



Skaneateles Library Association

Board of Directors

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

Supporting Our Mission

To inspire learning, enrich lives, and connect our community

Realizing Our Vision

To be the cultural and informational hub of a vibrant, thriving community by creating spaces and experiences that are welcoming, enriching, and sustainable

Present: President Susanne Guske, Vice President Dave Hempson, Secretary Meghann Sandak, Treasurer Maura Molnar. **Trustees:** Katie Armijo, Karen Bedard, Kathryn Carlson, Andrew Hagen, Kristin LaBeau, Bob Lotkowicz, Paige Lynch, Steve McClintic, Amy Roller. **Staff:** Library Director Nickie Marquis, Assistant Director and Adult Services Librarian Andrea Snyder.

Absent: Manny Arroyo, Ralph DeMasi, Erin McCormack, Larry Palmieri, Stephen Thomas.

Members of the Public: Diane Fellerman and Paula Conan.

Call to order: 6:30 p.m. by President Guske.

Approval of the Minutes

President Guske called for comments on the May regular meeting minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

President's Report

May has been a particularly busy month for staff and trustees. Conversations regarding the separation of the Barrow Gallery and the Skaneateles Library Association are progressing. The Executive team continues to meet monthly to consider reserves and upcoming expenses. We have been working to expand our committees and have been bringing on new members. An increase to our public funding was approved for a second consecutive year with 626 out of 922 constituents voting in favor of the increase.

In terms of fundraising for the new building, we have hired Mary Morrissey Kerwick to lead the capital campaign effort. We hosted two events in the same day, the first being a lunch session with State Senator Rachel May. Days before the meeting we learned that we had received a \$500,000 CREST Grant through her office to help fund the project. Later that evening we hosted an event at the Skaneateles Country Club for prospective donors to meet the architects and shared preliminary design concepts. Susanne acknowledged the many folks who worked to make this event a success including the Building committee, the Communications Committee, and the Fundraising Committee. We continue to put a lot of time and effort into following up with attendees.

Andrea worked on an application for a National Endowment for the Humanities grant for another \$500,000. The Grants and Foundation team have been working hard to put grant packages together so that we can be very responsive to new opportunities.

Susanne reminded Trustees that the Annual Book Sale will be held Thursday, July 6th through Sunday, July 9th. This will be the first sale on the Fennell Street site so we are working to celebrate the significance of the moment by sprucing up the site with flowers, are considering food and drink sales of some kind, etc. Dave is working on evening out the parking lot in preparation for the event.

Trustees should have received an invitation to an OCPL Trustees Zoom workshop that will be held this Thursday at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom. The training is a follow up from a recent session on censorship and will dig deeper into the role of trustees when issues arise.

Library Director's Report

The Story Walk is now up at Austin Park for families to enjoy. Mary Beth was recently awarded a Champions Grant from the Literacy Coalition of Onondaga County. She will be recognized at a press conference at United Way of Central New York later this week. Her proposed Parent University will offer a six session series for parents and caregivers that will focus on the science of reading and teaching reading using decodable books. We have shared the news with the school district and they are excited about the prospect of getting involved in this initiative.

Andrea demonstrated how to use the Talking Book and Braille Library, which we can access thanks to a partnership with the NYS Library in Albany. Patrons with reading disabilities, vision impairments, etc. can utilize the program. Nickie and Andrea are both qualified to certify eligibility for the program. After registering, a patron will get a call from the library asking what kinds of books they are hoping to access and in what format (either Braille or audio books). There is an easy to use player that will get sent through the mail with cartridges.

Financials

We are eight months into our fiscal year and remain on pace with our budget. We sat down this week with Betsy Carter to make sure we aren't tracking to exceed any budget categories in either direction. We saw a big increase in our interest and dividends thanks to our money market account. The balance sheet shows that we continue to work down cash available from the tax levy.

Communications Committee

The newest article in Skaneateles Stroll came out this month and features an overview of the architect selection process and reasons for the selection of Oudens Ello. The article also features a prominent ad for the Book Sale. Jason Pearsse will now be the point person for those articles. The Committee is also working on ads we want to place for the book sale in local publications. Next month's article will give an overview of the summer reading program and an ad will highlight the story walk.

In terms of the capital campaign, the Committee continues to help promote events and create follow up communications. We are trying to standardize communications and create templates so that people can customize and personalize as appropriate.

We do want to get another communications session for Trustees on the calendar. Susanne added that there is a need for talking points for both Trustees and book sale volunteers since questions will most certainly arise at the event.

The summer newsletter is almost ready to go out and will be mailed to every household in the district.

J.D. Barrow Art Gallery

On Friday we held a Docent Coffee Klatch with Andy Zepp from the Finger Lakes Land Trust that focused on bringing together art and nature.

Trustees will receive an email shortly about the upcoming August 2nd fundraiser (rain date August 3rd) on the Judge Ben Wiles.

As Susanne mentioned earlier, we are working on the separation agreement and hopefully we will be able to bring it to the Board soon.

A curator from the Oneida Nation has asked permission to view *Conflicting Faiths* at West Lake Conservators. Trustees enthusiastically approved.

Fundraising

Andrew reported that 68 people attended the May event at Skaneateles Country Club, 50 of whom were not board members. The event generated a lot of positive feedback. Oudens Ello did a fantastic job with the presentation and we are working hard on following up with attendees. Every non-board member that attended received a hand written thank you note within a week of the event. At the event we announced the hiring of Mary Morrissey Kerwick as capital campaign director. She brings excellent qualifications and skill sets to the job. She has begun training on the donor software we are using and has met with Andrew to talk about strategy. To date we have secured \$1.4 million in commitments including the CREST grant. We are focused on collecting multi-year commitment payments for 2023. Board members are encouraged to fulfill their multi-year commitments for 2023 now if they are in a position to.

For next steps, the Committee is considering organizing several smaller events hosted at peoples' homes or alternatively repeating what we did at SCC in May for folks who were unable to join. We do need to be mindful of capacity so that we don't miss out on opportunities.

Fennell Street New Building Committee

Dave reported that the Building Committee has broken into five subcommittees: the Design Subcommittee, Construction Manager Subcommittee, Zoning Subcommittee and a 75 Fennell St Subcommittee. The Zoning Subcommittee held a preliminary meeting with the Zoning Board to give them a sense of the direction of the project. The Zoning Board was pleased with the preliminary design and approach, and was grateful for the preliminary meeting.

The Construction Manager Subcommittee has created an RFP that is in its final iteration. We hope to issue it this week. We will bring those results back to the board to follow a process similar to architect selection process.

The Design Subcommittee considered feedback from the SCC Event and is taking some time to

synthesize before going back to Oudens Ello with an updated design strategy. The Committee is considering a more traditional look for the exterior (i.e. stone and/or shakes rather than board and batten). The librarians have been very involved to make sure the design compliments desired workflows. Oudens Ello will need another month to come up with another iteration of the design. We will bring that to the Board for feedback. We will have construction manager responses in hand in early July so that we can move forward with making a decision.

Public Comment

Diane Fellerman inquired about the timing of the lawn signs and why it is so close to the sale. The signs say “next weekend”, and in part it is due to some long-standing town rules about lawn signs.

Paula thanked everyone for their service on the Board and was delighted to hear about the progress of the new building.

Adjourn Regular Meeting – 7:37 p.m.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 12th at 6:30 p.m. (In Person – Library Hall)

Submitted by Meghann Sandak, Secretary