

737 Comstock Avenue Inc. (a.k.a. House Corp.)

Meeting Minutes

October 11, 2014

Syracuse, NY

Alumni Brothers in Attendance

Hank Suominen (Board President and Treasurer), Bill Gerbig (Board Secretary), Bill Beach (Board Member), John Trop (Board Member), Mike Yates (Board Member), Brad Short (Board Member), Phil Oldham, Scott Bounty, Al Bishop, Dan Davidson, Jamie Bersani

Undergraduate Brothers in Attendance

Will Gerhard (Consul), Connor McNamara, and others.

Hank Suominen opened the meeting at 10 a.m.

Consuls report:

The Chapter raised \$17,000 for Derby Days.

Current pledge class is 10. University average is 5-12 for the Fall semester (16-30 for the Spring). Initiation is tentatively scheduled for Friday, November 21st.

The Chapter held a clothing drive and collected 150 bags of clothes, which were donated to The Salvation Army. A blood drive is scheduled for November 7th.

Jack Johnston has conducted a live-in interest survey to gauge brotherhood interest in living in the house for future semesters in order to boost occupancy. Jack was not present, but the information he collected will be shared with House Corp when it becomes available. 26 are currently living in the chapter house this semester. Occupancy is expected to drop to 22-23 for the Spring semester.

Connor McNamara would like to initiate an alumni/undergrad career advisement process. His idea could fit well with Phil Oldham's efforts to boost undergrad/alumni communication. Phil described his plan. In order to facilitate this process, we need a more complete contact database, which Phil intends to work on with help from anyone else who is interested. The current database is incomplete and inaccurate. The best information available to us is from Stewart Howe, which manages distribution of the Saltine Sig, and Sigma Chi Headquarters. We currently have about 1200 alums and Stewart Howe reports that they only have 600 good addresses. We should be able to utilize Stewart Howe and National to improve our current information. Phil presented his proposed database format, and intent to start a pilot program between Columbia and Syracuse with Sigma alums living in the NYC metro area. It would help to get the undergrad alumni rep more involved in this process. Connor agreed to work with Phil on this.

House Corp report:

We no longer employ a full time property manager, and have contracted janitorial and board club functions to third party providers, consistent with recent efforts to outsource the financial responsibilities and reporting to Sciarabba-Walker. House Corporation now has no employees, and all financial duties are handled by Sciarabba Walker. The House Corporation President function and workload is much less now. Feedback from the undergrads was positive. With the quality of food provided by Gill Grilling, more out-of-house brothers have expressed interest in signing up for Board Club, which helps with budgeting.

Hank received an e-mail this morning from our web hosting provider stating that the code we used to create the website years ago is no longer compatible with internet standards. We either need a new website or need to use existing social media providers to facilitate sharing of contacts and information. Facebook and Linked In were suggested, and Psi Psi groups already exist with both.

We currently have 86 dues-paying members. As an active member, you can vote for the Board of Directors. Candidates for a 3-year term ending in 2017 are Doug Sedgwick, John Trop, and Bill Beach all whom have indicated their intention to run for another term. Keegan Slattery '13 has also expressed interest in the final open position. Keegan served as Consul, Magister, Rush Chairman, Tribune, and President of his pledge class as an undergrad. With a quorum of 9 members met, Brad Short motioned to confirm all 4 candidates, Bill Gerbig seconded, and all were approved unanimously.

Hank would like to establish alumni champions to lead initiatives in Fundraising, Scholarship, Webmaster, Alumni Newsletter, Alumni Events Liaison, Ritual Liaison, Career Development, and Capital Projects, at least one lead w/ support from committee members for each category.

1. Fundraising – Our capital campaign collected about \$200,000 out of about \$350,000 in pledges. We're still trying to collect outstanding pledges. For three years we forgot to send bills. Doug Sedgwick has been working on this.
2. Scholarship – there are several scholarships available – Sigma Chi Headquarters, Joe Nelson Scholarship, and our own, which John Bersani managed last year. There's a process for sending out applications.
3. Webmaster – Our website is in disrepair, and needs updating. We should find a recent graduate to take that on this responsibility. A new website is estimated to cost \$10,000, but maybe Linked In and Facebook could be utilized to accomplish the primary purpose of our website – contacts and information updates. It's possible they could be more effective since most members of both access their accounts frequently, and there is no cost. Bill Beach suggested we "back burner" this.
4. Alumni newsletter (Saltine Sig) – Hank currently spends about a month reaching out to get articles, and does so in January and July for publication in March and September. July is typically difficult to get people to respond in time to meet the publication deadline. Bill Beach suggested that more of the content be devoted to alumni with less about undergrads – it is an alumni newsletter. Hank asked for a volunteer to take this over with its original intent in mind. Phil

Oldham agreed to work with Hank on a transition. It was suggested that the Saltine Sig be used to solicit volunteers for each of the categories Hanks listed. We pay about \$2200 for each publication (twice per year) which includes postage. We collect about \$10,000 in donations per year. Last year was over \$12,000. Of the 86 who paid dues, only 4 graduated since 2008.

5. Ritual Liaison – Someone to supervise and support the ritual effort along with the Chapter Advisor. Hank worked with the new Board Club providers to make sure there would be a post-initiation banquet going forward.
6. Career Development – This fits well with Phil Oldham and Connor McNamara’s initiatives.
7. Capital Projects – We have a 10-year capital plan. Hank will continue to manage that.
8. Alumni Events Liaison – John Trop agreed to lead this.
9. Others as needed.

Capital Projects – We refurbished the front basement room, which and can now be used for many purposes – workout room, etc. It’s not big enough and doesn’t have adequate ventilation to be a chapter room. The ritual closet was refurbished last year. The basement stairs have been replaced. The goal over the next five years is to clean up and improve the rest of the basement.

Financially, we should be able to break even next semester 22-23 people living in the chapter house. The switch to Gill Grilling helped. We received a parlor tax installment from the undergrads and added 7-day cleaning service for the common areas, bathrooms, paper supply replenishment, and policing the outside. The undergrads are still responsible to clean up after parties. The undergrads were given three years to pay for the membership review expenses. Two of the three installments due to date have been paid. The mortgage is down to about \$25,000.

Will was asked about the food and cleaning services, and reported both are very good.

New undergraduate officers will be elected in November.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:45.

Respectfully Submitted,

William Gerbig

Secretary