

German Village Society Annual Meeting October 15, 2012

The 2012 German Village Society Annual Meeting was called to order at 4:37 PM by President Bill Case. President Case welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. Approximately 50 people attended.

President Case noted that everyone in the room has played a role in the life of the German Village Society. After one year as President, Bill thinks there is no other place where so many people are as involved as they are in German Village. Bill said we have fun doing our work and, the more involved people are, the more involved many people become.

The meeting began with the new video, produced by John Clark, entitled "What is German Village?" This was first showcased at the Society's Oktoberfest booth last month.

President Case announced the newly elected or re-elected Trustees: Bill Curlis, Stef Martt, Jeff McNealey, and himself. Bill thanked outgoing trustees Roy Bieber, Norm Hall, and Jim Hopple for their service. He noted there would be a short business meeting followed by reports from the Director and all of the Society's Committees. This will be followed by a potluck dinner.

Secretary Jeanne Likins motioned and Jerry Glick seconded that the October 2011 German Village Society Annual Meeting Minutes be approved. The minutes were unanimously approved by those present.

Treasurer Nick Cavalaris presented the Society's 2011 Financial Report. The Society has a \$350,000 annual budget. For 2012, the Society was within the budget. This year the Society hired a financial advisor, Huntington National Bank, to invest the Society's non-operational funds. Anyone wishing to see the financial reports or balance sheets can find these on the Society's website or could contact Nick with any questions. Trustee Chris Hune moved and Roy Bieber seconded the motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, which was unanimously approved.

In summary, President Case wondered who might know the Society's German motto and its English translation. He informed everyone that it is "Without haste and without rest". In closing, Bill commended the good work of Director Shiloh Todorov, the face of German Village and the German Village Society.

Director's Report

Director Shiloh Todorov noted that there will be a comprehensive annual report, available on line, at the end of November, closer to the end of the fiscal year. This will outline many of the year's accomplishments. It will be distributed as a hard copy report throughout the region to the German Village Society's growing number of current and potential partners.

At her one year anniversary, Shiloh shared what she's been up to this last year. She asked everyone to please review her performance, to talk to her or to a board member to share what people think about her work this year.

Shiloh noted that she was hired to restore the focus of the German Village Society on its charitable mission. She pointed out that there remains some confusion among some people about the role of the Society. Shiloh however is clear that it is to fulfill its non-profit, charitable mission. The Society is not a civic association Shiloh emphasized.

Shiloh also shared photos of her husband and their travels. One of the things that was appealing to Shiloh in accepting this position was the six weeks of vacation time each year to be able to travel with her husband, who travels internationally for work and is from Bulgaria. They love to travel, scuba dive, and ride motorcycles. Shiloh shared that her salary is \$61,500.

Also, since Shiloh believes in giving back she informed the audience that she is a volunteer with the Wellington School, with Local Matters, and with the Southside Development Center. Shiloh acknowledged that such volunteerism is also important to Russ who volunteers with the Columbus Historical Society.

Shiloh is quite proud of all the people she's met this year. It's been her priority to get out and meet people both in German Village and throughout central Ohio. Shiloh does a lot of networking, seeking to build relationships and partnerships for the German Village Society and is not always in the Meeting Haus. Shiloh referred to this as "the Cult of Shiloh" (a term coined by a board member) as important for her as she helps propel the German Village Society out of the 233 acres of German Village to become much more visible and active in the larger community.

Shiloh reviewed the new and renewed programs, mentioning specifically the two new Historic Preservation Committee's in-depth educational programs this fall and the refreshed German Village tours. She said that there have been 41 tours to date in 2012 compared to just 21 in 2011.

Also, there are several new ghost tours this month, done in collaboration with Columbus Landmarks. Shiloh was pleased to report that these were sold out three weeks before the first tour date. Tours are one of the ways we most fulfill our mission, according to Shiloh, since these are all about historic preservation education and advocacy and are shared with hundreds of people.

The Historic Preservation Committee is making steady progress with the new Oral History Project Shiloh reported. This new endeavor will be showcased in December at a special event, so watch for details. Also, Shiloh has created an informal arts committee to explore and coordinate hosting art shows and receptions at the Meeting Haus. Shiloh is still seeking input for the first tier priorities of the historic preservation projects that have been identified.

Much needed updating of Fest Hall is also under review and exploration with changes planned in the near future. One thing that was tried this last year and didn't work was new children's programming. Only three people signed up for 12 different classes which were offered.

Society revenues are up this year. As of now, the Society is \$13,000 ahead of budget plus has the \$20,000 "tax money" that doesn't have to be spent right away. (This was the 2011 budgeted amount to pay Columbus property taxes that no longer has to be paid as a result of a compromise agreement between the German Village Society and the Columbus Board of Education after an almost ten year process to appeal the property tax status of the German Village Society.)

Shiloh reported that she continues to learn from Russ and explore how they best can work together as the two full-time German Village Society staff members. She pointed out that Russ is the “go to” person with the new database software, Past Perfect, which was implemented in May. Russ also manages the building, books tours, handles Visitor Center overflow, and more. Shiloh hopes to have all staff do what they do best and wants to get some of the clerical work moved to a volunteer (hopefully) administrative assistant.

Several board members and Shiloh have been busy with a round of interviews for a new bookkeeper. Shiloh thanked Cheryl Matthews for her good work for the German Village Society. Also, a search is underway to hire a fund raising consultant. There are some great applicants Shiloh reported. This person would work on a capital campaign to raise funds for re-doing the Visitor Center, to start to put an annual fund together, and to create an umbrella or coordination over sponsorships and grants for all German Village Society activities and committees.

This part time person would have some management responsibilities with the Haus & Garten Tour week-end. Shiloh is working on how best to use the collective power of all the events and activities to extend the reach of the Society’s mission. Funds for this consultant will come from what has been paid in the past to the part time event person as well as one-time funds from the 2008 Step Up membership effort. The latter sought additional funds to help the German Village Society change its business model to be more sustainable.

There are some changes for the 2013 Tour week-end which include having a team of leaders for the Pre-Tour event. The co-chairs are: Phyllis Duryee, Ken Flowers, Michele McFadden, Jim and Jo Plunkett, and Marie Trudeau. Kristyn and Chris Hartman will serve as honorary chairs of the 2013 Haus & Garten Tour.

Shiloh reiterated that she is very gratified to work with everyone. She asked those present to ask themselves: Can you volunteer more or, in a new way? Can you help recruit others to volunteer with the German Village Society? Shiloh pointed out that there is a direct link between volunteers and the German Village Society being able to do more new activities and projects. In other words, more can be pursued and accomplished with more volunteer commitments.

A main question that Shiloh has been pondering and talking to folks about is: How can we get outside the 233 acres of German Village to accomplish our mission and, to build support for the work of the German Village Society? How do we attract new friends from across the city, the region, and the state, people who love German Village and visit German Village, as well as those who believe in urban communities, a pedestrian lifestyle, etc? Shiloh pointed out that we haven’t asked folks to support German Village like they support the Franklin Park Conservatory, the Museum of Art, COSI, etc. This is certainly something the German Village Society needs to do.

Shiloh has been asking all kinds of people, inside and outside of German Village, what does preservation mean? Many respond that German Village is the bricks. It is our vibrancy. Preservation is green. It’s knowing your neighbor and allying with neighbors to improve the neighborhood. What is preservation if not living on the bricks everyday Shiloh asked?

Also, we know that pedestrian friendly communities are appealing. We know that our businesses bring visitors to German Village and, bring them back time and time again. All of these things are the ways that the German Village Society lives its historic preservation education mission. For Shiloh, all of this is

part of a virtuous circle of good for the larger community, in service of the Society's non-profit, charitable mission.

What follows is a brief note about each committee since the power point presentation with photos and more details is available. Most committees meet monthly, sometimes more often as needed.

Committee Reports

- **Long Range Planning Committee** (Matt Eshelbrenner, Chair)
Highlights include: the nurturing and then spinning off as its own non-profit organization, Village Connections; the start up of a group of passionate parents from several south side neighborhoods who want to partner with the Columbus Public Schools to improve the schools in this area so that more parents would remain and raise their kids in this urban area while securing a good education; identification of helpful tips for residents about various city services that are available but not always well known.
- **Parks, Public Spaces and Community Events Committee** (Carol Mullinax, Secretary of this Committee, reporting for the Chair, Sara McNealey)
This group is composed of representatives of those who work in and take care of the two German Village parks, Schiller and Fetch Parks, including representatives from the City's Recreation and Parks Department. The groups are: German Village Garten Club, Actor's Theatre, St. Mary's Catholic Church and School, The Community Garden/The Farm, Stewart School Tutoring Program, Village Singers, Fun Committee, Huntington Garden, Friends of Schiller Park, the Highfield Garden, and the Schiller Arboretum Fund. There were also photos from the recent Columbus Bicentennial celebrations hosted by the German Village Society with the leadership of the Friends of Schiller Park.
- **Membership Committee** (Jeanne Likins, Board Liaison)
Erin O'Donnell was thanked for her year of service as this committee's chair. New Trustee Stef Martt was introduced and welcomed as the new Membership Committee Chair. Membership revenues look to be on par with prior years, the biennial German Village Society Membership Directory was published, and Bob Jackson was able to "retire" as the volunteer membership coordinator and "jack" of many things.
- **German Village Business Committee** (Greg Gamier, Chair)
The German Village Business Committee increased memberships, has had more emphasis on marketing via its new brochures (60,000 printed) which include both brick and mortar businesses as well as service businesses; the brochure has a wider distribution this year and there are ad buys for Facebook, Columbus Alive, the Quarter Horse Show, OSU Football program, etc.; there has also been an emphasis on networking with quarterly networking meetings. GVBC also launched eExplore German Village, a new marketing website linked to the German Village Society's website; art crawl attendance doubled this past summer and GVBC leaders are busy planning for Village Lights Dec. 2, 2012.
- **Historic Preservation Committee** (Chris Hune, Chair)
In addition to the historic preservation activities mentioned in Shiloh's report, this committee won a \$5,000 Ohio Humanities Council for the Oral History Project and has been working with the TEA 43206 sponsors to support a variety of initiatives.

- **Tea 43206** (Darci Congrove, Sponsor)

The first year, 2011, raised \$9,684 and 130 people attended. The designated funds went to purchase the new Past Perfect software to begin to digitalize the Society's many historical archives, among other tasks; to fund the difference in cost for the Columbus Health Department's Art Walk tour signs so those in German Village would be brown and not lime green as they are elsewhere throughout downtown; and to help support the proposed Schiller Park sign to tell the story of Schiller Park to residents and visitors alike.

In 2012, Tea 43206 raised \$15,484, a 60% increase in revenue, and 203 people attended. There are a number of possible projects that might be pursued with the 2012 funds, including historic preservation workshops, continuation of the oral history project, perhaps some upgrades to the Visitor Center, and beginning to work on a plan for comprehensive signage throughout German Village. August 16 and 17, 2013 is the second Historic Preservation week-end, so mark your calendars now.

- **Program and Operations Manager** (Russ Arledge)

The new software, Past Perfect, has two major functions: membership/donor database and historical archives. Russ is mastering both areas and has been inputting membership information and working with a volunteer to start to digitalize the substantial paper historic archives.

- **2012 Haus and Garten Tour Committee** (Jan and John Clark, Co-Chairs)

\$86,000 was raised this year. The Clarks thanked the leaders and volunteers, home owners, pre-tour hosts, Party on the Platz sponsors, the sponsors and all who contributed to making this event so successful. Lots of pictures were included in the PowerPoint slide show.

- **Streetscape Committee** (Tim Bibler, Chair)

This committee submitted a request for UIRF funding (Urban Infrastructure Redevelopment Fund) to the city for a preliminary engineering study over the summer and is awaiting a response. Creating a Third Street Amenities Plan, starting with news corrals, has been the focus since the summer and a grant will be submitted this fall for partial funding to start this effort.

- **Civic Relations Committee** (Nelson Genshaft, Chair)

This committee laid the ground work for the Society to submit a request for UIRF funding to the city for a preliminary engineering study. The major elements of this are: pedestrian street lighting, signage, to reduce the clutter of unnecessary lines and poles, to make sidewalks and curbs safer, etc. Bricking Third Street is on hold since the City will not tear up the current street to make it brick (or to repair brick underneath) so this aspect has to be pursued down the road. This committee is also listening to the pros and cons about the city's new recycling program and provided a community forum on the new no parking signs that will be installed this fall in selected German Village alleys where there have been problems getting city service and emergency vehicles through.

- **Art Committee** (Carol Genshaft, Chair)

The purpose of this new group is to seek art exhibitions that highlight and feature area artists and to bring people to German Village and to the German Village Society's Meeting Haus to see

these exhibits. This is an informal group that works with Shiloh. Already they have created an artist agreement and artist solicitation plan. Please refer artists to Shiloh or the committee. Two exhibits are scheduled this fall. There is not a budget for this group since the Society collects a portion of sales to defray the costs.

- The Columbus Maennerchor performed two songs.

- **Development Committee** (Mike Yarborough, Chair)

An important goal was to get a cross-section of the community as members of this committee. This group developed policies on naming privileges as well as gift acceptance. It has been working on a plan to solicit corporate support for mission-centric activities such as revitalizing the Visitor Center and on ways to add development to existing membership efforts. The new Development Committee chair is Dennis Brandon.

- **Marketing Committee** (Beth Ervin, Chair)

This committee oversees the German Village Society's brand and style standards, provides guidance on marketing strategies and how best to provide brand to the Society's communications, to assure consistency in the look, feel and voice of the Society across projects and platforms and, to insure the Society's integrity with its brand. The committee is all volunteers and includes professionals in public relations, marketing, advertising, and social media specialists and designers.

- **Technology Committee** (Brian Santin, Chair)

Working with Shiloh, this committee advises on the German Village Society website and other technology matters. This past year included the addition and upgrading of the office telephone system, generously donated by Alarm One Security, research which led to the purchase of the new software, Past Perfect, enabling wifi throughout the German Village Society's Meeting Haus, and some updating of the Society's website. It also worked with Jessica and Bill Lager, who donated the resources to create the German Village Society's mobile website, another first.

- **Maintenance Committee** (Roy Bieber, Chair)

Members include Russ Arledge, Chris King, Ned Merkle, Mary Ross, and David Schooler. Updating the German Village Society's Maintenance Schedule for its major assets (roof, furnace, etc.) and equipment to ensure sufficient resources in reserve to repair or replace things was an important undertaking this year. Currently, there is \$156,000 in this reserve fund. In addition, this group developed and implemented a plan to update the Society's business offices and the Neighborhood Room/kitchen as well as clean and organize things in the Meeting Haus attic and storage areas. Thanks to David Schooler for substantial assistance in funding this and to Mary for her design and coordination efforts. There was also considerable work done to improve safety and repair damage such as water in the elevator shaft, leaks in the bathroom, ventilation cleaning, GFI protection, tiles steam cleaned, heat added to men's restroom, added emergency lighting, etc.

- **Visitor Center**

Shiloh talked about how the Visitor Center is the hub of the German Village Society's mission. This is where we greet and educate visitors six days a week all year, and seven days a week during the warmer weather. The German Village Society welcomes both groups in tours (adults and children from schools) and individuals who come from literally all over the globe. The number of visitors, the number of tours, and the number of Meeting Haus rentals are all up in 2012 over 2011 and 2010.

Shiloh also reported that she has begun work with a great team of folks from both the Society and from Continental Office to begin to evaluate ways to update and enhance the education and advocacy efforts in the Visitor Center. Shiloh also thanked the many volunteers who make this mission-centric effort possible!

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 PM by motion from trustee Nick Cavalaris, which was seconded by Roy Bieber.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne M. Likins, Secretary