

# Annual Meeting Minutes

## Forest Home Improvement Association

### Forest Home Chapel

October 24, 2023

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**In attendance:** William Arms, Caroline Arms, Constance Stirling-Engman, Herb Engman, Tim Agnew, Valerie McAllister, Pete Loucks, Wayne Stokes, Kristi Stokes, Michael Bend, Valerie Hans, Tom Campanella, Alex Nading, Ari Lavine, David Kuckuk, Ruth Mahr, Lars Washburn

**Zoom attendees:** Linda Barrington, Bruce Brittain, Doug Brittain, Cindy Bowman, Rod Howe, Jeff Holden, Charlie Trautmann, Rich De Paolo

1. Meeting started on time, with a quorum. People introduced themselves, shared a few remarks about their length of residence in Forest Home and whether they had been or are currently involved with Forest Home Improvement Association (FHIA).
2. First, President Herb Engman gave the President's Report (available on the FHIA website at [https://www.fhia.org/wp-content/uploads/Minutes/FHIA\\_2022-23\\_PresidentAnnualReport\\_2023-10-24.pdf](https://www.fhia.org/wp-content/uploads/Minutes/FHIA_2022-23_PresidentAnnualReport_2023-10-24.pdf) )
3. Next, Treasurer Valerie Hans gave her report (available on the FHIA website at [https://www.fhia.org/wp-content/uploads/Minutes/FHIA\\_2022-2023\\_TreasurerAnnualReport\\_2023-10-24.pdf](https://www.fhia.org/wp-content/uploads/Minutes/FHIA_2022-2023_TreasurerAnnualReport_2023-10-24.pdf))

Several people asked Valerie questions about 1) putting money in a short-term CD and 2) ways to make it easier to pay dues with Venmo or PayPal. Valerie McAllister suggested using a scannable QR code.

4. Printed directory update: Next, Caroline Arms raised the topic of the printed FHIA Directory, which is due for an update. The last update was in 2021. Caroline gave some history about updates and mentioned that the previous one cost about \$200.00. She said everyone's input is needed to create an updated version. She encouraged residents to consider who has moved in or out of FH recently and any other changes, such as name changes or changes in contact information. Caroline added that she will reach out to street captains to see if we need replacements. She also asked for a volunteer for proofreading assistance and suggested that people contact her if they can fill any of these roles.

5. Next, Bill Arms displayed the slate of officers. Caroline introduced the candidates and gave some biographical information. There were no nominations from the floor. A vote was

taken and the new slate was approved unanimously: President, Charlie Trautmann; Vice-President, Valerie McAllister; Treasurer, Valerie Hans; and Secretary, Connie Stirling-Engman.

6. Next, Herb Engman introduced Ithaca Town Supervisor Rod Howe and Deputy Supervisor Rich De Paolo, who presented updates on issues affecting FH (see annual meeting agenda attached). Rod informed everyone that the Town will have a new board member, Susie Gutenberger Fitzpatrick. He also mentioned that Bill Goodman will be stepping down from the Town Board at the end of Jan. '24. Rod said a major project lately has been planning for an extension of the Black Diamond Trail all the way to Treman Park.

- a. Cradit Lane/Pleasant Grove Intersection – Request for Proposals being developed.
- b. RaNic Golf Course – appears stalled right now
- c. Forest Home Pump Station Upgrade – expect spring '24 completion
- d. Vehicle Length – Public Works Supervisor Joe Slater wants additional research. Public Works Committee meeting agenda on 11/21/23 will address this. Several residents said they want FH entrance signage stating length limits on trucks.
- e. Pedestrian Count on Walkway – the counter that was installed showed an average of 37 pedestrians per day.
- f. Lighting – Rich De Paolo, Town of Ithaca Deputy Supervisor, gave an update on the project to install LED streetlights and indicated that a policy for requesting changes was being developed. Caroline Arms brought up the request made by FHIA two years ago, when she was President, to move a streetlight and wondered about how that request would be handled. Rich said it would be subject to the new policy and require an updated application when the new policy was approved. Linda Barrington asked Rod about adjusting brightness of new LED streetlights. Rod replied that that is possible and if it still is not enough, a shield or cone can be installed to direct the light in a more focused way that also prevents spillage. Rod said that Joe Slater is the contact person for lighting questions or adjustments.

Connie Stirling-Engman reminded Rod that wildlife and insects need a certain amount of darkness to successfully complete their life cycles and rest. Connie said streetlights are most effective when they are narrowly focused to avoid spillage. She said several FH residents have expressed concern about excessive brightness of the new LED lights and their impact on wildlife.

Rod added that he has not received any requests for these shields or cones. Rod said there are no more lighting districts and the town has not added any new streetlights, but he is raising the

issue to ask if any more are needed. Town of Ithaca Board member Rich De Paolo mentioned that during the past six months, the Town Board has been working on policy for lighting guidelines to determine where streetlights are warranted. Rich stated that Town of Ithaca Public Works will have a meeting about lighting issues on Nov. 21 and the policies may move to the Town Board for approval in Dec.

- g. Joint application through ITCTC for walkway/bike path improvements – all municipalities in the county are participating; the City is the lead agency.

#### 7. Discussion/FHIA position on issues

Next, Tom Campanella described how he almost got into an accident at the Caldwell Rd. - Forest Home Drive intersection at the south end of the upstream bridge because a sign is missing and drivers are confused. He said the sign indicating “Incoming traffic does not stop” is missing. He asked if it can be replaced.

Rod said that the Town of Ithaca will implement Safe Streets for All. He said a web forum is forthcoming to discuss finances and identify concerns and needs that affect everyone using the streets.

Next, Bill Arms asked about the Historic Preservation Commission and Tom Campanella provided input into the revised ordinance. Rod said there will be a public hearing. Bill said the public should be looking at it before the lawyers do – Rod assured Bill that there will be a public hearing. Herb Engman asked about the NYS Bond Act, which provides funding for open space and trails. Rod replies that the Town is aware of this source.

#### 8. Consider contribution to Forest Home Chapel

Next, Herb brought up the matter of a financial contribution to the Forest Home Chapel. He suggested \$300.00, which is the amount we gave last year. Herb took a vote and the \$300.00 donation was approved.

#### 9. Final item #9 Group to work on long-range issues

Herb suggested a group of six or so people to work on the issues of road safety, bike paths and sidewalks and possibly traffic cameras to monitor traffic in FH. Several residents emphatically stated that they would like to see sidewalks built in FH to improve pedestrian safety, and neighborhood appeal. Herb mentioned that the last big project in FH was the Traffic Calming Plan. He said there have not been any major improvements since then. Residents have done all the work to make improvements to the FH Walkway, Lars Washburn has been doing the

snow blowing on Judd Falls Rd. and laying gravel (Judd Falls & FH Drive) was done by volunteers. Charlie Trautmann's 2023 Flat Rock Bridge renovation project was brought up as a perfect example of how maybe we need to think bigger and bolder.

**Closing remarks:**

Ari Lavine (City of Ithaca attorney) talked about how a decade ago the sidewalk improvement district gathered money from five different sources to improve city sidewalks. Ari offered to be a resource person for information on sidewalk development.

Connie Stirling-Engman brought up the recent new sidewalk developments on both Giles St. in Ithaca and in Varna and suggested the Town start some healthy competition with those areas. Connie inquired about the use of the Biden administration's infrastructure bill funds and wondered if they could be used for sidewalks. Connie added that the lower, narrow part of Warren Rd. is similar to the area on Giles St. where a sidewalk was built. She remarked that if one was constructed on Giles St., including the section with a steep bank, why not build one on Warren Rd? Connie commented that safe and accessible sidewalks are an enhancement to any neighborhood and attract people with strollers, children on bikes and older residents who wish to age in place.

Next, Tom Campanella talked about how he gets grants from the Pomeroy Foundation for historic markers that enhance neighborhoods. He said all the foundation requires to apply is a non-profit partner. He said the application deadline is many months away and suggested maybe an informative marker about Pearl Buck, who lived in FH for a while, would be appropriate.

Ari Lavine spoke again about the City of Ithaca Historic Preservation ordinance. He said if Town of Ithaca requested to join the City and make it a joint body, then FH could be a ripe candidate for historic preservation.

Bruce Brittain shared some thoughts about how residents stay informed to increase parties' participation – and encouraged residents to tell newcomers about FHIA to increase involvement.

Bill Arms again expressed concerns about the impact of Historic Preservation and said as the owner of a prominent historic home in FH – the Farmhouse - he has major concerns about the potential impact and believes we need to stay informed.

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.**

Minutes submitted by Connie Stirling-Engman, Secretary of FHIA

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