



FOREST HILL HOME OWNERS INC.

September 9th, 2020

Zoom

Attendance: Officers: Gretchen Mettler, President, Sam Kohn, Secretary, Tom Winston, Chair of Standards, Tony Rupcic, Treasurer.

Members: Tess Givens, Mark Madland, Beryl Tishkoff, Bob Charlick, Chris Hubbert

Absent: Chris Hubbert (excused)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 by Gretchen. No one offered corrections to the minutes. The board noted the phenomenal skills of the secretary. The minutes were adopted as submitted.

Treasurer's Report

Tony reported there have been approximately 90 donors year to date. He emphasized that we need \$19-\$20k a year to maintain properties, landscaping, and incidentals. Tony added that with \$30 k income a year we could have enhanced landscaping. For 2020, FHHO is still short \$6,500 in revenue just to break even. Tony noted that FHHO should have twice as many donors as we now have, and that FHHO is at risk of running a deficit. It was also noted that 1 or 2 board members haven't yet given in 2020.

Unfinished Business and Survey

Sam presented on the residents' responses to the survey. In total, FHHO has received roughly 50 responses so far, the vast majority of residents completed their surveys on-line.

Sam thanked The Trustees who helped write, revise, and circulate the survey. He stated that the next major steps are data collection, presentation, and analysis. Sam noted that residents needed another reminder to complete their surveys because the number of responses doesn't approach a reflective sample size yet. In response to comment from Trustees regarding the limited amount of survey responses, Sam explained that comments at the AGM will help qualify the survey results and help FHHO understand how close the survey responses are aligned with what the community actually thinks.

The conversation shifted to the issue of the Blue Cottage and the cost of restoring the historic structure. Tony suggested a creative way to temporarily reduce the property assessment of the Blue Cottage. Bob asked The Board to consider what value the Blue Cottage provided Forest Hill residents. A number of Trustees explained the many ways the Blue Cottage contributes to the

neighborhood. For Tess, Beryl, and Gretchen, the Blue cottage is a unique historic building that helps make Forest Hill special. Specifically, Tess described the Blue Cottage as our “little gem” to preserve and maintain. Other Trustees believe the Blue Cottage demands too many resources and does not serve a useful purpose for the majority of Forest Hill residents. The conversation ran its course without the major disagreements being resolved at this time.

Comments On Racism Statement

Throughout the summer, various members of The Board have been engaged in a conversation about racism in America and Forest Hill’s place in that discussion. The Board previously requested that Bob and Sam work to draft a statement regarding how our neighborhood had at times discriminated against many Americans, particularly African-Americans. The Board proceeded to discuss the most recent draft of a statement regarding this history, what its purpose should be, and how it will be communicated to the public.

Chris, in a written response to a draft statement on FHHO’s history, raised some concerns. He stated that FHHO’s statement on race and history may come off as hollow without an “actual purpose in mind”. Specifically, he expressed that FHHO may be “jumping on a social cause bandwagon because it is the current thing to do”. Bob responded to this comment by expressing what he hoped to accomplish with this statement. He explained that FHHO needs to take a clear stand, noting the progress that’s been made and which we hope will continue on inclusivity, while honestly recognizing past discrimination. Bob views the statement as a sign of a maturity for the organization to acknowledge the past discrimination, and that FHHO can do better. He agreed that FHHO now welcomes people on a non-discriminatory basis.

The Board continued the discussion, with some members echoing Chris’s worry regarding a hollow or empty statement without a definitive action plan. Other Trustees agreed with Bob that the objective is to acknowledge the past and begin the conversation, and that a lack of a clear action plan would not detract from the purpose or message. The discussion concluded with some thoughts as to where the statement would be published when completed. The initial thought was the FHHO website and/or the newsletter.

Bylaws Committee

Gretchen reported that they are still working on revisions to the members section regarding who counts as a member and member eligibility to vote.

Fund Raising

Beryl reported that we haven’t sold a single t-shirt since the last discussion and that this likely is because of the lack of in-person FHHO events.

Beryl reported on other possibilities for raising funds including selling FHHO doves and calendars of notable Forest Hill homes’ entryways. Beryl also wrote an article for the Heights Observer for the October issue, featuring FHHO logo art as a part of the article.

Preservation Committee

Tom and Bob briefly reported on their work to address Swim Club property.

Other Business

Tess confirmed social media pages will be used to post information and events particularly for the upcoming AGM.

Mark reported that the next trash clean up will occur on October 17th. Mark also received some well-deserved kudos from The Board for replacing the split rail fence on the Burlington Lot—twice.

Gretchen concluded by reminding The Board to start recruiting Trustees for next year.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46

Sam Kohn, Secretary