

Historic Wooster Square Association, Inc.



**Board Meeting
September 28, 2022
6:00-7:00pm via Zoom**

Minutes

Present: Sara Aburumi, Cordalie Benoit, Edward Dunar, Sarah Greenblatt, Ellen Keane, Barbara Lamb, Charlie Murphy, Charlotte Murphy, Tamara Munoz, Bonnie Rosenberg, Cheryl Szczarba

New Officers

Cordalie welcomed all and asked for the election of new officers. She proposed: Sarah Greenblatt, President; Edward Dunar, Vice President; Sara Aburumi, Secretary; Keith Lorch as Treasurer; and Cordalie Benoit as Immediate Past President, Ex-Officio on Executive Committee. Charlotte Murphy seconded the nominations. The Board unanimously approved the slate.

Minutes

Sarah asked that the minutes of the August 24, 2022 Meeting be approved, Edward seconded the proposal. With no changes the Board unanimously approved the Minutes.

Treasurer's Report

In Keith's absence, Sarah shared the Treasurer's report, sharing there was only one expense in August related to the Cherry Blossom Celebration UHaul rental, with bank statement documenting that expense. Sarah proposed that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Sara Aburumi seconded and the Board unanimously accepted the Report.

State Funding Update & Financial Policies Approval

Sarah shared that there is no further update from the state. She proposed that the Board approve amended Financial Policies, updated on 8.27.22 when sent to the State for review. Cordalie seconded the proposal. The Board unanimously approved the amended Financial Policies. Ellen mentioned that she knows an attorney who might be able to help us understand federal expectations regarding required federal financial literacy training for the full Board or the Executive Committee.

HWSA Interest Areas Updates & Leads

Barbara asked how our Interest Areas were identified. Sarah explained that they were identified prior to the Pandemic – perhaps 2018 – and have been discussed at meetings over the past two years. Cheryl shared that she envisioned we have liaisons with key City organizations who would become familiar with their efforts and report back to the

Board/Association. Cordalie shared that the HWSA might also be seen as a voice in the City representing our neighborhood and community, and that we might want to take a more active role in talking about issues impacting the neighborhood at our meetings and consider whether we want to have an opinion about particular issues – or not. There was a general discussion about whether these interest areas actually include broader issues like the environment or infrastructure (e.g. sidewalk repairs needed, trees being taken down, concrete vs grass being planned on some properties, pedestrian safety, plug-ins for electric cars in WS). Edward shared that our survey from last year asked neighbors about interest areas that need addressing – and that we could do an updated survey if we want to develop a vision and strategy for how we prioritize our efforts.

Sarah suggested we get updates and then make some decisions about next steps related to interest areas.

- **Membership** – Cheryl reported that we continue to have new members; she is drafting a flyer to share with new developments to engage new members for HWSA and WSW – wants to create a QR Code for each organization that neighbors can use to join or sign up.
- **Communications** – Charlotte M and Sarah updated the Board on the rebuilding of our website with a new host. Barbara suggested we send the drop down menu to the Board for review and that we engage in beta testing before we go live. Cordalie suggested that Charlotte Eliscu may be interested in writing the updates that frequently are needed to the website as well as the quarterly newsletter to our members that can also be posted on the website.
- **Parks and Trees Upkeep** – Charlie shared the original HWSA focus had been on the trees in the WS Park. Back in 2018 the HWSA paid for pruning of the cherry trees around the park, while the City paid for maintenance on the trees within the Park. Barbara raised concerns about tree growth and tree root growth throughout the neighborhood and how in wanting to redo her driveway, the City Tree Ward/City Plan Office suggested she just cut away the roots under the driveway, which may or may not kill the trees. She also complained that with her neighbors taking down trees and planning for concrete parking lots, there will be lack of shade and water absorption consequences for ours and surrounding neighborhoods. Cordalie suggested we might want to advocate for an ordinance requiring that driveways be of a permeable surface. Sarah suggested that if there were a HWSA liaison to Parks and Public Works about these issues, we might reach solutions more effectively.
- **Neighborhood Upkeep** – Sarah explained that this is an area where we in the past have partnered with our Alder who organized neighborhood clean-ups in the fall and spring – parks, small green spaces, and streets. Charlotte Eliscu shared that Alder Cupo is working on plans for a Fall 2022 Cleanup of our parks.
- **Historic Preservation & Neighborhood Development** – There were many opinions about the role, function and effectiveness of the current Historic District Commission and that they do not make it easy for homeowners in the historic district to make changes needed to their homes. Charlie wants to abolish it, others wondered if it

couldn't be improved. Cheryl suggested we check with the other two historic districts in New Haven to see if they also have issues with the HDC (Quinnipiac and City Point).

Next Steps

- Cordalie suggested we form a sub-committee or task force to review a proposal the Board might discuss about its role in working with or not working with the HDC around WS concerns/needs. Charlie and Barbara agreed to work with Cordalie. Barbara agreed to send the state 2010 HDC Guide for review by the sub-committee.
- Edward suggested we might want to develop a set of general principles as a yardstick by which we measure a healthy neighborhood to guide the HWSA in whether or how it takes positions on neighborhood concerns. Sarah agreed to talk with Edward about how to conceptualize the process of building our vision, values, principles.

Alder Updates

No Alders were present

Other Business

- Pumpkin Decorating on October 29 - 3:30-5:30pm in WS Park. Keith is organizing this and will need help. A flyer will be developed to post and send around.
- Next Meeting – October 26, 2022 at 6pm via zoom.

Adjourned at 7pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah B. Greenblatt, President