

El Cerrito Historical Society

Minutes of Board Meeting

January 12, 2023

Board Members present: David Weinstein, Tom Panas, John Falconer, Michael Martin, Pat Durham, Dianne Brenner

Others present: Ed Crowley

Red type indicates "to do" items.

1. Minutes of prior meeting: Approved.
2. Treasurer's Report: Interim Treasurer Tom Panas reported revenue of \$30 in the past month, one member's dues payment. Expenses were \$20, for supplies. The bank balance as of December 31, 2022 was \$20,600.89. Undesignated Assets total \$15,100.89, and Designated Assets total \$5,500.
3. Comments from Board (not on agenda):
 - a. Dave reported that Pat Shaw has decided to resign from the Board after 7 years of service. Dave commended Pat for the good job she did as Treasurer, and for her many other contributions to the organization. Dianne was authorized to spend up to \$100 on a personalized gift to Pat to commemorate her service to the Society. (Note: Dianne placed this order on 1/13/2023 and may receive it in about 10 days.)
 - b. Dave is cultivating potential new Board members and other volunteers, including Jon Bashor, who has written several articles for Society publications over the years, and Nick Brooks, the artist who created the Matchbook Cover Art which was the subject of a recent show. Nick may be able to assist with management of our website and publication design. Dave will put Nick in touch with John Falconer.
4. Public Comment: None
5. Old Business:
 - a. **Web hosting costs**: The project to investigate whether and how we might reduce our web hosting costs is still pending. Ed has withdrawn from this project, and John will pursue this as time allows as it's not urgent.
 - b. **Re-format brochure layout**: The project to re-format the layout of our brochures is still pending. Again, there is no urgency as we still have a supply of the various brochures on hand.
 - c. **Website and copyrights**: Dianne and Tom have met and will continue to do so to identify any needed copyrights for photos on the Society's website. John has made the updates that have been identified so far.
 - d. **Website Security Certificate**: Michael reports he has the necessary people lined up to complete this task. He has learned that the required letter, which needs to be notarized, can be signed by a notary, possibly obviating the need for a lawyer to sign it.

- e. **CD Purchase:** Tom will complete this when the weather allows. Some of our inactive bank funds will be put into a CD for a better interest rate.
 - f. **Conflict of Interest Policy:** Tom has reminded us that the Society has a Conflict of Interest Policy, and Directors (members of the Board) are required to sign and file this statement annually. Tom has sent all Board members a copy of the Policy, as well as the Annual Disclosure form. The forms are to be signed and scanned or otherwise sent to Dianne, as Secretary. **At the next Board meeting, we will discuss whether to change the policy or leave it as is.**
 - g. **Shadi Room Public Hours:** Tom has contacted the City of El Cerrito to request their OK for us/him to resume public open hours at the Shadi Room in City Hall. Since City Hall is open again, part-time, there should be no problem with us welcoming the public to the Shadi Room, but the hours will need to coincide with City Hall's open hours or people won't be able to access the building.
6. Bylaws: A change to the bylaws requires a vote by the membership. Pending changes are as follows:
- a. To change the **date of the annual membership meeting** to February, after the close of our fiscal year, instead of January.
 - b. To allow Board members to cast **votes by email** in certain specific circumstances. Dianne questioned why in this instance only, a unanimous vote is required for a vote to pass. The answer had to do with proximity of the discussion to the vote, and an interest in assuring that no comments were missed. Tom moved that we accept the change (Paragraph 6) as proposed, and with the language as modified by Dianne. The vote was affirmative, with no nays nor abstentions. The next emailed publication to the membership (Sparks) will include the proposed Bylaws change attached, so it can be voted on at the Membership Meeting on January 29, 2023. **Dave will send to John the version with the accepted language so John can post it to the website**
7. Events:
- a. The annual **Membership Meeting** will be a hybrid meeting – live and via Zoom. **Dave is to check that we will have WiFi access in the meeting room and forward the credentials to John.** John agreed to manage the technology for the event, and he plans to do a test once Dave gets him the WiFi access password. **John will check with Chris Sterba to make sure his presentation is in a format we can use on Zoom.** Dave's wife, Mary, will likely provide light refreshments.
 - b. **MLK Day:** This event is Monday, January 16. Cars for the parade will gather at the Del Norte BART station parking lot at 9 a.m. and the parade steps off at 10. If no rain, the parade will proceed to the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station for the program. If rain, the parade will go directly to El Cerrito High School, and the program will take place in the performing arts theater there. Dave will be driving in the parade with the Historical Society banner on his car, and he will speak briefly at the program. The keynote speaker is Dr. Reginald Walton and the program will also recognize the 13 Black-owned businesses in El Cerrito. The program will be about an hour long.
 - c. **Sunset View Tour:** This will take place at 10:30 a.m. March 18. The tour will start from the empty lot across from the cemetery entrance. The tour will not visit the Chapel.

The maximum tour group size is 50, per cemetery management. Dave would like to video Tom's narrative of the tour, for posting on the website/YouTube channel, but Tom will first ask cemetery management if filming would be OK.

- d. "Flat Top" Smith program: Tentatively scheduled for July 30.
 - e. More programs: We believe that public events are an important element in keeping membership numbers up. Dianne suggested that outdoor events, and during the summer, might mitigate people's fear of COVID contamination and therefore might draw more people.
8. Goals and Accomplishments: Dave is seeking comments on the list he sent out. He will present the list at the annual membership meeting.
- a. We need to have a discussion and strategize for a membership drive. John will send the current list of members to Board members FYI. Dave suggested we might consider a 5-year membership option.
9. Forge and Sparks:
- a. The next issue of The Forge should be out soon.
 - b. Sparks: Dave will try to get another issue out next week to include a reminder about the annual membership meeting and to notify members of the proposed bylaws changes.
10. Other: Janet Abelson is retiring from City Council after a career which began in 1998. She founded the Environmental Quality Commission. Dave will recognize her service at the Annual Meeting.
11. Adjourn.