

German Village Society Board of Trustees October 8, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Present: Bill Case, Nick Cavalaris, Bill Curlis, Beth Ervin, Chris Hune, Jeanne Likins, Stef Martt, Jeff McNealey, Brian Santin, Mike Yarbrough. **Absent:** Sarah Irvin Clark, Darci Congrove.

Also Present: Russ Arledge (staff), Greg Gamier (German Village Business Committee), Jim Hopple (Nominating Committee) Brittany Kress (co-chair of Monster Bash), Jake Murray (co-chair of Monster Bash), Gary Seman (newspaper), and Shiloh Todorov (staff).

At 6:01 PM President Bill Case called the meeting to order. Bill welcomed everyone including the recently elected members of the German Village Society's Board of Trustees.

Public Participation

Monster Bash 2012

Brittany Kress and Jake Murray, representing two of the three co-chairs of the 2012 Saturday, October 20 Monster Bash, gave the board an update on this annual fall event. Kysti Kalkman is the third co-chair. They are German Villagers who had such a good time at Monster Bash last year that they stepped up when Director Shiloh Todorov sought volunteer leaders for this year's event.

In terms of changes from prior Monster Bashes, there is a new ticket level for volunteers (\$25 for three hours of volunteering the day and evening of the event). There's also a photo booth and a really good DJ.

The committee is working to secure sponsors to donate \$300 each for advertising space at the event. With the trick or treating at the start of the evening, there are 12 stops, five of them businesses or business-related. The co-chairs noted how enthusiastic everyone has been and what great support friends and neighbors are providing to help make the event successful.

Trustee Beth Ervin, the board liaison to this event committee, thanked Brittany, Jake and Krysti for their great creativity and all the wonderful ideas they have generated for this event. She said it's been wonderful to work with this group of young Villagers and to see their enthusiasm and dedication.

In terms of the budget, the income derives from ticket sales and sponsorships. The major costs are for drinks, bartenders, the DJ, and postage for the post cards mailed to all German Village Society members. The leaders hope to net \$8,000, which is what the Society has budgeted for net revenue on the event.

Another new idea: the committee co-chairs asked each board member to contribute a bottle of sparkling wine for the VIP ticket holders as their specialty drink this year. These should be dropped off with Shiloh prior to the event or Shiloh will take cash and to the

shopping for those who prefer that option. VIP ticketholders will also get a "swag bag" of items donated by various GVBC members.

Nominating Committee

Jim Hopple, Chair of the Nominating Committee and until tonight's meeting, a German Village Society Trustee, presented that committee's proposed slate of officers: Bill Case, President, Darci Congrove, Vice President, Jeanne Likins, Secretary, and Nick Cavalaris, Treasurer. Jim's written handout summarized the process utilized by the committee, as well as the process required by the Society's bylaws.

Motions:

Trustee Bill Curlis moved that the board accept the Nominating Committee's recommendation and Trustee Jeff McNealey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Bill Curlis moved that the nominations for German Village Society officers be closed and that the officers be elected unanimously. Trustee Chris Hune seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Secretary's Report

The German Village Society Board of Trustees unanimously approved the September 10, 2012 German Village Society Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes. The motion was made by Secretary and Trustee Jeanne Likins and was seconded by Trustee Mike Yarbrough.

President Bill Case recognized and thanked Jeanne for her dedication in capturing the meeting minutes month after month this last year and, for agreeing to do so for another year.

Staff Reports

German Village Society Program and Operations Manager Russ Arledge submitted a written report. Russ pointed out that today is Eddie Rickenbacker's birthday and that he was born on Pearl Street roughly where the Comfort Inn now stands.

In response to a question about the new database, Past Perfect, Russ shared that the data input for donors so far has been for 2012. This is a bit of a test to be sure the information and how it is inputted is what is needed by the Society's users.

Russ pointed out that the database can generate a list of possible reports. These will be available once more data is entered from historical sources, of which there are quite a lot. The goal is to input data in real time starting January 1, 2013.

Shiloh Todorov, Director, submitted a written report. Shiloh shared that she and Russ attended the Ohio Local History Alliance conference last Friday and Saturday.

Shiloh and Russ feel very good about where the Society is compared to some of the other history non-profits who were participating in this annual meeting. There were so many

others attending the conference who are discouraged about their work and their ability to deliver on their missions given the economy and the reduced budgets within their organizations during the last several years. Shiloh reported that she feels very fortunate we are in such a strong position with the essential support of members and donors, especially as we are about to launch into new fundraising avenues.

In terms of hiring, there are four bookkeeper nominees lined up for interviews, which will be conducted by Darci Congrove, Jim Nichols, and Shiloh. There are also three extremely strong candidates for the part-time fundraising position and Shiloh hopes to do interviews soon. Helping Shiloh to shape the job description have been Trustees Chris Hune, Bill Curlis and Darci Congrove.

Shiloh noted that she is still in the process of talking with folks about the top priorities for the \$5,000 designated for historic preservation activities this year. It's been hard to catch up with some of the folks so it's taking a bit longer than hoped. Shiloh hopes to have a report on this next month.

Shiloh also shared that she and Russ are working 75-80 hours/week each, often seven days each week. This is not sustainable. The board needs to either provide more assistance or reduce expectations for what can reasonably be accomplished by two paid staff and the core of volunteers.

Shiloh recommends that the board authorize the hiring of a part-time administrative assistant. This person would assume responsibility for things such as booking tours and coordinating and scheduling tour guides, scheduling activities, including rentals, at the Meeting Haus, expanding the well-received art shows, and more.

All of these responsibilities generate revenue that would cover the cost of this part time person. The person would also handle an array of clerical tasks, such as photocopying, filing, answering the phones, assisting members and visitors, etc.

This action would enable the German Village Society to fulfill the goals that have been set, which are exciting. Shiloh will be proposing this as part of the 2013 budget. She will also be asking more of board members in terms of stepping up to do more of the hands on work of the Society.

President Bill Case congratulated the staff for securing the \$5,000 oral history project grant from the Ohio Humanities Council. This is a new initiative of the Historic Preservation Committee and everyone is excited about how this funding will help that endeavor be more professional and happen more quickly.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Nick Cavalaris presented three written reports: the October 2012 Financial Highlights, the Variance by Month, and the Balance Sheet.

In response to a question, Nick noted that the liability on the balance sheet is for the property tax funds that the German Village Society set aside in case the matter was not resolved this year and the Society had to pay the 2012 property taxes. This is just something the bookkeeper needs to correct in QuickBooks Nick noted.

Trustee Bill Curlis asked that the balance sheet be made more user-friendly before the next budget cycle so that it is easier for everyone to understand and to track. Nick responded that some of this will happen as the Society's funds to be invested are moved to Huntington Bank under the direction of the financial advisor.

Committee Reports:

Executive

---Commitment to Serve Pledge, Conflict of Interest Policy

President Bill Case noted that tonight's board meeting is the start of a new year, the 2012-2013 year of leadership both for trustees and for the officers. With that in mind, Bill commented about the importance of the German Village Society's Commitment to Serve Pledge and the Conflict of Interest Policy.

In Trustee Darci Congrove's absence, Trustee Jeanne Likins shared what Darci wanted to mention, pointing out that the conflict of interest policy is an important policy which board members need to be familiar with and agree to follow.

It is an essential part of a well-functioning, credible board to ensure that conflicts of interest are fully disclosed and addressed as decisions are made. It is also an IRS requirement and the Society must confirm this policy on the 990 tax form which is filed annually.

Regarding the Commitment to Serve pledge, in Darci's absence Jeanne noted that this was written in 2010 and approved by the Society's Board of Trustees. Board members sign this annually and give it to the Director.

This document helps to clarify what is expected from all board members in order for the German Village Society to function smoothly. This pledge should also be used for board recruitment to ensure that potential board members clearly understand what they are getting into when they agree to serve if elected.

Darci's remarks pointed out that if there are board members who are mid-term and unable to perform the majority of the functions outlined, it would be best for the Society for them to give up their board seat to someone that can commit the necessary time. Board members in this situation could move to committee service or another volunteer role that better fits their schedule. With only twelve board members and two staff, it really takes "all hands on deck" to get everything done.

President Bill Case reminded everyone that the Society's Annual Meeting is next Sunday, October 14 at 4:30 PM followed by a potluck. The next evening is the Society's leadership

gathering for all board members and committee chairs. It is being led by Trustees Bill Curlis and Jeanne Likins.

Trustee Bill Curlis commented that the Society is now a stable organization. It is time to focus on where the German Village Society can go, what it can become in the future, etc. This requires that everyone have some common understandings so the organization can proceed together from the same starting place.

There will be discussion about the Society's mission, its goals, roles of staff, volunteers, and leaders, as well as a review of policies, information to help ease the understanding of financial policies, procedures and reports, etc.

Trustee Jeanne Likins pointed out the event is Monday from 6-8 PM in the wine cellar of Haus Frau. She urged everyone to be on time to help keep the time schedule as outlined. There will be drinks and snacks as well and time to socialize a bit afterwards.

Bill noted that this gathering will be followed by a retreat the first of 2013. Director Shiloh Todorov shared that the tentative retreat date is Sat., Jan. 12. The facilitator Shiloh hoped to have in 2012 is available for that date, which is good news. Everyone was asked to hold the date with details to follow closer to the time.

---Technology

Trustee Brian Santin did not have a written report. He noted however the committee is continuing to move forward in freshening up the society's website.

Civic Relations

There was not a written report from Chair Nelson Genshaft. Trustee Bill Curlis asked when we should know about the URIF grant. President Bill Case noted he will get an update.

Development

On behalf of the Development Committee, Trustee Mike Yarbrough submitted the committee's September 13th meeting minutes for their board report.

Finance

Treasurer Nick Cavalaris announced that the Finance Committee met September 29. At that time it selected the committee to replace the bookkeeper and the 2013 budget was discussed, including a timeline.

Saturday, November 10 is the next Finance Committee meeting. Members will review the budget and make a recommendation to the board at its November 12th meeting.

German Village Business Committee

Chair Greg Gamier submitted a written report. He pointed out that their next meeting is tomorrow morning. The German Village Business Committee may be hiring someone to replace Paige Bilotta, the part time administrative assistant, who is retiring at the end of this year.

When asked, Greg reported that the new eXplore German Village newsletter is going well and looks great. He complimented and thanked Shiloh as she is the one who has created this new communication vehicle to promote German Village activities and businesses.

The goal now, Greg noted, is to get many more subscriptions. Shiloh shared that she is working to distribute it to our contiguous neighbors and other partners around the region. Trustee Jeff McNealey asked if Shiloh was in touch with Columbus Underground, and Shiloh reported that she had posted the link to subscribe to eXplore on the CU site.

Historic Preservation

A written report was submitted by Trustee and Chair Chris Hune. She highlighted the \$5,000 Ohio Humanities grant and the two fall workshops slated for October and November.

There have been some community members who expressed concern about the German Village Commission's decisions in the recent past which some feel do not sufficiently reflect the German Village Guidelines.

Chris noted that the Historic Preservation Committee will re-visit the Historic Preservation Values Statement that was developed in the past and approved by the board. It has not been shared recently with the German Village Commission. This now will be reviewed and brought to the board for approval so as to then share this with the German Village Commission.

---Streetscape

A written report was submitted by Chair Tim Bibler. Trustee Bill Curlis asked if the German Village Commission has been involved in the news corral discussion. Director Shiloh Todorov replied that yes, the Streetscape Committee did share three designs with the Commission for a conceptual review in September.

Shiloh noted that these three designs resulted from the public meeting which was held in August for community input into the work of this committee on proposed Third Street news corrals.

In terms of the proposed new metal Third Street planters, Shiloh pointed out that there is not funding presently available from the German Village Garten Club, the coordinating and funding group for these planters. Shiloh noted that the German Village Garden Club is working with the Society's Streetscape Committee and that such collaboration is good.

The discounted price for each box is \$500, but the price is available for a limited time. Also, this does not include the costs for the placement or mounting of these boxes. There is a planter with this design in Frank Fetch Park.

Long Range Planning

Matt Eshelbrenner, Chair of the Long Range Planning Committee, provided the September 13th Meeting Minutes for their board report. President Bill Case inquired about the bike rental idea being explored by this committee. Director Shiloh Todorov noted that this is a very preliminary exploration and there is not anything more to report at this time.

Trustee Jeff McNealey shared that the City's Recreation and Parks Department will soon let a \$2.2 million or so contract to install the nation's best rent a bike company around Columbus. Anyone can rent a bike on the spot with kiosks for payment.

It is a "point to point" system (get a bike at one location, return it elsewhere). This bike rental system will blanket the downtown and historic district neighborhoods. Jeff knows about this since he is a Recreation and Parks Commissioner and it is a current agenda item.

Marketing Committee

Trustee and Chair of the Marketing Committee Beth Ervin did not have a written report. She noted that they met last Thursday. Since the branding standards have been completed and are being utilized, the committee agreed that they will now oversee the brand utilization and provide guidance on marketing strategies, all of which is part of their committee's purpose.

In effect, the committee will be the "brand police". There will be a policy developed for the Society's chairs and event and project managers, whereby anything that will be distributed for public consumption first will be shared with this committee for its input. There will be a discussion of goals and marketing strategies.

Beth noted that the committee has the talent of a full marketing and public relations firm available to support the Society and get the word out in a professional, well coordinated manner. This is exciting since we are a small non-profit charity and benefit tremendously from these professional experts.

The committee will plan how best to integrate public relations with advertising, social media, etc. Beth will work with Director Shiloh Todorov on a proactive checklist to be shared with all Society groups disseminating information.

Membership

President Bill Case noted that membership is one of the most important functions of the Society. He is delighted that new Trustee Stef Martt has agreed to be the new Chair of the Membership Committee. He pointed out that Stef has already stepped up to lead the Membership Committee and submitted a written report to the board for her first board meeting.

Stef reported that the committee meets this Wednesday, October 10 at 6 PM at the Meeting Haus. Plans are underway to launch the 2013 membership drive, both membership renewal and membership recruitment.

Also, the membership revenues for 2012 are on track to be met, which is great news. Director Shiloh Todorov's projections show there is \$75,000 from individual GVS memberships and GVBC should net \$8,625 for the Society, which splits business membership proceeds with GVBC.

Trustee and board liaison Jeanne Likins thanked Erin O'Donnell for her work this year as Chair of the Membership Committee. Jeanne also thanked the committee for its work. She noted that this committee has been continuing its work with the development committee.

Parks, Public Spaces and Community Events

Sara McNealey, Chair of the Parks, Public Spaces, and Community Events Committee, provided the minutes from their September 5, 2012 meeting as the written board report. Trustee Bill Curlis wondered where the information about the Schiller Park trees (measurements, age, etc.) is being stored, suggesting this be centralized within the German Village Society.

Trustee Jeanne Likins noted that some years ago when she chaired this committee a Schiller Park Tree Tour was developed. It identified all the historic and otherwise noteworthy trees but there was no funding for a brochure. This information should be available in the Society's files though and should be combined with the new information.

Old Business

There was none.

New Business

Director Shiloh Todorov solicited views about the new 2012 Annual Report she is creating that will highlight accomplishments and list all members and donors. There is funding in the budget for Shiloh to print this and mail it to all 900 member households. The cost is \$3,000. Or, it could be sent as a digital file via email. This option would cost \$800 for the report design plus the costs to copy and mail to selected people and organizations.

After discussion, the board agreed that the report will be provided digitally to members and others with hard copies available at the Meeting Haus. It will also be mailed to an array of community leaders, including City Council members and other non-profit charities, sending the message that the German Village Society is alive and well.

Trustees Bill Curlis and Jeanne Likins provided an update about the excellent work Kathy Wightman has been doing to review board meeting minutes from 2001 to the present to identify and log motions, resolutions and policies.

Over the years, there was not a tracking or listing of policies or motions, making it quite difficult to know what was board policy. Kathy has been working on this for some months and is making great progress.

Bill and Jeanne thanked Kathy for her work on this helpful project and urged others to do the same. When this is completed, it will become an important reference section of the German Village Society's Leaders Manual.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Trustee Mike Yarbrough motioned and Trustee Jeanne Likins seconded that the board adjourn at 7:19 PM. This motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeanne M. Likins, Secretary

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