



FOREST HILL HOME OWNERS INC.

March 11th, 2020

Blue Cottage 2419 Lee Blvd. Cleveland Hts, OH 44118

Attendance: Officers: Gretchen Mettler, President, Eda Daniel, Chair, Sam Kohn, Secretary, Tom Winston, Chair of Standards, Tony Rucpic, Treasurer.

Members: Tess Givens, Mark Madland, Beryl Tishkoff

Absent: Bob Charlick, Tricie James, Chris Hubbert

Gretchen called the meeting to order at 7:07.

Mark moved to approve the February 12, 2020 meeting minutes as amended, second by Tess. Approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Tony reported on the first month financials of 2020, he explained that FHHO received \$250 worth of permit fees from the bank for the property on Monticello, and the revenues, currently at \$1992.50, were low compared to past years. Tony then reported on a handful of other minor fees FHHO paid such as printing, website maintenance, and legal fees.

In response to the low contribution numbers, The Board generally discussed how to increase contributions. The topic of publishing names of contributors, a past practice, was brought up for discussion. Mark commented that staying anonymous hasn't been an option in the past. Gretchen stated that every other organization does give the option for anonymous donations. Tony mentioned that other organization do the same, and publish all names.

Standards Committee name change, revenue sources, elimination of fees, transfer donations

Gretchen requested an update from the Standards Committee. Tom reported that they are working with a homeowner on a front porch repair and addressing overspray on a new paint job. Additionally, the Standards Committee was satisfied with the vinyl siding put on house being renovated on Chelsea.

Tom reported that after some reflection, he is suggesting renaming the Standards Committee to the Forest Hill Preservation Committee. The justification for the new name is that preservation emphasizes the value of the neighborhood's historic aesthetic and is less intimidating than the Standards Committee. Overall, The Board responded positively to the new name. The change could not happen immediately. The Board came to the consensus to recommend that the Bylaws Committee make the name change official.

Tom then brought up the issue of charging fees for permits. Gretchen asked why fees were instituted

initially. Tony reported that fees were implemented 7 or 8 years ago. This included permit and transfer fees. Tony explained that FHHO still collects fees, though they cannot force anyone to pay the fee, and last year the total collection of fees was \$320. Eda remarked that fees caused a great deal of issues for a relatively small amount of revenue, and in her experience has led to several negative interactions. Sam asked what the Standards committee spends the bulk of its time on, Tom explained that properties that are rented or homes that are being flipped require the most scrutiny.

The Board continued a broader discussion of fees and their affect on the neighborhood. Gretchen noted that if fees were eliminated, those revenues could be made up in other ways, such as a raffle or contributions from more members. Tony added that many of his neighbors haven't contributed in years. Eda commented that FHHO should emphasize that it is a volunteer organization with a specific mission, and in that way could more successfully increase contributions instead of charging permit fees. She suggested permits should still be collected, so that the Standards Committee can continue to preserve the historic features of Forest Hill homes, but not collect fees.

Mark moved to abolish all permit fees taken by Standards Committee. The motion was seconded by Eda. The board voted 7 in favor, 1 opposed.

The conversation then focused on the transfer fees FHHO collects. Tony explained that when he is able to communicate with title companies, FHHO is often able to collect transfer fees. Mark suggested, keeping in line with the spirit of the fee changes that just occurred, home buyers should be asked to make a transfer contribution instead of a fee.

Sam asked the group what the best method for fund raising is moving forward, considering the effort to move away from the terminology of fees. The Board discussed generally other changes that could be made in the future to further the mission of making FHHO more inclusive and less punitive. Specifically, trustees commented that FHHO forms should be changed to reflect the changes instituted presently, and might consider relaxing other strict limitations in the original deeds, e.g. vegetables gardens and chicken coops.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Tony moved to change transfer fee to suggested transfer donation, Seconded by Tom. The Board affirmed the change with unanimous consent.

Garage Sale, Fund Raising, Blue Cottage Maintenance

Gretchen suggested that FHHO should not attempt to host the garage sale this year for two reasons: there is an illness going around and no one has shown interest in leading the effort. Eda concurred stating that the garage sale wasn't FHHO's responsibility. Mark wondered about how FHHO should address the topic if residents inquire about it. The Board agreed that FHHO would take a hands off approach to the garage sale, if it happens, this year.

Beryl presented her ongoing fund raising efforts, particularly regarding FHHO branded merchandise. She explained that Daffy Dan's provided quotes on a number of items including caps, magnets, safety vests, T-shirts, pens, and sports bottles. Beryl suggested that a small bag of merchandise could be a powerful way to say thank you for residents who volunteer or contribute. Additionally, she reported that Mitchell's would create sponsored candy bars. After a brief discussion, The Board suggested ordering 50 colored T-shirts quoted at a price of \$8.00 each to be sold at future events. The Board agreed that for a price of \$12.00, other options for safety vests should be considered first before proceeding.

Discussion then shifted to the Blue Cottage, which needs significant repairs. Tony recalled that when FHHO considered repairing the Blue Cottage last, estimates were around \$20,000. The cost included addressing the drainage problems which is most pressing in the view of some Trustees. The building could also be demolished or sold by FHHO. Beryl suggested pursuing a grant from Rockefeller Foundation to help restore the Blue Cottage.

Other Business

Mark reported on the status of the FHHO database. He explained that it is acceptable the way it is, but it lacks some features that would be useful. Mark stated that there are database products designed for small organizations, he is not sure which is the best but will continue to investigate the matter.

Tess investigated the FHHO Facebook profile and explained that the last post was made in April, 2017. She did not know who set it up or who still has access to the account. Tony added that Jeff Dross set it up. Tess explained that it would be helpful to be able to integrate all FHHO social media pages with the website.

Mark explained the preliminary plans for the FHHO garbage pickup. The focus would be the main roads in Forest Hill and volunteers will be provided with bags and gloves.

Gretchen reported that the listening sessions needed to be officially cancelled due to Covid-19. Residents were notified of the cancellation through Evite.

The next meeting of The Board will be held May 13th at 7:00 p.m. virtually through zoom. An invitation to the meeting and agenda will be circulated ahead of time.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:31.

Sam Kohn, Secretary