



# FOREST HILL HOME OWNERS INC.

February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Virtual meeting

Attending: Barbara Danforth, Gretchen Mettler, Bob Charlick, Ronald Ramsey, Jacqueline Kelly, Beryl Tishkoff, Tony Rucpic, Tom Winston, Ann Ghazy, and Sam Kohn

Excused: Mark Madland due to the birth of his son. Chris Hubbert

Gretchen called the meeting to order at 7:06.

The January minutes were approved as submitted. With kudos to the secretary for an excellent job

## **Treasurers report**

Tony anticipates a strong financial year for FHHO because of the reduction in tax liability approved by the county. He noted there were twelve contributions submitted so far, not all Trustees have donated yet. Multiple trustees noted their contributions are in transit.

## **Membership Committee**

Barbara reported that the committee met and strategized how to connect with residents and expand the committee membership. They decided to email all community residents and directly solicit residents that might be interested in joining the committee. After conversing with residents, Barbara explained the sentiments expressed by some residents regarding the authority of FHHO to enforce deed restrictions. There were also comments Barbara heard regarding the perceived unfair attention on upkeep of homeowner occupied homes while unoccupied homes sat vacant and unattended.

The committee discussed various strategies to include local business coupons in the new resident welcome packet, and considered how best to make it mutually advantageous for residents and local businesses. They are currently thinking through how best to communicate the preservation standards to new residents so no homeowner can "plead ignorance" when they are contacted by the Preservation Committee. Barbara expects the new welcome packets to be ready in two months' time.

Bob lauded Barbara's efforts and suggested that preservation and membership work together to accomplish both committees' goal.

## **Marketing and Communication**

Ann reported the committee hasn't yet met, but that she met with Barbara individually to discuss ways to revamp the FHHO website. They concluded the website is perhaps too wordy. Their goal is to streamline the information presented. Ann also noted that it would be important to have more variety of homes pictured on the website to better represent the variety of homes available in the neighborhood.

Gretchen concurred, encouraging trustees, because they live in various house styles to take pictures and submit them to Ann to put on the website.

Ann would also like to get more of the residents (pictures or testimonials or both?) on the website to highlight the people of Forest Hill not just the homes.

### **Preservation Committee**

Tom noted there aren't many applications right now. He wants to use this lull to try to get 500 houses visually inspected this year, the other roughly 500 next year, to identify how the committee may give special attention to homeowners who may need to address specific maintenance issues. Tom explained that the ultimate goal is to make the committee more focused on homeowner education and more proactive in the community.

Lee expressed some concern that residents might take exception to being approached by members of the committee with maintenance concerns. Tom clarified that this could look like a letter in the mail that notes a home might need a paint job, for example, and which presented some possible contractors to hire. Lee responded that perhaps a group information event would be more appropriate instead of singling out residents. Ron responded by saying this is one of many ways FHHO can fill the gaps left by the cities of CH and EC in recent years who have reduced their housing department staffs. Bob agreed. The Board continued to discuss the challenges and best approaches for pointing out the maintenance that needs to be done to maintain the property values of the community while not alienating or creating an adversarial relationship between residents and FHHO.

Jackie provided a personal example of the difficulties residents face with making major decisions regarding home upkeep. She shared bad experience with a roofer, and complained that after a significant investment, the problem was still not thoroughly resolved. Tom offered her advice about how to make the tear-off or repair decisions and assured her that he would follow up with the difficult roofer. Jackie appreciated the advice and support. This conversation provided a perfect demonstration of how valuable the expertise and efforts of the preservations committee is, can be, and should be for all Forest Hill residents.

### **Statement on Discrimination**

Barbara expressed discomfort with the statement as it was originally constructed because to her it seemed to imply that the now integrated neighborhood needed extra support from FHHO in order to be good stewards of their homes. The implication being that certain people may not be capable of home maintenance. Bob responded by explaining the intention of the original statement that was voted on and passed unanimously in the Fall does not address any particular group and according to him lays out the overarching goal and mission of FHHO.

Sam agreed with Bob's characterization and noted that the statement was indeed just words, but that words do matter. Tom added that the statement itself was more informational than anything else. Lee commented that the statement should have a clear purpose and must be followed by action to really matter. Gretchen noted that there are many community organizations that already try to address issues of discrimination and that FHHO should work to collaborate with them. Sam agreed to form a committee that would follow up this statement with action, Lee volunteered to work on this new committee. They agreed to further discuss the content of the statement and strategize how to follow up the statement with action.

**Announcements**

Barbara announced her candidacy for mayor of Cleveland Heights and spoke briefly about her background and objectives.

The next meeting will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of March, March 10 at 7 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37

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Sam Kohn, Secretary