

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

**Meeting Minutes**

**April 22, 2017**

**Syracuse, NY**

**Alumni Brothers in Attendance**

Hank Suominen (Board President and Treasurer, by phone), Bill Gerbig (Board Secretary), Bill Beach (Board Member), Chris Dowd (Board Member), Brad Short (Board Member), Joe Deramo, Steve Oliva (Board Member, by phone), Otto Hildebrand, Dan Gelman, Paul Norcross, Dan Davidson

**Undergraduate Brothers in Attendance**

Dante Sesti (Consul), Hunter Acone (Pro Consul), Cobie Beach (Quaestor)

**Others in Attendance**

Jim Whitbread (Premier Cleaning Service),

Hank opened the meeting at 9 a.m.

Hank motioned to approve the minutes from February 4<sup>th</sup>. Brad Short seconded, all were in favor.

**Property Management**

Projected Headcount was 32 for Fall Semester and 28 for Spring, depending on how many go abroad. 2 have backed out for the Fall, so we're down to 30. Four were not registered, and Dante promised those registrations would be complete before the end of the day. It is still possible that there will be more applicants for the Spring Semester if people know that spots are available. [5/29 Update: Final headcount is 30 for Fall, 24 for Spring.] Hank reminded everyone that it only takes two minutes to register, and after today there will be a late fee, so those not registered are not officially committed. Anyone who wants to sign up for the Spring also needs to do so now. This is the basis for our budgeting process. Dante has informed everyone that there will be a late fee for all who don't register by the end of the day. All active undergrads must be registered today for Common Area Access. CAA closes on 8/1/17 and Room Only closes on 5/13/17 (last day of the semester).

Starting in the fall, fees to House Corp. will not include Board. The Chapter decided by majority vote that board will be handed by Good Uncle next year, and they will handle all aspects of Board Club. There will be no soda machines or coffee pots, and the kitchen will be locked. The kitchen will not be available for use. Hank made Good Uncle aware of all this. The PCSNY will vacate the Chapter Officers room and their office will be moved to the pantry.

Dante talked to a representative from Good Uncle (Matt) previously in the week. There will be 16 meals per week per person – 4 breakfasts, 4 dinners, and 8 flex meals that can be ordered anytime online, delivered to 737 or another site at a specified time. If a board club member doesn't use all 16 meals, credits will accumulate. The cost per person per semester is \$2995 plus tax, the same that House Corp. has been charging for board club. There are reduced plan options for out-of-house brothers. There is no minimum membership. All billing is done with the individuals by Good Uncle. Good Uncle also has a plan for snacks and beverages outside of normal meal service. The existing soda fountain needs to be returned or scrapped – Jim will find out if we own it or the syrup provider supplies it. The chapter will take responsibility for the trash – there will be no kitchen staff and the cleaning staff will not be responsible for cleaning up trash left from meals. Dante assured everyone that trash will not be a problem. The cleaning staff will not clean up trash left from Good Uncle service. Good Uncle needs to supply a Certificate of Insurance to the Chapter.

### **Summer Projects**

The house will be closed for the Summer on May 18<sup>th</sup> with no exceptions – this leaves an extra 4 days after graduation for everyone to get completely moved out with all personal items removed from the house. On 5/18 the security codes will be changed and the house will be locked off for summer construction. Anything left behind will be considered trash, but no trash or items should be left. Security deposits will not be returned this year until the condition of the house can be assessed after the move out date.

Contractors are scheduled to begin work on the 18th. All suspended ceilings will be removed. Projects include electric service work (re-wire 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors), fire sprinkler coverage into all bedrooms and closets that are large enough to require one (to be determined), new fire alarm panel, smoke detectors and CO detectors, and ceiling replacements. It will be a tight schedule – it will take a full two months. We will receive a rebate on insurance as a result of these improvements, and will be in full compliance of all codes.

Jim has other projects – floor in the foyer, carpets, etc.

Dante asked permission to order 3 dumpsters to aid cleaning out the house during the first week of May. If the chapter gets the trash to the dumpster, House Corp will pay for it. If they don't, we'll have to hire the labor and the chapter will pay for the labor and trash removal.

### **Scholarship**

The scholarship application is available on the website. There is a dedicated e-mail address for sending essays. If the applicant completes the form, we will have everything necessary to select scholarship recipients. Hank suggested we announce this in the fall with applications due by 9/1/17. We need to know what we have for funds and decide how they will be distributed. Hank and Bill Beach agreed to

finalize the plans for this within 2 weeks. The infrastructure is in place, we just need to develop the program and promote the application process.

### **Alumni Programs**

Phil Oldham is doing a good job staying on top of Saltine Sig publications. The summer edition gets mailed no later than 8/15, and at least 30 days before homecoming by Elevate (formerly Stewart Howe), and the spring edition gets mailed by 2/15, and at least 30 days before Clambake.

Attendance for Clam Bake is expected to be good, but we still need to do better. The Derby Days event is a conflict with the scheduled time of the Clam Bake, with no alcohol at the house until after 1 (official Clambake start time is 11), so coordination between alums and undergrads needs to improve for future events. Arrangements were not made for food to be ready by 11, and tables and tables and chairs were not ordered. Hank asked for photos to be posted on Facebook and the website to boost attendance and help promote our strong alumni connections for the University.

Syracuse Central (Homecoming) is scheduled for October 7<sup>th</sup>, with our annual meeting and elections. Slattery, Sedgwick, Beach, and Viscarello are up for election.

We will need to figure out catering for homecoming. Traditionally, this has been an alumni event run by the chapter, but that's going to be a challenge with the kitchen closed. Dante mentioned that other fraternities have had events catered by Good Uncle, so they may be able to provide that for us – the undergrads agreed to find out. If that is not an option, the alums need to be informed as soon as possible. The mailing needs to be sent out by August 15<sup>th</sup>, so we need to know what we're doing well before then. Paul Norcross agreed to check with Abbott's Catering as an option if we need him to – they are active with athletic events catering. Dante suggested getting the Tribune involved and agreed that the Chapter will reach out to Good Uncle and inform the alumni of their findings. Costs and funding also need to be considered. Bill Gerbig agreed to work with the undergrads on a schedule of events for homecoming. RSVP's and collection from all attendees both need to be addressed.

In an effort to boost involvement and dues collections, Clambake and Homecoming are free to dues paying members of the Alumni Association. Brad Short agreed monitor attendance with a list of dues paying members. The undergrads need to be responsible for collecting from live out brothers not on board club.

The next Saltine Sig will include a letter explaining how Alumni Association funds are disbursed. Chris Dowd asked if dues could be paid online? Bill Gerbig agreed to investigate.

### **Chapter Report**

All late registrations will be assessed a late fee billed to the chapter. The website automatically adds the late fee. Dante has the list of those not registered and will collect the late fee directly from them.

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Chapter debt to House Corp has been declining. Cobie has a check to send to Caroline, Hank asked that he e-mail the amount (\$3000), date, and check number. This will reduce the total debt to under \$10,000.

The Chapter needs to become more engaged with the website – undergrad profiles and content in general. It's a missed opportunity. We haven't had a committed webmaster in about 5 years. Hank feels that this is the single most underperforming office in the chapter. This needs to be a priority when electing the next one.

Internet performance continues to be an issue. Our current system was not designed with current usage in mind. Our contract is up with Time Warner in May of 2018. Dante spent 45 minutes by phone with Time Warner and didn't make any progress. In March, Time Warner performed an inspection and concluded that the only way to improve the service was to increase the number of routers. Cost per month is approximately \$600 for internet and television. There are 300 devices using internet – speed is poor and intermittent. The undergrads tried reducing the number of users by changing the password, which dropped the number to 100 temporarily, but it returned to 300. Many live out brothers and guests use the network when visiting the house, which is to be expected. The transition from Time Warner to Spectrum may be a root cause. Hank suggested finding an alternative service with high capacity service to the house, but no TV. Dante expressed that TV is still important to the house, but internet is a real issue. Hank explained that a third party service provider put the equipment in place, hired by Time Warner. The equipment should be good. Routers don't matter if the service to the house isn't adequate. Someone suggested looking into FIOS. Hank agreed to put Time Warner on notice that we plan to terminate the contract. We have morphed from a multi-family to a business account, and that has become part of the problem – we're between the two. We may need to start from scratch. Bill Gerbig volunteered to work with Spectrum (recently acquired Time Warner) to try to come up with a solution.

### **Miscellaneous Topics**

Regarding SU's long term housing plans, our lawyer recommends we put "Private Property" signage and fencing up to eliminate foot traffic through our property. Jim will be working on that over the summer. This may prompt a response from the University.

Regarding parking, Dante asked about expanding the size of the parking lot. We could create another 4 spaces, and it would be a good idea to expand the width of the driveway for more adequate and safer parking along the side. We have other priorities for capital improvements, but this will be considered as a future project.

Bill Beach mentioned that Joe Durzo, a Psi Psi, is the chairman of the Sigma Chi Foundation. He asked if we are participating in the Horizon program. We are.

As a Bell Chapter, we get 8 spots at BLTW. Dante is registered and will try to recruit 7 more. The names need to be confirmed with John Predmore.

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Adam Hildebrand asked about the Joe Nelson Scholarship. When this was initiated, it was set at \$2000 per year with no escalation for inflation. It's still \$2000, although the fund value is \$447,000. The University keeps the balance of income the fund generates, and it can't be changed. Alpha Zeta Delta also gets \$1000 per year. We can split up the award as we see fit. The scholarship program with disburse these funds with additional funds available from House Corp and the Alumni Association.

Adam Hildebrand learned through his work with the UNH chapter that there are numerous scholarships available that don't get applied for. Dante expressed that this would be on the agenda for the next scholarship chairman.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*William Gerbig*

William Gerbig

Secretary