

Lower Merion Historical Society
Executive Board Meeting
Thursday, September 10, 2015
The Lower Merion Academy

Present: Jerry Francis, Leon Levine, Perry Hamilton, Ken Brier, Martha Moffat, Joanne Murray, Louis Barson, Patrick Doyle and Carole Strickland

Excused Absences: Max Buten, Barbara McElroy and Pete Hoskins

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the June 18th Board Meeting were unanimously approved as revised.

President Francis reported that the Board currently has twelve Directors as a result of one death (Steve Selinger) and two recent resignations (John Hepp and immediate Past President Ted Goldsborough). A quorum for this meeting requires seven Directors and there are nine present.

The Nominating Committee currently has eleven potential candidates for future Directors to fill the vacancies and the upcoming Class of 2018.

Treasurer's Report: Leon Levine presented the Treasurer's Report, including a current Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Statement. Net income for 2015 is approximately \$8,200, as of August 12th. Almost \$5,000 in membership dues has been received; Treasurer Levine stated he would like to see it a little higher. Rental income from Cynwyd Station is coming in as expected. Down the road, the Society should think about building up a capital fund. Ken Brier moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Perry Hamilton and unanimously approved.

President Francis reported the Society's 990 not-for-profit tax form was submitted, and the Society has been approved by the Commonwealth of PA as a recognized charitable organization.

Financial Review: The Financial Review report for calendar year 2014 ("Review of Fiscal Year 2014 Records"), having been distributed in the information handouts at the beginning of the meeting, was briefly discussed. Reviewers Perry Hamilton and Carole Strickland thanked Treasurer Levine and Accountant Gary Kay for all their help in providing the records and answering the questions necessary to complete the review. Finances were confirmed to be in order. Given the complexity of the various programs recently undertaken and expected in the future, two suggestions were made by the reviewers: (1) specific accounting codes or subcodes be assigned to each individual project and utilized for all income and expenditures to better enable tracking with the specific project, and (2) the Treasurer provide quarterly "at a glance" financial reports for each on-going project. Treasurer Levine agreed with these recommendations.

Lou Barson moved the acceptance of the Financial Review report. The motion was seconded by Joanne Murray and unanimously approved.

Strategic Planning: (change in order of Agenda) President Francis explained the steps

taken with regard to further exploration of the key man insurance idea previously discussed. After all the required information was submitted by our insurance broker, Stellwagen, to the various companies, the least expensive rate to obtain \$100,000 coverage was still over \$3,000. For \$50,000 in coverage, the rate was over \$2,000. For the \$1,366/year we thought would be the premium range, we cannot buy anything. Ken Brier recommended foregoing the key man insurance, for now, and a discussion took place on the issue. Carole Strickland moved the issue be tabled until the January meeting. The motion was seconded by Joanne Murray and unanimously approved.

President Francis was then asked to leave the room and the Board went off the record to discuss a personnel matter, including the draft Consulting Agreement prepared by the Society's solicitor. The Board was subsequently called back on the record by Vice President Ken Brier who then made the following motion: That the Lower Merion Historical Society accept the consulting agreement contract for Gerald Francis effective October 1, 2015 through December 31, 2016. Monthly compensation will be in the amount of \$650.00. This motion was seconded and unanimously approved. Ken Brier will arrange for the final version of the Consulting Agreement with the Society's solicitor. President Francis then returned to chair the meeting.

Perry Hamilton then presented an overview of TelVue and how the Society might use it to enhance our program and communication abilities. TelVue is a cloud-based CMS system. To use TelVue Connect to set-up a basic studio at the Academy would cost the Society approximately \$10,000. A full studio would cost approximately \$16,000. There are additional costs for storing (in the cloud) and distributing the product, including a one-time fee of \$12,000 and monthly or annual fees to maintain access to product, thereafter. The Society could generate income to support these costs by seeking advertisement. The main purpose of doing this would be to get LMHS' content out in modern technological, including video, format(s). Joanne Murray observed that the Society's YouTube offerings had only 263 viewers, which is not conducive to advertiser worthy sponsorship. She suggested that LMHS needs to grow the concept first, doing videos on our own to increase viewership and see what new content (versus current recycled content) will do. TelVue could be considered "a nice end-game", but we'd have to "move the ball down the field, first".

Database Administration Review/Newsletter: Joanne Murray reported that over 1,000 readers receive the newsletter each month.

There has been no response to the posting at Villanova University for a volunteer webmaster for the Society. We've had 212,244 website visits over the last twelve months (see "Usage Statistics for lowermerionhistory.org – Summary by Month" in the Directors' hand-outs), and 1300-1400 Facebook hits when new pictures go up. One or two pictures are being posted each month.

Education: President Francis reported on the List of Lectures and Events, copies of which were in the Directors' hand-outs, as scheduled over the next two and a half months.

Library: President Francis thanked Ted Goldsborough, Max Buten and Bob McCormack for handling the amazing amount of research questions that have been coming in.

Membership: Pat Doyle reported that 99 second notices for 2015 membership/dues went out on June 10th. It was decided to stay with the “old way” of doing things for that mailing. However, in the next membership cycle, they intend to come up with a new plan to bring in more subscribers/donations. Joanne Murray suggested adding a PayPal button to the website to enable donations.

Programs: President Francis presented a proposal from Prichard Design & History Studio for a booklet commemorating the November 1st rededication of the plaque honoring the Georgia contingent of the Continental Army which was originally installed by the DAR in 1919 at St. John’s Episcopal Church on Levering Mill Road. West Laurel Hill Cemetery is donating the pedestal made from Georgia granite. The Georgia Historical Society has sent a bag of Georgia red clay. Carole Strickland moved and Joanne Murray seconded that we approve payment in the amount of \$300.00 for Pritchard’s proposal. The motion was unanimously passed.

Property: President Francis reported a recent incident at the Lower Merion Academy building when the smoke sensor in the attic activated. The firemen had to break in through the fire door because they did not have ready access to the key. Thankfully, the alarm activation was only a malfunction, and lessons were learned. The school district will replace the door and arrange for a lock box for an emergency key.

SEPTA sent a thank you letter to Cynwyd Station Café and Tea Room owner Sadie Francis for her accommodation of their Signals Department staff during a recent project. The letter further stated they “appreciate” having her “business located at the Cynwyd Station”. President Francis also reported a false alarm at the Cynwyd Station and stated the sensors there have been cleaned.

The Lower Merion Academy Board of Trustees will meet in the Academy Building on September 29th.

Public Relations: President Francis noted LMHS is doing shows on LMTV. He was also recently quoted in “Spoke” magazine in an article on the Manayunk Bridge/Cynwyd Trail. Additionally, “Main Line Today” magazine has contacted Jerry about doing another article.

Old Business:

President Francis reported the proposed Township “Ordinance to Designate Historic Objects” (milestones, keystone markers and street signs) is expected to go before the Board of Commissioners in October.

The Knox Home is no longer under development consideration by Mr. Houser. Historic rehabilitation/reuse developer Mac Brand may now have the property under contract, which should be excellent news for those wanting this Class 1 historic property preserved.

The proposed Lower Merion Preservation Trust is currently on hold.

President Francis gave a brief update on the rescue efforts for the Egyptian (Bala) Theater.

President Francis showed a framed smaller version of the historic commemoration signage for the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad intended for Cynwyd Station Park. As of now, the unveiling of the new display will probably occur at the November 15th Fall Festival with collaboration of the Friends group.

Carole Strickland reported on the September 9 Radnor HARB hosted Amtrak Zoo to Paoli Transmission Line Project meeting. Currently, it's intended the Bryn Mawr substation will be demolished. A new substation will be built with the same type of cladding material, color and texture. The sign on the substation may be donated to the local municipality (LM Township), but the Township has, yet, to be included on those plans, and the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The MOA is being revised to include the acknowledgement of historic structures in the project right of way that are not subject to change. Other issues to be addressed include preservation of tree canopy/screening, dissemination and staggering of work schedules to allow neighbors to know what's going on and to get some sleep, and designation of a contact for people to call regarding problems. The catenary poles will be lower at approximately 60' (with poles at bridges higher) than previously contemplated. No guy wires are necessary. Poles will be galvanized metal and are unable to be effectively painted. Construction is not anticipated to start until 2017 and funding still has to be secured. The Society has the contact information for the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum Archives Manager, if it wants to participate in any preservation related photos/materials.

New Business:

President Francis provided brochures of The Lower Merion Society for the Detection and Prosecution of Horse Thieves and the Recovery of Stolen Horses and talked about its connection with the Academy Building. They are trying to keep the Society alive. The Lower Merion Historical Society now has their Minutes and Ann Bagley has kindly organized them in folders. President Francis intends to write their history during his vacation.

The Meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Carole Strickland for Barbara McElroy

Our Next Executive Board Meeting is
Thursday, January 14, 2016
at 7:30 PM at the Academy