

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

Meeting Minutes

April 25, 2015

Syracuse, NY

Alumni Brothers in Attendance

Hank Suominen (Board President and Treasurer), Bill Gerbig (Board Secretary), Bill Beach (Board Member), Brad Short (Board Member), Steve Oliva (Board Member, by phone), John Trop (Board Member), Mike Carter (Resident Advisor), Connor Wilson (by phone)

Undergraduate Brothers in Attendance

Nish Ketchoyian (Consul), Matt Cassidy (Pro Consul), Ian Fister (Historian), Joe Leem (Quaestor), Eric Santangelo, Dante Sesti

Others in Attendance

Jim Whitbread, Lisa Leonard (Premier Cleaning Service)

Hank Suominen opened the meeting at 9 a.m.

2016-17 Headcount, Room & Board Contracts

Estimated 26 will be living in both semesters, 3 Fall only, and 5 Spring only. Numbers are yet to be finalized, some are still making plans, and elections need to be completed to determine room selection.

Graduate Student Advisor

This has worked out well for everyone. Mike gets along with everyone, and it has helped having him there. Going forward, we expect to continue with a Graduate Student Advisor if the right candidate is available. From a risk assessment point of view, it helps. Headquarters feels that it is a best management practice. Someone doing graduate work is a good candidate. Mike's graduate work will continue through the Fall semester, and new candidates will be considered for the Spring semester. If we don't have a good candidate, we won't have an RA and will look for a candidate for academic year 2017-18.

Property Management

Another positive fire department inspection was completed.

A risk management foundation completed an inspection for the insurance company. They noted several issues on the assessment that required a response by the end of the month. Hank gave them a

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preliminary response. Jim disagreed with many of the issues. We scored a "C." Hank will provide another response after further review. The most serious issue is electrical – daisy chained extension cords, extension cords running under beds. One outdoor emergency light was out – they get checked monthly. Hank and Jim have reviewed the report and will address the issues accordingly.

Hank asked an electrician who has been servicing the house for the last several years to provide a full survey of our electrical service. We have panels overloaded or misbalanced. The preliminary quote, increasing the service panel from 200A to 400A, new feeder circuits, and a new panel for dedicated service in the kitchen, would be \$25,000. Rewiring the house would be another \$75,000. All of the wiring would be done from the basement (also covering the first floor), and the second floor (also covering the third floor). The plan would be to upgrade the service and branch panels, one floor at a time. If we're going to open up the ceilings on the second floor, we might as well add sprinkler protection the bedrooms. A hydraulic survey would have to be done, and as long as the main lines don't have to be redone, it shouldn't be too difficult or expensive. Steve Oliva said that when we opened up the first floor in 2008, everything was replaced. On the second floor, some was replaced in the hallways. It's all interconnected, and we can't replace everything without ripping the house apart. So the estimate is \$10,000 to update the service, \$15,000 to update all the individual panels and new feeders to the panels, and \$75,000 to rewire the house. Now that we have the survey, we can give it to another electrician to get a better scope of work. Hank will find someone to do a hydraulic survey and get an estimate for the sprinklers. Steve offered local contacts who can perform that service. Bill Beach suggested that sprinklers and electrical should be top priorities, and all agreed. Hank thinks there could be an insurance rebate available if we were fully sprinklered. Sprinklers would be difficult to install on the first floor, but the bedrooms can be done this summer and should be the priority. Jim mentioned that the fire inspector wants to have an internal inspection of the sprinkler system we have now.

We're in the final year of the mortgage and have a line of credit, so the funds can be made available. Hank will look into that. We also have a rainy day fund to keep the house open for 2 years if something were to happen. That amount is about \$85,000. It could be done out of pocket over 2 years, but then we'd be without reserves. M&T Bank would allow us to renew a mortgage.

Hank was contacted by J.B. Allen, Board of Trustees for House Corps. who covers our chapter. Risk Management opened up a line of credit with Constantine Capital, so they can make short term loans without going through the mortgage process, which makes it much easier to get a loan in the \$50-75K range on a 5-year term is within reach. It's available for life safety upgrades. Sprinklers and Electrical would definitely fit into that program.

The plan would be to start 6/1, be done 8/1. We'd have a good buffer until students come back. August 29th is first day of classes, so students will start arriving around 8/26.

All agreed to do the new service, branch service, kitchen service, and sprinklers this summer, as long as the cost of sprinklers is reasonable. Hank thinks that a 2-man crew could do the sprinklers in 10 days.

The floor in the basement is wet after a heavy rain, comes in through the back steps, nothing that can't be managed easily.

Dehumidifiers are in place in the ritual closet. Mold is still present, but it's much better and after one more clean sweep it should be gone.

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Jim mentioned that trash management is falling behind again. Chairs have been disappearing and trash cans in the bathroom continue to be a problem. Electric hand dryers in the bathrooms was discussed as a possible solution to a few problems, and that will be considered as a summer project while the electrical work is being done.

Master Key program – Jim said we are ready to go. A key ring was lost, and Jim is ready to swap all of the cylinders this summer. They normally get replaced every 5 years.

Financial

Receivables are, for the most part, in good shape. The few issues that remain are being addressed. Board Club members need to communicate with Hank if they anticipate making a change.

Undergraduate Report

There are plans to attend both BLTW and Horizons workshops this summer. One is going to Horizons. They still need to figure out who is going to attend which. We have 8 spots at BLTW and will try to fill them. Hank suggested that they put a budget together, figure out the financial gap and apply to the Alumni Association to make up the difference. There are 3 sources of funds – National, Alumni, and Chapter, and nobody should have to pay out of pocket. Deadline for BLTW applications is late June.

Chapter debt to House Corp. has been paid down to about \$189. When the house stays full and there is no property damage, and less has to be spent on unusual cleanups and back charges, the chapter can be rebated. Property damage has been much better this year. Cleanup at the end of the 2nd semester has been a consistent issue that has resulted in back charges and loss of security deposits. The undergrads agreed to make a conscious effort to make sure this isn't a problem this year.

We need to improve registration on the website. If everyone was to register and pay through the website, House Corp. could reduce its administration costs with Elevate (formerly Stewart Howe). All neophytes should be registered. Registration should be part of the room registration process. Nish and Matt agreed. Hank requested that the undergrads not use their @syr.edu e-mail addresses, since they won't be active for long after graduation and Elevate won't be able to maintain contact. The undergraduate chapters' contribution to the website is minimal, and that's our primary point of contact and information for chapter news and events.

Composite inventory on the website is good. Whoever we use for composites should agree to provide good electronic copies. There are two years missing from years when Vantine wasn't used, 2012-13 and 2013-14, and we don't have 2015-16 yet. We need to find those to include on the website.

The Saltine Sig has been better in general. Content has improved, but timeliness needs to be better. The Spring version should go out end of January, but was 2 months late, partly because of an article that was rejected by Elevate – they have to do content checks and one article was rejected. Homecoming and our annual meeting are early this year, September 17th, so it's important that the next edition goes out by 9/1, so chapter content needs to be done by mid-August. We may need to send out a separate letter announcing Homecoming. Phil Oldham is trying to organize a 60's era reunion at Homecoming.

Derby Days raised money for Huntsman Cancer Institute in Utah and Galisano Children's Hospital in Syracuse. A hall will be named after Psi Psi at Galisano. Sigma Chi will also be recognized at Huntsman.

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Derby Days raised \$22,000 this year. Hank suggested that the undergrads try to solicit donations from the alumni, using Facebook, the website, or other means.

25 were initiated in the spring, and we are expecting another 15 in the fall.

Scholarship

Joe Nelson was a Psi Psi who gave a modest amount that has grown to about \$140,000. The deed of the gift says that \$2000 is given to Sigma Chi and AZD each annually, but the annual income is about \$15,000. The rest of the income goes into the University's general fund. We make a recommendation and the University awards it. Two brothers have completed the application, which we will forward to the University. An individual's financial aid gets reduced if an award is given to him. There is also a Sigma Chi Foundation Scholarship that needs to be investigated. We will work on this to give awards by December 1st for both the Foundation and Joe Nelson.

New Business

Barkley Scheu, '83, located an original copy of the sheet music for "The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi" from the 1920's, framed it and sent it to the chapter, to be hung on the wall in the library or another suitable place. Once it's mounted, a picture and caption should appear in the next Saltine Sig recognizing Barkley for his contribution.

The meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

William Gerbig

Secretary