



Fall 2020 Members Meeting – September 3, 2020

Hosted on Zoom

Agenda

5:15 PM	“Doors” open – Log in early!	
5:30 PM	Meeting Orientation & Introduction of new staff	Naomi West <i>Director of Philanthropy & Engagement</i>
	Convene meeting Welcome Approval of June 2020 meeting minutes (attached) Adjourn business meeting	Valerie Tran <i>Council Secretary</i>
5:40 PM	Historic Seattle Update & Special Guest <i>We want to hear from you! Please submit questions in the Chat feature of Zoom for Q&A at the end.</i>	
	COVID-19 & Properties Updates	Kji Kelly <i>Executive Director</i>
	At the Good Shepherd Center: What’s going on at The Meridian School?	Meghan Kimpton <i>Head of School</i>
	Finance & Administration Updates	Jane Davies <i>Director of Finance & Administration</i>
	Advocacy Updates	Eugenia Woo <i>Director of Preservation Services</i>
	Programs & Philanthropy Updates	Naomi West <i>Director of Philanthropy & Engagement</i>
6:00 PM	Q&A	Moderated by Taelore Rhoden <i>Community Events Manager</i>

Thank you for joining us! We look forward to seeing you in person again when it is safe to gather.

MINUTES

Historic Seattle Constituency
06 04 20
Via Zoom
Meeting ID: 956 5720 1885

Twenty seven members and non-members attended the 6/4/20 Members Meeting via Zoom. Staff was represented by Kji Kelly, Naomi West, Eugenia Woo, Jane Davies, Cindy Hughes, Jeff Murdock, Brady Begin, and Bailey Hess. Historic Seattle Council Chair David Yeaworth represented the Council.

ORIENTATION

Historic Seattle's Engagement & Administration coordinator Brady Begin welcomed members and guests to Historic Seattle's first ever digital members meeting and gave a basic explanation about how the various features of Zoom work.

Brady suggested that we take a moment to acknowledge the current unrest here in Seattle, across the country, and around the world as people stand up and speak out against racism and injustice. The tragic death of George Floyd was not an isolated incident and in order to understand this injustice, we must take the time to educate ourselves about the history of racist violence against African Americans. Furthermore, as preservationists, we must work harder to acknowledge and celebrate Black history. In furtherance of that goal we have added a new section to the Historic Seattle website that is a compilation of resources that can contribute to the understanding and preservation of Black history. Most are local, a few national, and any suggestions for further resources in this area are welcomed. Brady encouraged all participants to visit this vital new section of the website.

CALL TO ORDER

David Yeaworth, the Chair of Historic Seattle's Council, called the business meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. He welcomed everyone and said that he was pleased to see all the faces on his screen, and that he hoped that everyone was well and safe. David introduced all members of the Historic Seattle staff who were present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 10/29/19 & 3/5/20

David called for a vote for the approval of these two sets of minutes, both of which had been distributed to participants along with the meeting agenda. Larry Kreisman moved approval of both sets of minutes. Wayne Dodge seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

HISTORIC SEATTLE UPDATE

David introduced Historic Seattle's Executive Director Kji Kelly, who updated the membership group on the activities of the organization. Meeting participants were encouraged to submit questions in the Chat feature of Zoom for a Question & Answer session at the end of the meeting.

Kji began by saying that he had been thinking about the role of both historic preservation and Historic Seattle in our community in this extraordinary time. He recalled last fall's members meeting at Mount Zion Baptist Church, back in a time that was pre-Covid and prior to the murders of Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd. At that time he said that Historic Seattle has the potential to play a powerful role in preserving communities. The field is slowly evolving to recognize, honor, and embrace a much more diverse cross-section of people and places that really do truly represent this country. Historic Seattle is in a unique position to lead that evolution in the field. We must understand both the positive and negative aspects of our history in order to move forward. Historic Seattle is currently physically, emotionally, and fiscally stable and we are looking for ways to engage and most especially to listen.

Jane Davies reminded meeting participants that the meeting was being recorded.

Kji continued with an update on Covid-19 and Historic Seattle's properties. All of our properties are closed to the general public. Since we rely heavily on rent from our tenants, we have been monitoring our accounts receivable closely. We have also been providing our assistance to our tenants in a variety of ways, including guidance on how to tap assistance at

the City, County, State, and Federal levels. Rent abatement, as well as rent deferrals are being provided to tenants. We recognize that our tenants are partners with us as we work through the current situation. At the same time that we are trying to keep our portfolio stable we are also looking ahead on other real estate initiatives.

Kji reported that as of yesterday we have signed a Purchase & Sale Agreement on the Ronnei-Raum House in Fall City. This is our first Preservation Action Fund project. The Preservation Action Fund is a \$2 million grant from King County that goes to Historic Seattle. Our partners in the program include the King County Historic Preservation Program, 4Culture, and the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation. This is a proactive revolving fund where we identify historic properties in need of attention and purchase, landmark, rehab, and sell them. The proceeds from the sale go back into the fund to do other projects. With the Ronnei-Raum House we fully intended to see the project through to the end of the restoration process, but a neighbor emerged with a good offer who wanted to purchase the house and do the restoration work himself. The property has already been landmarked by King County and we also have an easement on it. Both will provide protection for the home in perpetuity.

We continue to work on design, budget development, and fundraising for a Seismic Retrofit Project for the Good Shepherd Center in Wallingford. We have developed a prioritized scope of work and are putting together a complementary budget associated with that work. Currently we are assembling the capital stack to do the first three phases of the project.

In a small but significant example of responding to community needs, the Little Free Library structure at the Dearborn House has been transformed into a Little Free Pantry. This structure was designed by Historic Seattle Council member Rick Sever and constructed by Good Shepherd Center staff members Matt Murray and Jeff Hansel. It functioned well as a free library for several years, but when Covid arrived with its associated food and nutrition needs, the structure was transformed quickly and effortlessly by staff into a food resource for the community. It shows that we can respond in both large and small ways to community needs.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

Historic Seattle's Director of Finance & Administration, Jane Davies, gave the update and displayed several slides summarizing the financial effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the organization. The summary indicates that we are feeling some financial effects but we are fortunately stable. Our focus continues to be keeping our tenants financially viable while anticipating losses in the future so that we can prepare. With lease income representing 75 – 85% of our revenue, we have seen varying percentages of income lost in the three months since the pandemic started. The losses may not turn out to be complete, as we plan to work with tenants to eventually get caught up with payment. The income from Programs is not a huge revenue source, but it does affect us with a projected 50% decrease in program income. Some registrants for programs have generously converted their fees into donations to the organization. Because we are a Public Development Authority we are quasi-governmental, and this has meant that a number of larger pandemic-related funding sources are not available to us. Despite the economic downturn our spring fundraising appeal was quite successful. It remains to be seen whether we will be able to hold the Preservation Celebration, our main fundraising event, in September.

Jane continued with a slide demonstrating the Covid-19 Admin and Finance Response. We are limiting administrative expenses to essential ones only, and adjusting real estate operations expenses. We anticipate increases in spending associated with compliance with safety protocols when we begin reopening our properties to the general public and as the staff returns from remote work. We have been evaluating capital projects and are proceeding only with those that have already been funded. We have had to reduce the staff by one position – this person's responsibilities were solely related to external programs and the position will be on hold for an unknown period of time. Additionally, all staff has been learning to work remotely, adapting to new technology and procedures.

As to potential future changes in cash flow, it is very challenging to predict. If there is no fall outbreak of the virus we could end up right on budget, but an outbreak could mean a \$40,000 cash flow loss.

ADVOCACY UPDATE

Director of Preservation Services Eugenia Woo gave an update on Historic Seattle's advocacy activities. She gave a shout-out to Advocacy & Education Manager Jeff Murdock for his contributions during this surprisingly busy time for historic preservation advocacy.

Eugenia reported that in-person meetings of the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board and the boards of the City's historic districts had been suspended since March. The City is working hard to set up virtual meetings and anticipates being able to launch them in late June. In the meantime City staff is available to provide administrative approval on minor alterations to landmarks.

The Wayne Apartments in Belltown are on the chopping block. Constructed between 1889 and 1891, the structure is the only existing pre-Denny Regrade building left in the area. Although it was designated in 2015, the Landmarks Board imposed no controls and incentives in 2018 after the owner was able to show that designation would deprive them of reasonable economic use. There are now two development proposals for the block, one of which calls for the demolition of the Wayne and the two buildings to the south for an eight story mixed use project. (The landmark building that now houses Mama's Mexican Kitchen, in the building to the north is also due for redevelopment, with plans calling for retention of facades only.) Both of these projects are going through permitting and environmental review, and there is currently an opportunity for public comment. Historic Seattle will be submitting a letter and we encourage others to do so as well. Eugenia can assist letter writers with talking points if needed – feel free to contact her or Jeff for assistance. The comment period has been extended to June 17th.

Eugenia said that there is a serious issue regarding threats to Seattle's (and surrounding areas') historic houses of worship. The University District has a large collection of church properties and with aging congregations struggling to maintain their properties the pressure to sell the buildings in the upzoned market is immense. This direction is amplified by the fact that religious properties cannot be designated City landmarks without the owner's consent – they are an exception to the City's usual landmarking powers. The University Christian Church has come down, the University Temple is scheduled to be demolished, and a demolition permit has been applied for by Churchhome, the current owner of the 3rd Church of Christ, Scientist at 17th & 50th. We are actively reaching out to Churchhome to see if we can work with them to find a preservation friendly buyer who could do a restoration project along the lines of Town Hall. If any meeting participants have any connections with Churchhome we would appreciate the assistance. The same holds true for the threatened Hofius House on First Hill on the same block as the Dearborn House. The house is owned by the Archdiocese of Seattle and if sold would probably come down. We would like to work with the Archdiocese to identify a preservation-minded buyer interested in keeping the house intact – any connections within the Catholic church would be helpful as we explore the options available for this property.

PROGRAMS & PHILANTHROPY UPDATE

Naomi reported that the majority of Historic Seattle's programs have been cancelled since March since they required in-person participation. We plan on moving the Good Shepherd Center "Behind the Garden Wall" event to a digital presentation, and the Center for Wooden Boats outdoor tour has been moved to the date of August 11th. The "From Ragtime to Jazz" launch has been backed up to October 28th. We plan on launching an 8 week long online digital topic series next week, covering a wide variety of subjects and free and available to the public. Our activities in the fall and winter will probably combine safe in-person activities with digital programming, depending on direction from the State. Naomi thanked Eugenia Woo and Jeff Murdock for pulling together the digital topic series so quickly.

Naomi reported that Historic Seattle's spring emergency appeal was very successful, and our Give Big income exceeded our goal. This is important because we have lost so much revenue from programming, as well as both short and long term rentals, and it is heartening to see our community step up to help us. We are grateful that so many donors see the value of our staff and programs, as well as in keeping our tenants viable. Due to Historic Seattle's status as a public development authority, we were not eligible for the federal Payroll Protection Program or other large emergency grant sources. We have applied to the National Endowment for the Humanities for an operations grant, and to 4Culture and the City of Seattle for several smaller grants. We continue to be hopeful that the Preservation Celebration will be held this year in person, although due to scheduling conflicts it has been moved from the Showbox to Washington Hall. Washington Hall will be like a homecoming for us, as we held our Awards Ceremonies there in 2016, 2017, and 2018. We have the date of September 23rd, 2020 set for the Celebration, and recipients of the awards have all been selected. We have instituted some budget reductions centered around moving events notices and fundraising mailings to a digital format – as much as people appreciate actual physical mail the costs are high and this is one area where we felt we could cut back. We have activated several of our platforms to engage with our members and supporters, including hosting guest bloggers and staff contributions to the Heart This Place series.

Q & A

Moderator Brady Begin invited meeting participants to submit any questions via the chat function, and then unmuted all for more free flowing interaction. Eugenia Woo and Jeff Murdock were thanked for their work on the Fairfax Condominiums landmarks nomination. A question regarding identification of houses found in historic photos at the U.W. Special Collections was referred to Larry Kreisman. A member asked the best way to learn more about the Wayne Apartments and Eugenia agreed to email her a copy of the Landmarks Nomination for the property. A member asked if the URM Symposium, which originally had been scheduled for May, would be moved to a later date. Jeff Murdock said that he had heard from the State recently and they were anticipating an online symposium to be held in the fall. He will reach out when he has more information.

Brady added that this Members Meeting has been recorded, and will be publicly available on Historic Seattle's YouTube channel. Naomi said that she welcomed any feedback as to how to improve the Zoom application for conducting Members Meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Chair David Yeaworth thanked everyone for their virtual attendance and asked for a member to move for adjournment. Larry Kreisman moved adjournment, Harriet Wasserman seconded, and it was carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.