**Riversdale Historical Society**

**General Membership Meeting**

**Saturday, February 10, 2024**

Patrick Gossett called the hybrid meeting to order at 10:05 AM. Present were:

Patrick Gossett Howard Menaker Maria Cathell

Anne Turkos Leigh Ryan Beth Alvarez

Jennifer Flood Maya Davis Mel Kornspan

Joanne Calvert Godelieve Bartley Kathy Mack

Zoe Webb Michelle Kretsch

**Welcome and President’s Update--Patrick Gossett, RHS President**

* Patrick welcomed attendees and noted that as of the end of 2023, RHS had 121 active members. RHS received 60 renewals at the end of the year. He sent renewal letters to 125 individuals who had not renewed over the last three years; 17 individuals renewed as a result of this appeal. Renewals will now be done annually as a group, instead of monthly based on the month in which the member originally joined. Renewal letters will go out in November.
* Patrick thanked Michelle for the loan of the owl equipment to facilitate our hybrid meeting.

**Approval of Minutes of General Membership Meeting of December 2, 2023--Anne Turkos, RHS Secretary**

Minutes approved as submitted.

**Treasurer’s Report—Michelle Kretsch, RHS Treasurer**

* Total funds available: $26, 401.86
* Michelle reviewed expenses over the last two months.
* Upcoming expenses include an ad in the Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage program booklet, insurance for the cemetery, signage for Calvert Memorial Park, and supplies for Paint Branch Garden Club and the park.
* Treasurer’s report approved.

**Museum Shop Update—Michelle Kretsch, RHS Treasurer**

* RHS Executive Committee has met with Maya Davis regarding the transition of the museum shop to M-NCPPC management.
* M-NCPPC will be taking Riversdale-branded items and other items that relate to the area or topics relating to Riversdale. Any remaining inventory will be donated; this is a very limited number of items.
* The furniture from the shop will be disbursed to the Visitor Center or elsewhere in the house where needed for storage. Any furniture not needed for these purposes will be donated to Habitat for Humanity or another charitable organization.

**Director’s Report—Maya Davis, Riversdale Director**

* Slides Maya used as illustrations are attached to the minutes. The report covers the months of December 2023 and January 2024.
* Facilities and Operations—Maya noted a number of repair projects and contract renewals, collections support from Surratt House staff member Rhiannon O’neal, tour guide training,
* Staffing—Offers have been made to individuals who will fill the museum/operations specialist and gardener positions.
* Revenue—Income received from tours, programs, and ECO rent.
* Volunteer hours—Figures provided for Collections, Garden, Kitchen Guild, Special Events, and Tour Guide, Museum Shop, and Visitor Assistants.
* Programs (past and upcoming)
* Visit with Good Niklaas—98 participants. Support from the Belgian Embassy, Renee Domagauer, and Laura DeMarco
* Riversdale by Candlelight—made a good connection with the community via performance by the Parkdale High School choir and work of the Kitchen Guild.
* Black History Month—numerous programs
* Riversdale Chamber Music Society
* Parkdale Choir Concert
* U.S. Army Woodwind Quintet with the Riversdale Chamber Music Society
* Kitchen Guild—provided dates for cooking through May, especially Plummers’ Kitchen
* Full list of 2024 programming through June—highlighted Riversdale Reunion of Calvert and Plummer descendants on June 8.
* Maya fielded questions about the Riversdale Reunion, staff availability, Rhiannon O’neal’s assignments (assessing indoor environment, environmental monitoring, developing a maintenance plan), and reviving the six-month calendar of events produced by M-NCPPC.
* Patrick highlighted the Preservation Month reception on May 23 at the Newton White Mansion and the upcoming video shoot by Joe Himali. His work will focus on Riversdale’s architecture and will be posted on Instagram and TikTok. We will add the piece to the RHS website when it is available.
* Maya will share the new pgparks.com webpage for Riversdale at the next general membership meeting. Site is still under revision.

**Kitchen Guild—Michelle Kretsch, Riversdale Kitchen Guild**

* Michelle noted the list of dates upon which the Kitchen Guild will be cooking.
* Two individuals have expressed an interest in joining the Kitchen Guild. They will participate in an upcoming cooking session to get a feel for what volunteering would involve.
* Michelle will talking to Maya and Marvin Alonzo-Greer about needs and activities planned for Plummers’ Kitchen.
* Produce from the garden will be used in future cooking sessions.
* Patrick noted the necessity of improving the functionality of the woodbox.

**Calvert Memorial Park—Beth Alvarez, Paint Branch Garden Club**

* Total number of volunteer hours as of 2024-02-06-02: 2407.5 hours
* Since last reported, volunteers have installed trees and bulbs donated by garden club members, weeded, edged, watered newly installed plants, pruned, thinned perennials, and picked up trash.
* The major accomplishments since early December have been the planting of eight eastern red cedars on the northern perimeter of the park and approximately 150 daffodil and crocus bulbs. Watering of the newly installed trees continued in December until more than adequate rainfall and snow arrived in the new year. The effort to remove and reduce some of the liriope, which has become invasive, has begun and is on-going.
* In lieu of an Earth Day project at the park, an event will be held on May 4, 2024, from 9 am to Noon. Faithful volunteers from previous Earth Day and Good Neighbor Day sessions have committed to participating. Our enthusiastic 2023 Earth Day partners, members of the University of Maryland’s Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity, have made the commitment to join the garden club volunteers. Plans include raking leaves, invasive mitigation, spreading mulch, and planting additional native plants. Historical Society members are invited to participate.
* The work at Calvert Memorial Park is a cooperative effort of Riversdale Historical Society and Paint Branch Garden Club. The Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations, first signed in 2020, has been reviewed, revised, updated and signed by both the PBGC and RHS and is undergoing updating for 2024.
* Volunteer efforts are ongoing and typically take place on Tuesday mornings. Volunteers are enthusiastically welcomed. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact, Beth Alvarez, alvarez@umd.edu, cell phone: 240-383-9682.

**Calvert Memorial Park: Signage—Howard Menaker, RHS Vice President**

* Three signs will be installed in the park this spring—near the steps entering the park, at the fenced gravesite, and at the brick outline of Riverdale Presbyterian Church.
* Signs will contain QR codes that lead to more information on the RHS website.

**Newsletter--Howard Menaker, RHS Vice President**

* Aiming for a mid-March publication date for the next issue
* Howard plans to step down as editor at the end of 2024. He would like to have an assistant editor to help out with issues going forward, eventually taking over as editor. Contact him if interested.

**Social Media--Maria Grenchik Cathell, Social Media Manager**

* Maria’s notes and illustrations for her report are attached to the minutes.
* Maria thanked Jenn for her help in providing information and images used in RHS social media posts.
* Maria is working on making the RHS website more mobile device-friendly. Approximately 50% of website views come from users of mobile devices.
* Maria shared analytics for the RHS Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) accounts and usage for the RHS website. Everyone is encouraged to like, share, and comment on posts to increase their visibility.
* Send Maria ideas for posts at [info@riversdale.org](mailto:info@riversdale.org).
* Howard noted that Maria’s return to work with RHS has been a home run. The engagement level with our social media is tremendous.
* Park and Planning is under certain social media constraints and cannot be as active as we are, and they are very grateful for RHS’s support on social media. We are able to drive traffic to the pgparks.com page for Riversdale using our posts.

**Collections and Acquisitions Update--Jennifer Flood, RHS Curator of Collections**

* The slides from Jenn’s presentation are attached to the minutes.
* The frame for the William Norris Calvert portrait is now in the hands of conservator. Jenn showed some images of Dean’s work thus far. Frame has been stabilized. It will likely need re-gilding. There will also be an effort to replace missing ornaments and components.
* Over 1,700 Calvert Family documents have been transcribed as part of the digitization project. Jenn showed a letter from William Norris Calvert to miller George Taylor regarding a barrel of flour and provided background about the Avalon Mill. She also showed a letter from R. Cohen to Charles Benedict Calvert in which Cohen encourages CBC to purchase servants’ footware from him.
* Jenn showed images of the portraits of Charles Baltimore Calvert and Eleanor Mackubin Calvert which were donated in memory of Hester Virginia Calvert Lilly Yarborough and her husband Ramon Yarborough.

**Other Business—Patrick Gossett, RHS president**

* **2024 General Membership Meeting Dates**

May 11, 2024

            September 14, 2024

            December 7, 2024

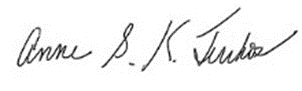
                        All meetings will be held in person at Riversdale beginning at 10:00 a.m.

but will also offer a Zoom option.

* Reminder about the Preservation Month reception on May 23, 2024, at the Newton White Mansion at 6 PM and the Riversdale Reunion on June 8, 2024.

Meeting adjourned at 11: 33 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Anne S.K. Turkos

Secretary

Attachments:

Riversdale Updates February 2024\_Maya

Social Media Report\_2.10.24\_Maria

RHS presentation 2.10.2024\_Jenn