

ANNUAL 2018 MEMBERS' MEETING

The 2018 Annual Members' Meeting, was held on Tuesday, December 11th, 2018 at 6:30pm at Forest Hill Presbyterian Church.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2018 MEETING:

Trustee Elections

Trustees for 2019 were elected by the members. For the list of 2019 trustees [CLICK HERE](#).

Speaker

Our speaker for the evening was Ken Kuehnle, the attorney from Columbus who we had engaged to provide an analysis of our covenants and opinion on whether, we could use any parts of the Ohio Planned Community Law (OPCL) in our governance (See below for more details). His analysis, which you can read in full [HERE](#), clearly established that FHHO does not qualify as an Ohio Planned Community. Despite a few technical difficulties, Mr Kuehnle was able to speak to us via FaceTime from Columbus, summarizing his professional background, the role he had played in working with the Ohio legislature while they were writing the 2010 Planned Community Law (OPCL), and several examples of case law over the subsequent 8 years in which HOAs, which did not qualify as planned communities based on their founding documents, had incorporated aspects of the OPCL into their bylaws and been successfully sued by members of the HOAs. He also discussed the reasons that our covenants do not allow us to qualify as a planned community and answered questions from the audience. He summarized by saying that his analysis of our covenants clearly establishes that our bylaws must be written according to ORC-1702, the chapter of the Ohio Revised Code for Non-Profits that FHHO has always used for its governance. After the meeting, many attendees, thanked the Board for having made arrangements to have Mr. Kuehnle as our speaker and expressed a renewed confidence in FHHO and the importance of its mission to Forest Hill. In several cases, these renewed votes of confidence were accompanied by generous contributions to FHHO.

Reports and Awards:

Other highlights of the meeting were approval of the **Minutes** of the last Annual Meeting. The association's Treasurer, Tony Rupcic had handed out the **Year's End Financial Statement** as attendees arrived. He pointed out that in addition to the routine expenditures, we had two rather large unusual expenses this year. One was \$2,000 for website costs, about \$1,500 more than usual. The website had not been functional since July 2017 since we no longer had the services of Laura Grebus, who had so generously developed the site and managed it in previous years. Thus, the extra costs were initially for an interim webmaster and then for the cost of training Jo Fox to take over basic management. The other unusual charge was \$2,500 for the legal opinion on the covenants to establish whether or not FHHO qualifies as an Ohio Planned Community. In response to a

question as to whether bids were obtained for services, Mr Rupcic responded that two bids were always obtained. Dr. Fox commented that although our budget is small and an external audit is not required, a previous Trustee had requested one. Based on this, we had obtained two bids and in early 2019 would be obtaining an external audit of our 2018 budget. The Treasurer summarized that despite our two unusual expenses, expenses this year were only about \$1,000 higher than our revenues so we were optimistic that we would end the year with a balanced budget, which after several very generous contributions made by members attending the meeting, was a goal that was achieved.

Sue Kenney then gave a dynamic presentation about the **Forest Hill Aging in Place Resource Guide** which she has developed together with Judy Charlick. Examples of information provided include places to call for transportation, utility problems, home repairs or home help, and even library book delivery and pick-up. Sue told a story about how she had visited one large chain and asked if they would deliver prescriptions to people who were unable to leave their homes or drive to pick them up - the answer was No. When she went to another chain and asked the same question she was told that they would deliver up to 3-prescriptions at a time. Tips such as these are documented in the resource. Sue and Judy are looking for residents to help them get this resource into the hands of every Forest Hill resident who could benefit from the information it contains, as well as spread information about it to other communities. Several organizations in both East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights, including Future Heights, which published an article on it in the December issue of the Heights Observer, have already received the resource with great enthusiasm. In addition to the benefits of the information it contains, Sue and Judy see distribution of the resource as a way of extending neighborliness and engaging community. You can download a copy of the Resource Guide [HERE](#).

Other reports included a summary provided by Dr. Mary Rice, **VP of membership**. This year we saw a record 60 sales, in part due to the movement of many of the previously bank-owned homes. Prices are also rising, with prices in the \$200,000 range not being uncommon.

This year, **contests and rewards for outstanding contributions** were reinstated and brought a sense of fun, appreciation, and energy to the meeting. Attractive certificates of appreciation, kindly created for us by Sharon Leary, were presented to several people who had been working behind the scenes, often entirely of their own initiative, to further the reputation, community spirit or mission of FHHO. One was given to Pete Grebus for his persistence during the years that it took to get "the Walden House" through all the foreclosure procedures to the point where, just a few days before the members meeting, the case finally reached tax foreclosure court and the land bank got possession of the house. Laura Grebus was acknowledged for the time she has put into in-depth research into legal and governmental issues pertinent to our community, making herself a valuable resource to residents who would like to understand differences between the different types of HOAs.

Jamain and Kesha Owen were acknowledged for the recognition that their renovation of the house at 16237 Forest Hills Blvd obtained from the Cuyahoga County Land bank has

brought to Forest Hill. This couple, who own a Rockefeller home on Wyatt obtained the house in April 2016, and despite both having demanding full-time careers they performed much of the work themselves, completing the project in October 2017. Jamain explained that they enjoyed the process of restoring a structure that others had written off and hoped that by doing so they might also stimulate an interest in other residents. He showed some striking before and after slides illustrating how they were able to salvage and restore the magnificent slate roof and the natural exterior facade and how they were able to salvage original windows while opening up the rooms to the outdoors. After sitting vacant for almost a decade this home sold in only one week at the asking price of \$175,000.

The renovation of this home by the Owens has brought much recognition to Forest Hill. Cleveland Heights named the restoration project as its 2017 Community Improvement Award "Historic Preservation" winner. It didn't stop there, in 2018, the couple heard that they had been honored by the Cleveland Restoration Society and the American Institutes of Architects by being one of the 12 recipients of awards for the most significant restoration projects in NE Ohio. Jamain accepted the award at their annual Celebration of Preservation ceremony at Playhouse Square. We are grateful to have such talented residents in Forest Hill who, like so many others, are committed to maintaining our homes and preserving the historic features that distinguish this community from many others.

Finally, awards were presented to the winners of the East Cleveland Forest Park Fall Photography Contest organized in collaboration with Dick Secor on behalf of the East Cleveland Park Association. First prize went to John Satola for a spectacular photo of the meadow. When the beautiful 16 x 14 acrylic print that had been made for John was held up it drew gasps of appreciation from all present. John reported that he had had to sit for 15 minutes until the sun was just right for the photo but Dick Secor responded that the result was perfection in every way and this was by far the best photo entered into the contest. John had needed to leave the meeting early so the print was accepted on his behalf by neighbor, Eda Daniel. Second prize went to Devany Carswell for showing the most artistic creativity in every one of her submitted photos; one in particular, was picked as showing the most artistic and creative talent and will be converted into a 14 x 10 acrylic print for her. Sharon Leary congratulated Devany on behalf of the contest organizers; Devany's deprecating and other humorous remarks as a powerpoint image of her prize photo was shown on the screen brought much laughter and applause as well as post-meeting comments about the sense of community and friendship that they felt had been brought back to FHHO by the events of the evening.