

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting, March 18, 2023

Attendees: President of the Board Steve Rotella, Vice President of the Board Tom Dyja, Executive Director Alison Ventura, Trustees Michael Simon, Susan Holder, Donna Richardson, Leslie Cohen, Lydia Irving, Jennifer Valentino, Catherine Chermayeff, Suzanne Gluck, 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 9:04 am.

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting of January 21, 2023 was duly made, seconded and unanimously approved..

3. Executive Director's Report

After President Steve Rotella thanked the Board, staff and Executive Director Alison Ventura for their work in preparing for the upcoming season, Alison updated the Board as to the status of the Vail House collections center project and the efforts to select an architect for the project via the circulation of an RFQ (i.e., "Request for Qualifications") –an invitation for architects to introduce themselves and to express their interest in the project. The special committee formed for this project (including Barry Bergdoll for the selection process) is endeavoring to contact all architects within the community as well as other potential candidates from outside. Alison also noted that the Gardiner Foundation had recommended the OHS for a \$125,000 grant to create an augmented reality experience at the Society as part of a larger initiative highlighting the history of the Revolutionary War on Long Island. Alison noted that this grant would be part of a completely different program from the OHS' desire to secure a grant from the Foundation in respect of the collections center at Vail House. Steve noted the augmented reality project would not require a significant amount of the OHS's resources. On the subject of grants, Alison noted that the Society received a \$750 grant to enable Amy Folk to attend a museum administrators professional development conference. Alison noted the recent passing of longtime OHS volunteer Grace Griffin and that the Society had received a number of donations in her memory. Alison has begun looking into possibly using those donations to purchase new benches for outside of Webb House or restoring the existing benches. Plaques in Grace Griffin's memory would be attached to the benches and possibly a ceremony for her family could be planned. Regarding the upcoming season, Alison noted that the Bob Burke exhibition had been canceled due to logistical reasons; instead there will be an exhibition highlighting folk art in the OHS collection. Work continues on planning for this season's Summer Benefit, to be held on Saturday, August 5, as well as updating the Society's website and looking into a cataloging program that would allow some of the collection to be viewed online. The Society is also considering using the Eventbrite app for events this summer. Eventbrite does charge a fee but it could help the administrative side of programming run more efficiently. Any Board member who wishes to share his or her thoughts on Eventbrite should contact Alison.

4. Financial Report

Treasurer Michael Simon reported the following: The Society is preparing for its audit. The Finance Committee has agreed to consolidate its accounts by moving the funds that were held at Vanguard to Wells Fargo. The accounts are flat for the years, which in the current economic climate is in line with expectations. The Tupper bequest is currently entirely held in short term treasury bills. It is anticipated that a subcommittee will be formed regarding the funding of the work to be done on the Vail House collections center project.

5. Development

•Steve Rotella reviewed with the Board a year over year summary of development since March 2020. Over this period, fundraising has progressed well, largely due to the success of the Griffin giving program. However, over the last year, Griffin giving and membership donations are down. It is not clear what this is attributable to. The Development Committee will analyze the data and attempt to ascertain whether this is indicative of broader issues; and if so, make recommendations for addressing these.

6. Buildings and Grounds

Chairperson Jennifer Ventura reviewed the current projects being undertaken by Building and Grounds. Among other things, she noted that irrigation needs to be addressed. She also commented that an effort was being made to put maintenance projects on an annual basis, in order to keep up with regular foreseeable maintenance needs.

7. Community Engagement

Chairperson Leslie Cohen reported on the various upcoming events, including Bingo Night at Poquatuck Hall (March 23) for which Cliff Cohen was to be the caller; and the Historic House Walking Tour, scheduled for June 10. The Tour will start with a lecture and will include a catalog prepared by Jeanne Markel. Board member EJ Camp is spearheading the Moby Dick reading planned for July. Vice President Tom Dyja noted that it will not be a reading of the entire book in full; rather a "digest" version of about one third of the book intended to be fun for the whole community. Readers will read between 12 and 15 minutes each. Children's activities are being planned as well as a ticketed event that will include chowder and biscuits and Dark and Stormies as well as sea shanties. There will also be a screening of "Moby Dick" starring Gregory Peck. The event will conclude with a reading on Chris Wedge's boat at the Orient Yacht Club.

7. Vail House Archives and Office Project

President Steve Rotella noted that the materials relating to the Vail House project that have been circulated to the Board include talking points for discussing the project with the community. Steve urged Boardmembers to review these. Executive Director Alison Ventura commented that Society was exploring grant opportunities to help fund the project and considering a capital campaign. In addition, we will need to consider where the administrative offices and staff will be moved while they are displaced during the construction process. Currently, the committee overseeing the project is seeking to engage an engineer to review potential structural issues identified by contractors who have visited the Vail House site. In closing Steve noted the necessity of balancing the need for resources that the Vail House project will require along with the demands that the Society's ongoing programming and functioning require.

7. Adjournment

The meeting of the Board ended at approximately 9:48am.