can be done on site at a cost of \$45 per hour. Betsy will coordinate with Matt McAllister and Sarah to work out the times the repairs can be done.

F.) Garden: David Scheid

- 1.) David sends his regards to everyone and is still recovering from his heart attack.

G.) Budget & Finance: Sharon Murphy

- 1.) None.

VI. Old Business

- A. Nancy requested an updated list for Board contacts.

VII. New Business

- A.) The tour that was scheduled under new business for the Board has been postponed until October.

VIII. Adjourn:

The Chair asked if there were any further business. Hearing none she called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Loudell made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Betsy. The meeting was adjourned at 12:57 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah M. Meyers".

Sarah Meyers
Curator
Recording Secretary