



BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 7:00 pm
Meeting conducted virtually via ZOOM platform

MINUTES

Present: EXECUTIVE: Patricia Wallace, Geoff Dawe, John Green, Anna Kroeplin.
DIRECTORS: Peter Styrmo, Ronen Grunberg, Alan Lambert, Jeff Thom.
STAFF: Kathleen Vahey- Curator
REGRETS: John Bare- Landscape Committee Chair, James Hoyes - Facility Maintenance
Committee Chair

1. CALLED TO ORDER: 7:02 p.m.

President, Patricia Wallace, welcomed everyone to the virtual Board meeting and called it to order. She thanked Sport Aurora for sharing their ZOOM platform to conduct this meeting virtually.

2. DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: 2020-AHS-046

Moved by John, second by Alan: THAT the agenda be approved as presented. **CARRIED.**

4. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: September 14, 2020

MOTION: 2020-AHS-047

Moved by Anna, second by Ronan: THAT the September 14, 2020 Minutes be approved. **CARRIED.**

5. AURORA FACTOID (Alan)

Alan presented the fascinating history of a light rail transit system that stopped in Aurora at the site of the former TC's Burgers location. It ran for 30 years, ending the service in the 1930's.

Jeff Thom will be presenting the next fun factoid at the November meeting.

6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Patricia Wallace:

Patricia was contacted by Dawn Gallagher-Murphy of the local PC Party Riding Association who is interested in promoting Hillary House in a video to be used at a Riding Associate virtual fundraiser to be held in November. The video will include arts and culture organizations within the riding. It would include a disclaimer stating the Aurora Historical Society is politically neutral.

MOTION: 2020-AHS-048

Moved by Patricia, second by Geoff: THAT the proposal from the PC riding association be approved to include Hillary House for their fundraiser video that will include an apolitical disclaimer. **CARRIED.**

7. TREASURER'S REPORT – Geoff Dawe

As result of the Aurora Historical Society being able to take advantage of a couple of Federal Government COVID-19 relief programs, our current finances are in relatively good shape. He further reported:

- There is concern for the 2021 budget, as there may not be as much Federal and Provincial government support for financial relief caused by the COVID pandemic.
- The Canadian Emergency Wage Supplement (CEWS) grant was received.
- Bell Canada has reduced the office costs, thanks to Julie's negotiations.
- AHS's corporate credit card should be received next week.
- Patricia and Geoff have been working through the procedures for an online payment processing option which will ease some bill payments (Bell, Enbridge, etc.)

Discussion ensued on the Federal government's COVID loan/grant opportunity (CEBA – Canadian Emergency Business Account) for small businesses that have been impacted by the COVID shutdown to apply for up to \$40,000 to cover 2020 cost. The government is offering a condition that if the loan is paid back by December 2022, the applicant can keep \$10,000. Pros and cons were discussed.

MOTION: 2020-AHS-049

Moved by Geoff, second by Peter: THAT AHS apply for the Canadian Emergency Business Account loan. **CARRIED.**

MOTION: 2020-AHS-050

Moved by Geoff, second by Anna: THAT the AHS Board approve the Treasurer's Report. **CARRIED.**

8. COVID PANDEMIC – Operational Review

Patricia reported that low participation levels in programs and special events were directly related to COVID restrictions. Fundraising efforts have also been compromised, such as cancelling the Hillary House Ball this year.

She pointed out that staff and volunteers have had to use additional hours to prepare safety measures for public events due to the COVID pandemic. The Curator was assured that if she recommended to shut down operations of Hillary House due to safety precautions, the Board would stand behind her.

It was agreed that no further programs or Christmas will be planned for November and December, however, personal tours can still be conducted and the gift shop can be accessed by appointment only.

9. CURATOR'S REPORT

Kathleen reviewed her report that was previously distributed to the Board and highlighted the following:

- The new street banners have been erected that identify Hillary House as a museum.
- She submitted a damage report on a cracked skylight (caused by a walnut tree on the property). It was noted that walnuts were a hazard during the recent outdoor Victorian Tea event.
- Social media posts have received a high number of positive responses, such as a fun factoid that was viewed by over 6,000 people.
- The Victorian Harvest Tea event was sold out with 44 guests and 2 seating's (COVID restrictions in place). Kathleen thanked Board members for volunteering. Patricia thanked Kathleen and her volunteers for doing a great job running this event.
- The last Speaker Series event went well, and the next one is sold out. Community partners will be sent the poster for the November event to promote it.
- Speakers for the 2021 Speaker Series events are being organized. So far, Ian Proudfoot has been booked, a Pianist and an expert on WW2. Patricia asked Board members to volunteer to take turns to introduce the speakers each month.

10. FACILITY MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE REPORT: (James Hoyes)

Some highlights of the written report that was sent to the Board last week are below:

- Work on the Gift Shop has been completed and it is operational.
- Will do minor repairs and projects throughout the winter.

The Board thanked James for his ongoing work and dedication to the Hillary House.

11. LANDSCAPING COMMITTEE REPORT – (John Bare)

Some highlights of the written report that was sent to the Board previously are below:

- The front walkway repairs have been completed.
- John donated and installed an additional 10 garden lights. There are 22 in total in the front and back.
- Bales of hay and pumpkin decorations will be set up before the Victorian Tea event.
- **Clean-up Day is Saturday, October 24, from 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.** All are welcome to help. (See Julie)

The Board thanked John for his ongoing work and dedication to the Hillary House.

12. RESTORATION WORKING GROUP: (Alan Lambert)

As directed by the Board, ERA Architects has been retained. A scope of work assessment will be completed shortly. Once received and approved by AHS Board, the Ontario Heritage Trust and the Town of Aurora will be advised of the proposed work.

13. HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE: (John Green)

John expanded on the following topics that were sent to the Board in the agenda package:

1. Concern, re: Aurora Train Station building;
2. Heritage designation for 28 Wellington Street;
3. Heritage Permit Application for 31 Catherine Ave- Metrolinx is concerned.
4. Delisting of 1625-1675 St. John's Sideroad – structure destroyed before designation completed.
5. Ontario Barn Preservation – rules & regulations to ensure barns are not destroyed due to lack of use.

Jeff asked for an update on the Town's purchase and intentions with several Yonge Street properties.

John will get an update at the next HAC meeting to bring to the AHS Board.

MOTION: 2020-AHS-051

Moved by Geoff, second by Jeff: THAT all of the reports (#6-#13) be approved.

CARRIED.

14. SPECIAL PROJECTS

a. Fence Repairs – Status

The Town has hired a contractor to paint the fence at their cost. Scheduled to begin next week.

Patricia reported that Parks Canada recently inspected the fence to determine the best course of action. The representative confirmed that Parks Canada is in receipt of historical documents where they take responsibility for the fence. No time frame given for more information.

b. Strategic Plan

Anna and Alan are working on a draft of the Strategic Plan for the Board to review before the November meeting. It will be finalized to present to Council in mid-November.

15. FUNDRAISING REPORT

Trillium Grant

The deadline for the start date of the approved project (pathway) has been extended. Amending the scope of the project to something other than the pathway is being explored as another funding source for the pathway is in development. Other projects related to structural repairs are being considered for submission. More specifics are required to submit a re-allocation request. The Restoration Working Group will be consulted to assist.

Fundraising Plan – 2021

A schedule of fundraising events for 2021 is in development. Patricia recommended hiring an experienced event planner for the Hillary House Ball. The Board was in agreement. The hiring process will commence in January. Other fundraising avenues are being explored including funding and grants from all levels of government and private foundations.

Private Foundation

Geoff shared information on a private foundation grant opportunity. After some discussion, the Board agreed that AHS should apply for it.

Strategies were discussed on the amount that would be required to fully repair and maintain Hillary House. Geoff suggested a tri-party option to raise a large amount, that would include the Town grant, Provincial and Federal grants and private donors.

16. NEW BUSINESS:

The next Board meeting will be dedicated to review AHS bylaws, which will allow enough time to finalized them for approval at the 2021 AGM. Jeff will send out the original bylaws and the proposed revisions to the Board. Patricia noted that to dedicate most of the next meeting to the bylaws, all other Board reports need to be in writing for distribution before the November Board meeting.

17. ADJOURNMENT – 8:55 p.m.

MOTION: 2020-AHS-052

Moved by John, second by Ronan: THAT the AHS Board meeting be adjourned at 8:55 p.m. **CARRIED.**

18. NEXT BOARD MEETING DATE: - Monday, November 9, 2020 at 7 p.m.