

**Old Town Triangle Association
Monthly Meeting of the Board of Directors
September 15, 2009, 7:00 p.m.
1763 N. North Park Avenue**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Fern Bomchill Davis, President.

Attendance

Directors: Chris Beer, Martha Connolly, Fern Bomchill Davis, Phil Graff, Alice Huff, Jeff Pines, Emily Rose, Dirk Vos, Michael Warnick,

Administrators: Shirley Baugher, Leslie Wolfe

Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the July meeting (there was no meeting in August) were unanimously approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report *Martha Connolly, Treasurer*

Martha reported that the Association's finances were in order. There were no unusual receipts or expenditures. Since all Art Fair financials are in, it was requested that a report on revenues be included in the next newsletter.

Committee Reports and Budgets

Art Fair *Chris Beer, General Chair*

Report: Chris informed directors that the application for the 2010 Art Fair is now up online at zapplication.org. Artists may submit their applications online between September 15 and December 15, 2009. She made the following announcements in connection with the 2010 fair:

- 80 percent of the artists from the 2009 fair have been re-invited for 2010.
- Most committee chairs have been identified and have agreed to serve for the coming year.
- The first committee meeting will be held on November 12 in the Triangle Center.
- The poster art has been selected.
- Some promotional materials have been ordered.

Budget: Budget requests are similar to those of 2009. There are no major changes. A review of artists' surveys indicates that participants were pleased with the fair, though they would like to see more promotion of the event. A big problem is still one of identification. Many continue to confuse our fair with the Wells Street fair. It was reported by some that the Wells Street Fair is representing itself as the Old Town Art Fair online and is linked to the OTAF web site. When this problem occurred several years ago, the OTAF took steps to trademark the name Old Town Art Fair and to confer

on the name the status of “incontestability”. Under this status, no third party may challenge the Association’s right to use the name or the validity of the registration. This registration is in force until October 8, 2012, at which time the Association may renew the trademark. Under the circumstances, it is necessary for the Association to lodge an objection to Wells’ Street’s online use of the name Old Town Art Fair.

Historic District/Planning & Zoning Committee *Jeff Pines, Chairman*

Report: The past two months have been uneventful in terms of historic district issues. The only item on the current agenda is the need to formalize bringing new people to the committee. This will be done after the results of the Membership Survey are received.

Budget: The Committee’s expenses are minimal. They are requesting only \$300 for CAPS, \$600 for additional photographs to add to the current archival collection, and a small amount for Spring Clean-up.

There was a brief discussion on having plaques installed to identify historic houses in the neighborhood. Some directors thought this would be an effective means of emphasizing the historic importance of the Old Town community. Placing the name of an historic site on a street sign was offered as an alternative idea. The idea was tabled for further discussion at a future meeting.

Membership *Michael Warnick, Chairman*

Report: Michael noted that the Association has a voting membership of approximately 400 persons; and a total membership of about 550 persons. He mentioned that it is becoming increasingly difficult to get members to renew. Often he has to send out two or three notices and, in some instances, he still does not receive a response. A preliminary analysis of survey results indicates that many members are unclear on the benefits of membership in the organization and do not feel that a sufficient effort is made to make new members feel welcome. Several suggestions were made to address this concern including:

- Having a board member at the door for each activity to greet people as they enter
- Sponsoring a social even especially for new members
- Offering a presentation about the OTTA and talk about the advantages of membership
- Having more family-oriented events

It is hoped that survey results will offer further insights into what may be done to attract new members and keep existing ones.

Budget: Budget requests are similar to those from last year. There is an increase in the production cost of printing the newsletter; but this is offset by assumption of mailing out the printed newsletters by Shirley and Michael. There is also a slight increase in the community events line since there will be more neighborhood activities that allow for interaction among residents.

Neighborhood Improvements *Dirk Vos, Chairman*

Report: Dirk stated that programs are operating much the same as last year. There is one addition to the complement of activities: a neighborhood brick replacement program that will operate in much the same way as the parkway tree program. The information was relayed to residents in the last newsletter; and they may receive additional information as needed through the office. A recommendation to install a bulleting board for neighborhood activities in Ogden Park was put on hold. Existing programs include:

- Triangle Parkway Tree Program
- Triangle Brick Program
- Parks Maintenance Program
- Trash Can Servicing Program
- New Planting in parks
- Trash can replacement
- Neighbor co-sponsored projects

Budget: Neighborhood Improvements is requesting a budget of \$51,400 to accommodate implementation of the above programs.

Contributions *Alice Huff, Chairman*

Report: Alice reported that we had spent \$31,500 of our \$45,000 allocation, and noted that less had been contributed to LaSalle School than originally estimated since they had another funding source and money left from the previous year. She indicated that during the year we had expanded the scope of smaller contributions. In the coming year, she wants to reexamine the areas and recipients of our grant allocations. She asks that directors offer input and ideas before the next board meeting, at which time she will present a proposal to directors. She will also present a budget amount at the October meeting based on results of her research.

Gallery Committee *Emily Rose, Chairman*

Report

The application for gallery exhibitors 2010 has been printed in the newsletter, in the Chicago Artists' online resource site, and the Chicago Artists' Coalition website. Local artists are invited to submit cds of five to ten images for consideration by the gallery jury. The jury will meet at the end of October to review artists' works and those accepted will be notified in November 2009.

The most effective means of notifying the public about the monthly gallery shows is being studied. The last show was not well attended, although it is an outstanding show mounted by instructors in the Old Town Art School. A couple of reasons were offered for this: insufficient notice sent previous to the show (announcement appeared in two newsletters and online), and a glut of local events on that particular week-end.

The following changes were noted in gallery/art school procedures:

- Only two brochures rather than four are printed annually for the art school announcing class schedules and instructors.
- Announcement of the school schedule appears four times a year on the web site.

- Prospective students are encouraged to get information about the school and registering online
- While gallery shows are announced in the newsletter and in local newspapers, no mention is made of refreshments being served. This was done to prevent some visitors coming and treating the shows as free food and drink events. No chairs are set out, which encourages visitors to come, view the art, and interact with friends and neighbors.
- Art school tuition is increased by \$5.00 to keep in line with other schools.

A few suggestions were made with respect to the gallery shows and the school. One director suggested that the OTTA commission for individual artists' sales be rebated entirely or in part, to members who purchase paintings. The chair will take this suggestion under advisement.

Another director mentioned the possibility of more workshop sessions, especially in the summer, to be held for longer periods on consecutive days. A third suggestion involved the inclusion in the offerings of a digital photography class. All of these suggestions will be discussed by the Chair and the committee.

Budget. Art school promotion and budget will remain the same as for the previous year.

Director, Phil Graff, suggested that a line item of \$3,000 for internet technology be included in the 2010 budget.

All budgets will be voted upon at the October meeting to allow for any modifications and determination of final numbers.

Old Business

- A report was given on the second meeting of a selected community group involving approval for an outdoor café at Marge's. Neighbors requested (1) that new housing be placed around the exhaust system to address an ongoing noise problem; (2) that a tree be planted in the well cemented over by the establishment; and (3) that café hours be modified. No action was taken on the request for valet parking or a loading zone. Marge's management agreed to the requests at the meeting, but subsequently reneged stating that the cost of installing the housing around the exhaust was prohibitive and that neighbors' requests were unreasonable.
- Michael Warnick announced that OTTA decals will be mailed to members of the Association very soon.

New Business

Residency Requirement

Chris Beer, Art Fair General Chairman, asked if the Art Fair Chair is required to live in the Historic District. Her concern is that, with the more stable population demographic in the neighborhood, finding additional volunteers and chairs for the fair becomes more

difficult, since most who currently live here are already volunteering. It was noted that officers of the Board, and the Art Fair Chair is Second Vice President, must live in the Triangle according to the By-Laws. It might be possible to change the By-Laws to allow an exception, or possibly all officers, if necessary. The idea was tabled for future discussion.

Membership Survey

Director Emily Rose noted that the deadline for responding to the online survey was September 15. She reported that she had roughly a 25 to 30 percent response rate from the online survey. Hard copies have been mailed to members who did not respond online. These results are due in October 1. Emily will analyze and give a summary, of results at the next Board meeting, focusing on areas of interest among respondents for the coming year. She will also send a complete analysis of the results online.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.