

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
FRIENDS OF POPLAR HILL MANSION

August 16, 2023

Open Board Meeting Minutes

**Present:** Board Chair, David Scheid, Jeanne Mears, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Sharon Murphy; Board Members: Ginny Hussey, Will Lowery, Dee Neal; Newtown Representative Katie Glasser; Curator & Recording Secretary, Sarah Meyers; Public Guest(s): 0

**I. Call to Order:**

The August Open Board Meeting of the Friends of Poplar Hill Mansion was called to order on Wednesday, August 16, 2023 at 12:02 p.m. by Board Chair David Scheid.

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

The Board Chair asked if there were any corrections or additions to the April 19, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes. Hearing none, the April Board Meeting Minutes were approved. The Board Chair asked if there were any corrections or additions to the May 11, 2023 Special Board Meeting Minutes. Hearing none, the May Special Board Meeting Minutes were approved.

**III. Reports:**

**A.) Chair: David Scheid**

- 1.) David said that the Board is now working under the guise of the new Bylaws and the Committees are now under their new names. He asked everyone to consider which Committees that would like to join.
- 2.) David mentioned the new Chinoiserie Prints for the Dining room that were acquired. They will be framed and added to the walls. David also mentioned that he will be doing a floral arrangement in the Main Hallway in the silver bowl and talked about other upcoming exhibits.

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

- 1.) There is \$20,286.15 in the operating budget.
- 2.) Sharon mentioned that the Liability Insurance is due and that the price decreased to \$885.00. Due to the cost of the Liability Insurance being over the \$250 threshold for expenditures, a motion is needed to make payment. Ginny Hussey so moved and Dee Neal seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- 3.) Sharon reported that the Friends were \$624.23 in the red mainly due to the increase in the vendor tent rental.
- 4.) Katie Glasser asked a question about the Preakness Tea. She was informed that a ticket was purchased for her by Betsy Wolfe, but said she did not receive any notification or invitation. Sarah said she sent an email, as the same was done for Lena Fleming. Lena responded to said email, but Katie did not. Katie asked which email Sarah was using and Sarah responded that it was the same email to which she sends all correspondences. It was eventually discovered that Sarah did not have Katie's correct email (she had an old one that apparently Katie no longer uses) and that Katie has not been receiving any emails from Sarah after being on the Board since the beginning of the year. Sarah now has Katie's correct email. It

was suggested in light of the miscommunication and Katie not attending the tea, that a refund check in the amount of \$25 be sent to Betsy Wolfe.

**IV. Curator Report: Sarah Meyers**

- 1.) See written report on file at Mansion.
- 2.) Sarah did a SWOT report for the festival and the Board had a brief discussion about the festival. Some of the Board thought the vendors charged too much for their items.
- 3.) Sarah mentioned that the Newtown Association is having a yard sale on September 30<sup>th</sup> at the Parson's House. Sarah asked the Board if the Friends would like to participate. The cost is \$15.00 per "booth". There were leftover items from the festival that could be sold. The Board agreed to move forward and get a booth.

**V. Committee Reports:**

**A.) Membership:**

- 1.) No report.

**B.) Events: Jeanne Mears**

- 1.) Jeanne reported about the Festival on May 7.
- 2.) Jeanne also mentioned the Coastal Tea for September 21st and said that the menu has been set and tickets are being sold. Sarah said that currently there are 12 reservations. Jeanne mentioned that we have to have at least 20 reservations to move forward with the tea.
- 3.) Will asked about the possibility of considering evening and night events to attract people who work during the day.
- 4.) Dee asked about hosting the Chamber of Commerce for their Business After Hours.
- 5.) There was a question about whether the Friends need a permit to serve alcohol. The simple answer is yes if the Friends charge for the alcohol or an admission and no if there is no charge for either the alcohol or event.
- 6.) The Community Players are doing an event on September 17<sup>th</sup> called Paths to Freedom at the Mansion.

**C.) Outreach:**

- 1.) Sarah and Sharon participated in several tabling opportunities including 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday, RiverFest, and National Night Out.

**D.) Development:**

- 1.) Sarah had suggested some possible acquisitions for the museum including an Eye Surgery Kit and an 1810 Mirror for the Dining Room. Both items are listed on eBay. It was requested that she forward the listings to the Board members for their review and there will be an electronic vote via email to determine if the items should be purchased.

**E.) Review Committee: Ginny Hussey**

- 1.) No report.

**F.) Garden: Will Lowery**

- 1.) Will and David will be working on a scope of work for a possible new landscaping company for the City to do the grounds at PHM. The current company is only contracted to cut the grass and no additional work such as weeding.
- 2.) Will is going to ask the irrigation expert at Salisbury University to come and look at the current irrigation system at the Mansion to see if he can diagnose the issue(s) as to why it is not working properly. David suggested the Friends pay said expert a small consulting fee.
- 3.) David said in light of the installation of the lift and because the Wicomico Garden Club no longer tends to the garden, that the small cutting garden adjacent to the patio should be removed. This would allow the patio to be expanded and the lift to become more accessible to those who need it.
- 4.) Some of the dead trees on the property have been removed. Three from the rear yard including two that were precariously in danger of falling either on the Mansion or our neighbors' property. The two small dogwood trees from the side lawn were also removed as they were both diseased.

**G.) Grant: Ginny Hussey**

- 1.) No report.

**VI. Old Business**

1. Siding Project Review: Work has finally begun on the siding. MHT approved the sample piece of the siding and the manufacturer got all the wood cut. The workmen removed the old siding from the house on the east elevation and discovered a problem with the original support beam and one of the other beams. There was some water damage and rot. The beam is approximately 12" thick and it appears the first 3" of it are rotted. Those 3" need to be replaced. It will cost approximately \$7,500 to repair. MHT dictates that "Dutch repairs" need to be made rather than replacing the entire beam. That means that the rot will need to be cut out and the same wood needs to be used and fitted in to replace the rot. It appears that a previous repair had been done to part of the beam, but it was not done properly and will also have to be redone. The work is on hold until that beam is repaired. In the meantime, the crew also removed the siding on the west elevation. In the process, they caused damage to the interior wall of the parlor with a hammer. John Orth, who did the plaster work in the house last year, came out and is putting together an estimate to repair the damage. The estimate will be given to the City and the Contractors will have to pay for the work. That repair work will not be made until after the work to the exterior is completed. Both sides of the house are now covered in plastic until the work can continue.

**VII. New Business**

1. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: David reminded everyone that the Friends will be celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2025. He would like to see an event to celebrate that is special, elegant, and unique. We would invite past Board Members and Curators as well as the general public. It was agreed that underwriters/sponsors would be needed for this type of

event (it was suggested the hospital would be a good place to start, especially with the upcoming rebranding efforts). David would like volunteers for a Steering Committee to begin planning this event, of not only Board Members but others from the area. Jeanne suggested that the Board needs to consider hiring someone (a professional Party Planner) to arrange everything for this event, rather than the Board making all the plans. It was emphasized that a budget needs to be created and stuck to.

2. Festival Expansion Possibility: in an effort to keep adding new things to the Festival to attract new people every year, Sarah suggested adding a food component to the Festival since food usually attracts people. Her idea was to add a small “Bacon Fest” and invite a few food trucks/vendors to create some specialty bacon items to be sold the day of the Festival. Bacon seemed a logical choice since on the inventory of PHM there was 1400lbs of bacon listed. So this would tie into the historic aspect of the museum while incorporating a modern twist. The Board agreed that Sarah should pursue this possibility.
3. Katie announced that she is resigning from the Board at the end of September as she is moving from the area. Lisa Gringrich, the President of Newtown will be coming on as the representative for Newtown.

**VIII. Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 1:09 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sarah Meyers  
Curator, Recording Secretary