



**Regular Meeting with Work Session
March 25, 2024**

Call to Order: The Board met in person in Council chambers at Richfield Village Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Anita Gantner, Board Chair.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Present: Anita Gantner, Mike Lyons, Steve McPeake, Holly Price, Mark Robeson, Mike Selig

Excused: Dave Wehner

Also in Attendance: Village Councilperson Pat Norris, Township Trustee Don Laubacher, Park Director John Piepsny, Administrative Coordinator Polly Wheeler, about 13 other attendees and 3 attendees by Zoom

Work Session

- 1) Mr. Piepsny introduced the idea of renaming Amity House. On a recent tour with a bride, she reacted negatively to the Amity name due to a horror movie that incorporates that name. He suggested Neal House, Lake House, or other ideas from the board.

Ms. Gantner asked if the board actually wants to rename Amity House.

Mr. Robeson said that he likes the concept of the Amity name because it represents friendship and community and has not had an issue with the name. He asked if the association with the name of the Amityville horror movie is inhibiting potential sales.

Ms. Price said that she doesn't know why the house is named Amity. The popular culture reference will fade. Before considering a renaming of the house, she would like more information about the business reasons for renaming and the concerns.

Ms. Gantner asked Lynn Richardson to put together a description of why Amity House is named as it is, and then the board can reconsider.

- 2) Lynn Richardson was invited to present the Friends' letter of intent (LOI) for Garfield Hall. She read the description of the building, stating she has never found another building like Garfield with its floor type. It is unique and worth saving, and it is probably the only building of its kind. The Friends have been fortunate to connect with the Garfield family.

Ms. Richardson said that Phase I of their plan includes repair of the existing structure and allowing visitors to view the building.

She said that Phase II would be to reinstall restrooms and reinforce the nearby bridge to make the hall rentable. This would be much farther in the future, if the board chose to proceed in that direction.

Friends believe that Garfield Hall will draw more people to the park than even the Mill. It is best appreciated as part of the Kirby estate. Ms. Richardson said that she Friends would like to champion the entire central part of the Kirby estate, listing the structures that would be included. She said that for the Friends to go ahead with the project would require some kind of long-term commitment.

Ms. Richardson described several examples of park friends groups taking on whole villages or groups of buildings as a project. She listed the benefits to the park for the long-term agreement that the Friends would like to have with RJRD, including stability and the ability to fund-raise for the benefit of Richfield Heritage Preserve. Ms. Richardson said that the Friends would like to begin a dialogue with RJRD about an agreement, and in the meantime, they would like to champion Garfield Hall as a stand-alone project.

Ms. Gantner asked, between the LOI for Kirby House and the one for Garfield Hall, if one LOI is more important than the other as far as priority. She said that the board will not commit to the LOI at this meeting because the board has not had enough time to consider it.

Mr. Lyons asked if anyone has actually evaluated the fundamental structure under the floor of Garfield Hall. He said it would be useful for considering this LOI. Corey Ringle said she can send a report for the board before the next meeting.

Ms. Gantner asked the board for further discussion about the LOI for Garfield, Kirby, or for the general Kirby area and whether the Friends should go ahead with the full champion application. Mr. Lyons said he would like more information about the condition of Garfield at this point.

Mr. Selig asked where the Friends MOU stands now. He is hesitant to approve another LOI without that. Mr. Lyons responded that the MOU will not necessarily replace the work agreements, e.g. the Mill. He said there should be more dialogue about the MOU and LOIs to better define the relationship between them.

Ms. Price asked if a building like this [Garfield] needs more structural detail in an LOI. There could be more pitfalls than with other structures. She questioned the level of detail that should be saved for the full application, and how much should be in the LOI. Mr. Lyons added that its uniqueness may indicate that the building design is not viable and said that the board needs to look at the technical sustainability of a building and a project like this.

Ms. Gantner said that she is concerned about the Mill being a long way from completion. The funding may be spread too thin before this is completed. Mr. Robeson agreed that he shares that concern about getting into other projects before the first one is completed. Mr. Selig agreed but also noted that a donor may want to support a particular project. He sees value in cultivating that type of relationship.

Comments from the floor

Corey Ringle (Hawthorne Dr) stated that she checked with the Friends' historic volunteers to see what they are comfortable doing. They were excited about the smaller mill projects, but they were

not comfortable working on the structural aspects or the tallest parts of the mill, where a fall could be 2-3 stories.

Volunteers like to have a project to move on to as one project, such as Amity House starts to wrap up. Ms. Ringle said that damage to Garfield Hall has occurred due to a log storage box on the floor long-term, and to the failed roof that contributed to concrete damage. The volunteers would be ready to work on Garfield Hall where the fall risk is far less than the Mill and where they would be comfortable working.

Gary LaGuardia (North Royalton) said that he will help Corey with Garfield. There are many structures still standing that were built with timber framing. He stated that lack of maintenance has caused water damage in Garfield Hall. It needs the electric system redone but the structure can be preserved. Volunteers are willing to help stabilize structures so they can be preserved for future use.

Regular Meeting

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Jan. 29, 2024 special meeting and Feb. 26, 2024 regular meeting were approved as submitted.

Standing Committee Reports

Governance: Mr. Lyons reported that a Governance Committee meeting was held on March 18. The committee reviewed the draft of the MOU with the Friends and discussed it with the Friends representatives. The next meeting is scheduled for April 24, when the next draft of the MOU will be reviewed. The committee will discuss the MOU with the full board later so that the board can make requests and suggestions.

Grants & Fundraising:

Mr. Selig reported that the committee submitted an application for the State Capital Grant. Senator Roegner's office says that all is in order in the grant application. Applications will be reviewed in April, and a decision will be made in June or July.

Administration Report:

Mr. Piepsny reported that a Special Events Committee has been formed with about 8 members, representing the partner groups and staff. This committee will meet about once a month to coordinate efforts and planning for park events. As an example, the Goat Derby sponsorships are already sold out, so a large crowd is anticipated. The committee is planning for all the logistics of this event.

Mr. Piepsny said he is working on the rules and regulations to prepare Amity House to be a reservable facility. He proposed that board members stay overnight in the house, once the occupancy permit is received, and report on their experiences as a "guest" to make sure all the details are covered for rentals to brides and other clients. The staff is working on what is needed for rental of this building, including who will be cleaning it, changing linens and whatever else is required.

Ms. Price said that she wants the opportunity to review the business plan for Amity House when it is ready. She would like to see the expected expenses, fees, and revenue. Mr. McPeake asked if the fee structure is set up for this venue. Mr. Piepsny replied that it is still being discussed internally.

Ms. Gantner asked if there will be a business plan for Amity House. Mr. Piepsny said that there will be a plan and that customers will have to sign up on RecDesk for rental of the venue.

Mr. Robeson asked if Mr. Piepsny has seen any benchmark properties, since Amity House is very unique. Mr. Piepsny replied that he has looked at some other rental properties. He has asked Lynn Richardson to arrange one showcase in the living room to display the history of the Neal family and the house.

Mr. Lyons asked when Amity will be ready for rental. Mr. Piepsny said that Summit County needs to inspect the home after Corey Ringle, as a registered architect, submits the application for occupancy. The occupancy application for overnight guests will be for an anticipated capacity of 8, with a daytime capacity of 24 or 25. They expect to submit the application by July so it can be rented in the fall.

On another topic, Ms. Price asked when the bridge inspection report is expected. She mentioned that signage is needed on the maps in the kiosks, indicating that the bridge is closed by the Mill, in addition to the signage on the bridge itself.

Treasurer Report:

No treasurer's report. Ms. Gantner indicated she would follow up with the fiscal officer.

Old Business:

- 1) RHP logo – Mr. Piepsny presented the final new logo to the board, with the changes that were requested at the last meeting. The board's consensus was that it looks good and should be used.
- 2) Contractor form – Ms. Price asked about the administrative report that lists working on updated Independent Contractor forms. Mr. Piepsny replied that an Independent Contractor form has been drafted by a lawyer as a template. Mrs. Wheeler updated that form for one of the contractors, adding the appropriate information for that contract.

New Business:

None

Announcements:

The next regular board meeting will be on April 22.

The "Total Eclipse of the Park" will be April 8 from 1-4pm in the park. Since the Chamber of Commerce is also holding an eclipse event on the Village Green that day, the Mayor authorized the Senior Center bus to shuttle people between the two locations so that they can attend both.

The photo contest begins April 1. Photos can be submitted throughout the month of April and should reflect the theme, "Discover Your Outdoor Experience". There is a \$5 fee, and information about it is posted several places. Contact Susan for details or to submit a photo.

Comments from the Floor:

Sandy Norris (Humphrey Rd) passed out the annual reports for the Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve from the past two years to the board for their review.

Chris Naizer (Granger Twp) asked if there will be rules regarding tobacco and vaping in the Amity House regulations. Mr. Piepsny assured her that this would be included.

Adjournment:

MOTION by: Mr. McPeake moved, seconded by Mr. Lyons, to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by voice, which was unanimously yea.


Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Submitted by:



Polly Wheeler, Administrative Coordinator

Accepted by:



Anita Gantner, Board Chair