

**Forest Home Improvement Association Officers Meeting
October 12, 2011, 7:30 pm
Forest Home Chapel**

Minutes

Officers in attendance: Jon Miller (president), Michael Bend (immediate past president), Bill Arms (treasurer), Beth Kelly (secretary)

1. Approval of minutes from August meeting

It was agreed to approve the minutes from the 08/18/11 meeting with one minor edit. Beth will do this.

2. Treasurer's report

The treasurer's report will be presented at the annual meeting on the 26th of October. The necessity of collecting dues from community members was discussed since this year fewer dues have been sent in. Street captains have been a big help in collecting dues. Ideally there will be activities a few times a year that would require the street captains to make the rounds.

3. Delivery of community directories and invitations to annual meeting

Street captains have been notified that the new directories are ready for delivery from the Chapel basement. Included with the directory is an announcement for the annual meeting and a request for dues (recommended \$30/year/household). Michael Bend has been updating the directory and keeping the master list. He can email a pdf of the directory to anyone who wishes to have an electronic copy.

4. Nominating Committee report

Nominating Committee chair Michael Bend reported that the committee has met and continues to confer via email. He is confident that there will be a slate of nominees to present at the Annual Meeting. Currently invitations have been accepted for vice president, treasurer, and secretary; conversations are ongoing regarding the position of president.

5. Report on meeting with Peter Stein, Tompkins County legislator

Jon Miller reported on a luncheon meeting the day before with Peter Stein, county legislator for district 11, to discuss issues pertaining to Forest Home. The meeting was requested by Peter, who is reaching out to constituents. Jon presented him with a list of priority

pedestrian and bicycle projects compiled by the Alternative Transportation Working Group. Most of the suggested projects fall under the Town's or Cornell's jurisdiction. The County does have jurisdiction over Warren Road (where the community has requested the improvement of the sidewalk and the grading of the area around the entry feature) and the upstream bridge, whose renovation is scheduled for next year or the year after.

Among the other issues discussed were Cornell's plans to create an off-road bike path that would connect the Northeast neighborhood with Cornell via Bluegrass Lane and Hasbrouck Apartments. Peter was excited to learn about the idea of installing a microhydroelectric generator in Fall Creek near the Byway; he said he would share the idea with colleagues at the County, who are on the lookout for renewable energy projects. They also discussed the Forest Home Walkway (on Town property) and Warren Road sidewalk (on County property); Jon made it clear that the community did not want to abandon the Walkway once the sidewalk is built. Peter offered to make a brief presentation about the state-mandated property tax cap at the next annual meeting; Jon accepted and invited him to the meeting.

6. Meeting with Bill Goodman, chair, Town of Ithaca Public Works Committee

Bill Goodman arrived at 8:00 to discuss Town of Ithaca Public Works Committee objectives, and to learn about FH priorities. He asked whether the new entry features and speed tables met the goals to lower speed limits. Jon reported on a speed and volume count conducted by the Town this past spring; he said the measurements were not entirely accurate, but in general the speeds do seem to have been reduced by 5-10 mph, and very high speeds seem to have been eliminated. The volume of traffic has not been reduced by the speed tables; this was not their purpose, but volume remains a concern. Bill Arms asked about trucks and large vehicles exceeding weight limits on both bridges. Goodman said that the County was responsible for maintaining the bridges, and that the County sheriff is the one who enforces the weight limits. The Ithaca Tompkins County Transportation Council makes the maps that reflect the weight limits on the bridges. Herb Engman is on the council and could be contacted. Bill Arms mentioned that Cornell has talked about reconfiguring the entrance of North Campus at Credit Farm Road and Pleasant Grove Road to deter people from going through Forest Home. It was made clear that this idea is supported by the community.

Jon provided details on the illumination issues at the foot of Pleasant Grove hill; at present the streetlight is on a pole on the other side road and does not light the crosswalk. Pedestrians are vulnerable at night, as drivers descending the hill are (a) coming off a curve and (b) rarely stop at the stop sign, knowing that their view of the other side of the one-lane bridge is obstructed. Goodman agreed that something should be done. He noted that the Town has enacted a lighting law that seeks to limit unnecessary lighting; he said homeowners should be reminded of the need to reduce outdoor lighting and make sure it is shielded. This led to a brief discussion of the excessive amount of lighting at the Plantations

Welcome Center. Goodman said he would drive by on his way home from the meeting.

A discussion followed about the Forest Home Walkway. Goodman reported that this summer, after FHIA representatives attended a Public Works Committee meeting, he and fellow members Nahmin Horwitz and Rich DePaolo visited the Walkway to inspect it for steepness, height of the handrail and surface conditions. He said the committee members saw the value of the Walkway; their preference was to provide a long-term solution rather than perform slap-dash maintenance.

Jon noted that Town highway superintendent Jim Weber has suggested more than once that the eventual construction of a sidewalk at the lower end of Warren Road would make the Walkway redundant and rehabilitation unnecessary. (Sidewalk construction is planned for the next time the road is resurfaced, but resurfacing has not been scheduled.) Jon noted that in order to create the sidewalk, a retaining wall will need to be built, at substantial cost. Michael Bend noted that the FH Walkway and sidewalk on Warren Rd will be competing for the same funds. What are the chances of getting money for both projects?

The officers asked for the Town's help with snow removal. The Town sends a snow blower to remove snow from the walkways on both bridges, and FHIA has asked that the snow removal be extended to the full length of the 200 block of FH Drive, as well as to the sidewalk between the downstream bridge and Judd Falls Rd, and the steep lower section of JFR. In each of these areas, the plows pile snow on the sidewalks and people are forced to walk in the road. Jon said he considered this the most serious of all the hazards for pedestrians in FH.

Efforts to make the 200 block of Forest Home Drive more walkable were discussed. Abe Stroock of McIntyre Place has met with neighbors along this stretch to ask if they would be amenable to a minor amount of excavation along the fronts of their properties to allow for a path that is at least 1-1 ½ ft. wide. So far people have been positive. Goodman noted that when the upstream bridge is renovated, the sidewalk and retaining wall around the curve will likely also be repaired. He wondered if it might be possible to construct a sidewalk all the way to the downstream bridge as part of this project.

Jon asked Bill Goodman who owns The Byway and Goodman said he would check the abstract of title to find out since there is interest in pursuing a micro-hydro project behind the houses on The Byway. There are several unknowns with this project, e.g., who owns the water, stream banks and old mill dam.

Finally, Jon noted that a couple of the entry features (notably Caldwell Road and 300 block of FHD) obstruct existing walking paths and force pedestrians into the street. Goodman said making neighborhoods more walkable was one of his major goals as a Town official.

7. Drafting of agenda for Annual Meeting

Items for the annual meeting agenda were discussed, including a president's report covering the previous year's major activities and accomplishments, a treasurer's report, a secretary's report on social activities for last year and next, a briefing on the Traffic Calming survey results, and a brief presentation by county legislator Peter Stein. Also, it was agreed to solicit comments on priorities for Phase II (pedestrian and bicycle facilities). The agenda will be sent out by email prior to the meeting.

8. Christmas Party time and place

Michael Bend offered to host the annual holiday party at his house at 127 Warren Road, pending confirmation with his wife Valerie. A tentative time was set for Saturday, December 17, from 5 to 8 pm.

9. Old business

10. New business

11. Adjournment