

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER LANSING
MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
Monday, September 12th, 2016
Creys Building

President Bill Castenier called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Present: Valerie Marvin, Anne Wilson, Zig Olds, Bob Rose, Harry Emmons, Tim Kaltenbach, Joan Bauer and Ron Emery.

Absent: Jesse Lasorda, Mary Kwas, and Jacob McCormick

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the 3 previous meetings of May 2nd, July 12th, and the annual meeting of June 9th were presented and reviewed. On Val's motion seconded by Joan all three were unanimously approved with the spelling of "Insty-Prints" corrected in the third line of the Treasurers' report in the May 22nd minutes.

2. Treasurer's Report:

Tim presented a written Treasurer's report. (See attached) which shows that the General Fund balance as of 8TH IS \$3,027.59, and the Museum Fund balance at \$75,501.84. Tim reported that the "Whatcha Got" fundraiser raised \$1200; the walking tours netted \$642. On motion by Joan, seconded by Ron the report was accepted and placed on file unanimously.

3. Book and Paper Show October 3rd

Bill asked for volunteers to man the HSGL booth at this show on October 3rd. Several volunteered.

4. Walking Tour Recap

Five were held this summer, REO town, Washington Ave. Oak Park, MSU, and Moore's Park. All were well attended. The next tour will be Sunday, September 18th at the Riverside Cemetery in Okemos. Ideas for next year include North Capitol Avenue, Genesee Neighborhood, the Capitol Bldg, and maybe some Church tours.

5. Lansing Has Fun Exhibit

This exhibit, in City Hall will continue through October. Bill asked for volunteers to help disassemble it to make way for another function at City Hall. Several volunteered.

6. Future Programming

Future programs include the Cemetery Tour (9/18), 50 Years of Journalism with Berle Swartz (9/29) at CADL (this one to be taped), Trains, Planes, and automobiles. The Trains program will be held October 8th at the Library of Michigan. The Planes program date and location is being negotiated with CADL. The automobile program is also to be determined with Stephen Lehto.

Craig Whitford may present a program *about Ty Cobb (Bill wasn't it really about Babe Ruth?)*

7. **Next Exhibit- The Year 1937**

We are planning on a new exhibit to highlight the year 1937 in Lansing focusing on the General Strike of that year in Lansing. We will display movies, books, politicians, and wearing apparel from that year. We will seek to close Michigan Avenue down for the main program on June 2nd next year, and place exhibits in stores, union halls, etc.

Other exhibits and programs will include an REO Olds fundraiser September 22nd, a Delta Township Walk September 21st, and a State of Michigan Museum exhibit on "Modernism" on October 7th highlighting a book written by Susan Bandy.

8. Review of Cooley Haze House

8. **The Cooley Haze House**

Bill circulated a copy of the CAP Report of June 2014 that described the condition of and estimated the costs of refurbishing the building as a museum. Val spoke to Lori Sipes former head of the Women's Hall of Fame. Sipes is now with MSU. The estimated costs approach \$330,000. This should be looked at in the context of the factors that were described as necessary in an "Ideal Museum" as circulated, by Zig and others on e-mail.

At the last meeting, Mayor Bernero asked us to make a decision not based on money because he could "sponsor" a capital campaign to raise the money. Joan noted that it would really be the continuing costs of maintenance that would be the big challenge.

Several noted the need for constant sources of money like the \$300K to \$600K Granger gives to the Boys and Girls Clubs, and LCC. Bill also noted that Midland had its own museum that was established after a \$7M grant. Even with that it was only able to open three days a week because of maintenance and operational costs.

Val cautioned against having the structure, like the Cooley Haze house becoming an "event space" rather than a museum or an historical repository. Thus, the question would be could we continue to support the museum operation after the house is refurbished. Val noted three things about the site:

- 1) It does have an event space to draw people to events and exhibits but can only seat 30
- 2) Very little exhibit space. Could not even hold our current exhibit cases.
- 3) There is no potential for foot traffic given its solitary location.

Bob likened our situation to Iosco County that set up in an old house and have been able to continue to support it. He asks if we have met with the "movers and shakers" who can provide funding? Such people include the Greater Lansing Arts Council, or Bob Tresise of LEAP to see what grants are available.

Joan noted that we "have nothing to sell." Maybe we don't even really need a building. After all, the only thing the Cooley Haze house has that we could use is an office for an Executive Director and its old. We haven't done a good job of aggressively selling our need for a museum. First we need to decide what it is that we want. Then get a consultant to help develop the "action plan". We need to pull interested contributors into a strategic planning committee.

Zig and Anne both want to get some wealthy benefactors behind our plan.
Harry thinks that we could spend the \$330K to refurbish the Cooley Haze house and still not get what we want.

In the end we have two basic questions still to answer:

1. Do we really want a museum?
2. Do we really want a maintenance responsibility?

The consensus is that the Cooley Haze house is not what we want and we need to tell the Mayor that...diplomatically. Bill, Tim, Joan, and Zig agreed to tell the Mayor that given our goals the Cooley Haze house will not work. and NOT lack of money.

9. Adjournment

Harry moved to adjourn at 8:36; Joan seconded and motion passed unanimously. According to the schedule from November 2015 the next meeting is to be held Monday, November 7th.

Respectfully submitted

Ron Emery

Secretary

October 28th, 2016