

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting, 7/22/23 (page 1)

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting
July 22, 2023

Attendees: President of the Board Steve Rotella, Vice President of the Board Tom Dyja, Executive Director Alison Ventura, Trustees Michael Simon, Leslie Cohen, EJ Camp, Dor Richardson, Lydia Irving, Jennifer Valentino, Tina Silvestri, Catherine Chermayeff, Suzan Gluck, Sarah Olmstead, Lindsay Pollock, Charles Dean, Ted Harris, and Honorary Trustee John Holzapfel

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Steve Rotella at approximately 9:02 a.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting of May 20, 2023 was duly made by Suzanne Gluck, seconded by Tom Dyja, and unanimously approved.

3. President's Report

President Steve Rotella stated that we are in "crunch time," with all the summer events proceeding apace and planning for the Collections project at Vail House. He also noted that planning will soon get underway for the Society's 80th Anniversary celebration. He commented that with all that is going on and is anticipated over the next few seasons, it may be appropriate for the Board to consider adding a new staff member in the future. He also noted that the Society's programs this summer have been well attended and appreciated.

4. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Alison Ventura reported that the Gardiner Foundation has awarded the Society a grant of \$120,000 to create an augmented reality exhibit as part of the programming that the Foundation is supporting highlighting the history of Long Island during the Revolutionary War. Work on this is expected to begin in earnest in the fall. The Suffolk Times has contacted Alison about this project and will be running an article on it. As mentioned in the prior Board meeting, the OCA has requested the Society's help in raising money to pay for a beautification project involving landscaping around the obelisk monument at the top of Village Lane. In this regard, the Society will send a joint email with the OCA to the Society's mailing list requesting contributions for the project. Regarding administrative matters, Alison suggested that it would be helpful if the Society's office manager were given approval by the Board to be allowed to write checks of up to \$1,500 for day-to-day operational expenses of the Society. Alison reported that ticket sales for the upcoming Summer Benefit are running well ahead of where they were at this time last year. Catherine Chermayeff updated the Board as to the status of the artwork and experiential auction component of the Benefit, remarking that there were many interesting lots to bid on including five live auction items and over thirty lots comprising the silent auction. Alison thanked Catherine Chaudri and Sarah Olmstead

for their work on Heritage Day, which went very smoothly and had a great turnout. Alison also thanked Jenn Valentino and the Building and Grounds Committee, noting that many community members have complimented how well the campus is looking this summer. She also thanked the Education Committee for the programming and events they have offered this summer. Alison noted that Society curator Bill McNaught recently turned 80 and suggested that Board members should wish him a happy birthday if they see him around the campus. Finally, she noted that Scott and Melissa worked very hard on the recent Moby Dick reading and are well deserving of thanks for their help on this successful event.

5. Financial Report

Treasurer Michael Simon reported the following:

The Gardiner Foundation grant that Executive Director noted earlier for the augmented reality exhibition has been received and is earmarked to be spent accordingly. As previously noted, the funds allocated for Webb House expenses were not used last year, so will be used this year to offset recent expenditures incurred in connection with Webb House maintenance projects. Contributions to the Annual Fund are currently running higher than had been projected, in part based on the receipt of recent memorial gifts. The Society's accounts are in the process of being consolidated at Wells Fargo. This is expected to be completed prior to the next Board meeting. Executive Director Alison Ventura provided more details regarding the memorial gifts that the Society recently received: several donations were received in honor of Dr. Peter Smith and his wife who died earlier this year, and other gifts were received in the memory of long-time OHS volunteer Grace Griffin. Alison suggested that the Society consider making one of the Society's internship positions a memorial internship named in honor of Dr. Smith and his wife. She also noted that the Education Committee has requested new benches and/or refurbishment of existing ones to which plaques dedicated to Grace Griffin's memory could be added as a gesture of gratitude. Michael added that he was supportive of giving the office manager check writing authority on checks up to \$1,500. President Steve Rotella requested that the Board vote on this, and the motion passed unanimously. Michael said that the budgeting process for next year would start after the Summer Benefit, which he noted is the Society's biggest fundraising event of the year. Steve thanked Michael for his work chairing the Financial Committee and trustee Howie Shinker for his work on the audit.

6. Development Report

Steve Rotella commented that fundraising is at approximately the same level as it was last year at this time. Revenues from membership dues are ahead of last year, suggesting that the automotive process now in use is working well. The Griffin Giving Program is running a little behind last year although recent renewals may offset that somewhat. The Program is in need of a Board member to focus refreshing the Program in order to realize its full potential, particularly as we head into the Society's 80th anniversary year.

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and the need to raise money for the Collections Center Project. The Griffin cocktail party is scheduled for September 9 at Trustee Susan Holden's home.

7. Buildings and Grounds

Chairperson Jennifer Ventura expressed thanks for the appreciation the Committee has received from the Board and the community in response to the work on the campus undertaken by the Committee in the spring. During the summer, the Committee's work is primarily maintenance-related. She recommended that Board members have a walk around Webb House to see the work that has been completed: in addition to painting work, restoration of the shutters and hardware was undertaken with great results. The Committee has determined that stabilization of the chimney at Vail House cannot be deferred until work on the Collections Center begins and recommended to the Executive Committee that stabilization of the chimney be commenced as soon as possible. The Executive Committee approved this course of action and work on the chimney will start shortly. The Committee is currently reviewing what B&G projects should be undertaken in the coming year and also getting input from the staff in this regard. Jenn invited Board members with recommendations for B&G work on the campus that should be addressed to advise her and the Committee of same. Steve Rotella thanked Jenn for being so proactive in her role as B&G chairperson.

8. Community Engagement Report

Chairperson Leslie Cohen reported that the Historical House Tour went well and that collaborating on this event with Southold's Historic Preservation Committee was a success. She suggested that Society should consider other similar collaborations for future events. Leslie reported that the vintage baseball game was also a success. She commented that she had discussed with Vice President Tom Dyja how to increase attendance at future iterations of this event. Leslie reported that the Moby Dick event was a huge success and extremely well received by the community. She thanked Board members Tom Dyja, Tina Silvestri, Lindsay Pollack and especially EJ Camp for all of their help on this event. EJ noted that the Moby Dick project was in the works for over a year and the main idea behind it was community engagement. She expressed her gratitude for the community's support in carrying out the event and making it a success. Leslie noted that many people from outside the Oysterponds community also attended. Tom Dyja said we should reflect on the event's success and consider how we can build on it for future similar events. Discussion ensued regarding leveraging the success of events such as the Moby Dick weekend to help grow awareness of the Society and its role within the community and garnering further community support.

9. Nominating Committee Report

Chairperson Suzanne Gluck reported that among the new Board member vacancies that will need to be filled for the coming year due to Board members coming to the end of

their terms are various Board leadership roles, including Board President, Treasurer and Chairperson of the Development Committee. She requested that Board members provide her with their recommendations for suitable candidates.

10. Additional Comments

President Steve Rotella remarked that the Collections Project Committee, led by Leslie Koch, continues to be engaged in the selection process for the architect for the project. Steve anticipated having a recommendation for the board within the next thirty or so days following the completion of the Committee's due diligence. Steve then thanked all those involved in the planning of the upcoming Summer Benefit and in particular the co-chairs, Mike Ventura and Carl Valentino, as well as Tina Silvestri and Donna Richardson for arranging for Saturday Night Live and Colbert Show tickets, respectively, as auction items. Steve noted that Alison Ventura recently passed her one-year anniversary as Executive Director of the Society and thanked her for all her hard work to date.

11. Adjournment

The meeting of the Board was adjourned at approximately 10:03am.