

Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting  
September 16, 2020 Minutes

In Attendance via Zoom: Wes Beck, Suzanne DeHaan, Amy DeMott, Kate Diedrich, Wendy VerHage Falb, Sarah Green, Scott Opperman, James Scozzari and John Walendowski

Absent: Michele Giordano, Jeff Martin, Wayne Norlin

Staff: Barbara Draughon, Maria Zache Starkey

Other/Minutes Recorder: Tom Truesdale

Public: none

1. Call to Order: 7:07 pm
2. Public Comment – none
3. Approval of August 2020 Minutes – Minutes were approved.

President Wendy Falb, on behalf of the board, congratulated Barbara Draughon on recently being appointed executive director of the Heritage Hill Association.

Information Items:

4. Treasurers Report – New projections in revenue and expenses have been mapped out through the end of July 2021. The numbers used have been conservative and realistic in keeping with the present economy due to the nationwide pandemic. Currently, the Association is approximately \$10,000 in the black after the realignment.

Information coming soon regarding forgiveness of federal PPP grant, but things look positive. This money is available to draw on in this time of economic crisis.

5. Staff Reports:

No questions were posed regarding executive director notes.

Barbara did talk briefly about litter and graffiti in the neighborhood and the city's AND neighbors' efforts to keep things clean.

A MEDC (Michigan Economic Development Corp.) grant application for Covid-19 relief was approved for \$10,000.

Long-term planning was brought up in relationship to neighborhood/city master plan. Barbara suggested occasional board meetings – if not every other meeting – dedicated to discussion of neighborhood needs and/or other topics related to life in Heritage Hill. City strategic/master planning sessions have already started informally. A couple of neighbor/business leaders were mentioned as possible facilitators for board discussions.

Wendy suggested the board look over the last neighborhood Master Plan to help lend meaning to the “discussion of our past, where we're at now, and where we want to be.”

6. Committee/Liaison Reports:

Land Use Issues: HHA Office received a visit from a neighbor living near the Madison/Cherry intersection expressing concern regarding the church's conversion to low-income apartments and expressing concern over lack of public input offered during the development process. A few board members familiar with the process to develop that site noted that neighbors were well-informed and were offered several opportunities to provide input throughout the process. It was concluded that this neighbor did not appear to have attended the meetings and might have been just outside the measured parameter requiring engagement by the developer and City.

The city's master plan sessions are starting preliminary meetings. Barbara and a couple of board members are involved.

Administration: Still looking for prospective board members to fill out 3 mid- and late-term vacancies. Discussion took place as to what is wanted in a board member. Defining the association mission resurfaced as board membership possibilities turned toward the "persons" who might "best fit" and contribute to "the vision" in which the neighborhood wishes to pursue. Do the neighborhood master plan, association purpose and Heritage Hill's vision intertwine in their requirement for seeking forward-thinking board members with the initiative to lead in these efforts? Are the unfilled board seats as well as the seats of those transitioning off board at year's end to be filled in "Annual Meeting" setting? Should the board fill what seats can be filled at "Annual Meeting" and focus on filling any remaining seats once a long range plan is set in place? Many questions were asked. None were answered in this session.

Fundraising: A meeting of committee on 9/3/20 created a preliminary list of "possibilities" to pursue in 2021 including a physical Home Tour or a virtual Home Tour. Also, on-line auction, architectural tour, garden tour, plant sale, yard art sale, art/craft sale are being discussed .

Discussion ensued about "friend-raising" efforts to further community building efforts of the HHA including activities like movies in the park, pumpkin carving contest, Christmas (tree, house, yard) decorating contest . . . family-oriented events.

Realizing the playing field has changed and events have to be relevant to long- and short-term residents as well as youth, professionals, seniors, etc. More meetings of the fundraising and hospitality committees will take place to "flesh out" some of the more promising (both fund- AND friend-raising) events.

Community Engagement: Caroline Cook will be conducting a socially-distanced, mask-required walking tour of a select few blocks of Heritage Hill on the evening of October 6, this year's celebration of the National Night Out.

She will conduct a Fulton Street Cemetery tour on October 28.

There will be charges for both and participation numbers are limited.

No definite plans yet for the conducting of an "Annual Meeting." Exploring virtual presentation with participation capabilities (to ask questions, respond to presentation, etc.).

7. New Business: Board member John W. informed board of a "ticketed event" to showcase the renovation of 430 Madison SE by Kenowa Builders. No other information available.

8. Old Business: The neighborhood crime stats promised after August's meeting will be available soon.

9. Public Meeting Adjourned at 8:12pm.

Submitted by Tom Truesdale