



# Friends of Saxonia House, Inc.

## F.O.S.H. 5th Annual Meeting

January 15, 2024

6:00 PM, ZOOM Platform

Attending: Alan Pape, Alison Witt-Janssen, Rhonda Hare, Ed Ritger, Jim Dieringer, Fred Klessig, Greg Zahn, Jon Scott, Susan Baker, Scott Peschke, Dave Bratz, Karl Felgenhauer, Deb, Gordon, Diane, Paul

### I. Pre-Meeting Greeting and Presentations

[A Slide show](#) was presented highlighting events that happened within the past year, the highlights of these were:

1. Our Oktoberfest open house which welcomed over 200 visitors to tour the grounds
2. Our booth at two Germanfests in WI
3. Obtaining a Norwegian Log House which will be moved to the property
4. Commissioning a mural to be displayed at the property
5. Completion of Business and Marketing plan and obtaining of the first grant
6. Ongoing research: Wayne Kroll, Tom Lutz, Mike Besch
7. Poultry barn repair and plans
8. Demise of Dairy barn, to be used for salvage
9. Six regular monthly volunteer Saturday Work Days removing modern additions

President Alan Pape talked about the Three Phase Plan extending over the next fifteen years, which will provide Saxonia House with all seven things visitors want. The central theme will be Romantic Art of the mid 19th century, which will combine Art, History, and Hospitality. This is a 5-8 million dollar plan, with a projected partial opening in Fall 2025—the 170th anniversary of the Saxonia House first opening. Alan elaborated on the theme, which comes from the mid 1800s rebellions in which many countries were trying to be like the new American democracy. This led many to emigrate to America, and around 4,000 highly educated and skilled came to Milwaukee and the surrounding areas during this time.

## **II. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by President Alan Pape at 6:23 pm. Alan introduced all Board members and fellow Board member and legal advisor Ed Ritger, who would be guiding us through the parts of the business meeting.

## **III. Minutes**

The [minutes \(linked here\)](#) of the last annual meeting, Jan 23, 2023, were read by Secretary Rhonda Hare. Scott moved to accept the minutes as read and Alison seconded. Motion carried.

## **IV. Treasurers' Report**

Treasurer Greg Zahn reported on the finances of the last year, ending with a balance of over \$60,000. [Treasurer's Report details linked here.](#) Alan procured us a grant from Kohler Company and Kohler Foundation for over \$42,000 for Phase 1 of the plan, and just today shared another grant application, part of which would help cover emergency restoration of the east wall and also help move the Norwegian Log house/Guest center and exhibit hall to the property. Alison motioned to approve the Treasurer's report and Fred seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion followed on the move of the Norwegian Log House , which will be headed up by Jon Scott. Alan explained the Norwegian connection to our theme. Norwegian and German painters and others who wanted revolution against the King of Prussia formed a club in Dresden. They painted Political and Romantic Art. Johann Andreas Klessig (father of Saxonia House), was good friends with Kirschner, and would have been a member of such a club.

The log house was donated to us and will be the site of modern restrooms and an exhibit on the above mentioned Norwegian and German Art.

## **V. Nomination of Board of Directors**

Ed asked for nominations for Board of Directors for the next year. We have spaces for up to eight and currently have an open seat. Self nominations are accepted. Ed asked for self nominations. None were heard on the Zoom platform. (We later found out that Jon Scott was willing to nominate himself, but had trouble with the microphone on his computer.)

Ed then asked current Board members if they were all willing to serve again. All affirmed that they would. These members are: Alan Pape, Ed Ritger, Greg Zahn, Alison Witt-Janssen, Fred Klessig, Jim Dieringer, Rhonda Hare

## **VI. Election of Board of Directors**

Scott Pescke motioned, Dave seconded that all seven mentioned above be elected. Motion carried. Officers will be chosen at the next Board meeting on February 5, 2024 at 6 pm.

## **VII. Call for Other Business**

Ed addressed the following questions brought up at last year's annual meeting:

- *Why aren't all members invited to Board meetings?* We currently invited over 130 interested folks to the annual meeting, and all members are welcome to attend meetings by just emailing Membership Chair Alison for the link. However, because of the time commitment of these meetings we thought it would be more efficient for everyone if we just posted the minutes of all Board meetings on our website. We started doing this in 2023 and the minutes are available for viewing two weeks after each meeting (every other month).
- *Why do we have to pay property taxes when we are a non-profit?* Ed explained that to be exempt, we need regular events at the property. Our current work days are not sufficient. In 2023, however, we added many events to our calendar, so Ed will be looking into tax exempt status for us before March 2024.
- *Why don't we have a plein air event/artist event* like Scott Peschke from Plymouth Art Center does? It was decided that we need better facilities to hold such an event. When the restrooms are installed and we have power, etc, we will definitely be holding events like this because there is lots of interest.
- *Why don't we contact the Goethe organization (German craftsmanship) to help save the building?* Alan's professional thoughts are to narrow a focus for them before we ask that, like maybe the reconstruction of the German Bake House or an exhibit about German reconstruction.

**New business:** Solar panels will be donated to be used on the Poultry barn once the new steel roof has been installed.

This summer's work days will be working to take apart the remains of the dairy barn to be used for salvage. The neighbor to the west of our property is interested in helping.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

Alan motioned to adjourn the business part of the meeting at 7:21 pm and Scott seconded. The motion carried. Many members stayed online to chat.