

**Minutes of the 2007 Annual Meeting  
of the Forest Home Improvement Association  
Forest Home Chapel, November 29, 2007**

**In attendance:** Darcy Binns, Trevor Pinch, Christine Leuenberger-Pinch, Dani Novak, Seymour Smidt, Robby Aceto, Kris Merschrod, Harriet Brittain, Doug Brittain, Amita Verma, Bruce Brittain, Jon Miller, Herb Engman, David Gross, Pete Loucks, Nancy Trautmann, Carrie Koplinka-Loehr, Barb Chambers, Mary Kane Trochim, Mark Pedersen, Lisa Wickham.

Meeting called to order by FHIA president Darcy Binns at 7:43 pm

**Treasurer's Report:** Michael Bend, treasurer, presented a spreadsheet reflecting total expenses for the year of \$377.13, total income of \$1,089.09, and total assets of \$4,659.30. He also reported receipt of an e-mail from Bruce Brittain on the afternoon of 11/29 alerting Michael to an impending request by Bruce and brother Doug for reimbursement of approximately \$2,800 in expenses incurred for traffic calming activities. Michael indicated that the request, when formalized, would have to be considered by the new FHIA officers. He suggested that the Association develop procedures for reimbursement of expenses claimed for activities spanning more than one fiscal year. No decisions were made nor action taken.

**Newsletter:** Michael Bend announced that he welcomes submissions (articles, announcements, poetry, etc.) for the FHIA newsletter. He has produced two newsletters so far and has made them available in PDF form to the FHIA e-mail list and posted them on FHIA.org; he has also printed copies and hand delivered them to those neighbors without e-mail. The hope is to produce a newsletter at least once per quarter.

**University Neighborhoods Council:** Jon Miller, FHIA representative to the UNC, gave a brief background report about the council, which was founded after the Redbud Woods controversy in 2005 as a forum for discussing issues of shared concern to Cornell and the neighborhoods surrounding campus. Issues discussed by the UNC have included Cornell's master plan and transportation plan processes, ongoing and pending construction projects, emergency response procedures, deer management, and sustainability initiatives on campus. Jon invited interested people to attend UNC meetings (usually the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at the East Hill Office Building on Pine Tree Road) and to communicate with him about any FH/Cornell issues, questions or concerns. A brief discussion ensued over the value of maintaining good relations with Cornell while remaining alert to areas of potential conflict. No decisions were made nor action taken.

**Animal Health Diagnostic Center:** Trevor Pinch, FHIA vice president, reported on discussions between Forest Home residents and representatives of the Vet School about the anticipated noise impact on FH of the heating, cooling and ventilation systems of the AHDC, a new facility to be built in the Vet School complex on the east side of Caldwell Road above the water treatment plant. The center has received site plan approval from the Town of Ithaca. Trevor explained that there is

no limit for aggregate noise coming from campus buildings. There are state guidelines (not regulations) on how much noise a given building can add to ambient levels in a neighboring residential area, but as those guidelines are currently written, the ambient level of noise above which the new noise is measured rises with each new noise source. Furthermore, the Town of Ithaca has no regulations or guidelines for noise generated in areas zoned residential (as Cornell is). Trevor reported that, in response to an FH request, Vet School reps have agreed to take new noise measurements after the AHDC is built, not only on Fairway Drive and Forest Home Drive (where ambient noise measurements were taken this summer) but also on Crest Lane, which is across the valley at roughly the same elevation and could be more directly affected. Trevor also reported on discussions about mechanical noises that have been coming in recent weeks from either the Vet School or nearby buildings, and which have been especially loud on Crest Lane at night. Cornell reps have questioned all relevant parties, but no one has found any new or increased noise. Robby Aceto noted that the noise from campus buildings always increases when the leaves fall. Jon Miller noted that mechanical noise from campus buildings is an emerging issue of interest and will be a future topic for discussion by the UNC. No decisions were made nor action taken.

**Deer:** Darcy Binns provided a brief history and an update on deer management on Cornell lands adjacent to Forest Home. Forest Home's objection to a proposed fence around the arboretum, along with interest by other neighborhoods and local governments in finding ways to control deer populations, encouraged Cornell to develop a comprehensive (albeit experimental) deer management plan that includes trapping and surgical sterilization of deer in and near densely populated areas of campus and public bow hunting on lands farther out. Darcy was not certain whether plans to build internal deer exclusion fences in the Mundy Wildflower Garden are moving forward. No decisions were made nor action taken.

**Traffic Calming:** Darcy Binns reported that she had submitted the Forest Home Traffic Calming Plan and a cover letter, signed by her as FHIA president, to the Town of Ithaca on November 24. She also reported that she included a copy of a petition signed by 39 FH residents asking the FHIA to move quickly on installing speed tables and implementing other measures to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, particularly on Judd Falls Road and McIntyre Place. Neither the cover letter nor the petition were shared with other FHIA officers prior to the afternoon of 11/29. Darcy said both would be posted on the FHIA website. A copy of the petition was circulated at the request of some in attendance. Herb Engman, who was recently elected Town Supervisor, said the cover letter and petition, which he had received at his office at Town Hall, suggested that Forest Home is not united behind the traffic calming plan as submitted. A discussion ensued about how the FHIA should proceed. Suggestions centered on requesting a meeting with Town officials to clarify the FHIA's position, and/or writing a follow-up letter explaining that the neighborhood strongly supports the plan (as was clear from an open community meeting held by the FHIA on October 3) and is eager to work with the Town on implementation. No decisions were made nor action taken.

**Small Park:** Herb Engman raised the issue of the ownership of the parcel of undeveloped Cornell Plantations land along Fall Creek on the 200 block of Forest Home drive. Plantations Director Don Rakow has asked Herb if the Town would be interested in taking ownership of the land, as it is costly to maintain and does not serve the Plantations' mission. Herb noted that the land extends across the creek to the west bank. He asked if FH would be willing or able to take responsibility for mowing and fence maintenance if the Town were to take ownership of the parcel. He mentioned an "adopt-a-park" program in which neighborhoods volunteer to maintain a park in exchange for the Town accepting liability and ensuring that the park land is not developed. Discussion ensued about whether FH could or should commit to providing those services indefinitely. Questions were raised about the possibility of a surcharge on neighborhood tax bills, similar to the Forest Home Lighting District, enabling Town crews to maintain the land. Seymour Smidt suggested that the neighborhood think carefully about how it would use the land before committing to anything. It was noted that this issue has come up several times over the years, and that the status quo -- that Plantations maintain the parcel as a quasi-park -- has always been the most attractive option for FH. The concern is that Plantations may eventually choose to transfer the land either to a private entity or to another division of the University, and that it may be developed. No decisions were made nor action taken.

**Events/Social:** Darcy Binns reported on the various events that have taken place under the auspices of the FHIA since the last annual meeting, including a geological tour by Art Bloom, a tour of the Botanical Garden by Don Rakow, and an embroidery club meeting in honor of the late Marge Loucks. She also read the names of those Forest Home residents who died during the year. No decisions were made nor action taken.

**New Business:** Herb Engman announced that the Town is seeking volunteers to fill vacancies on a number of boards and committees, and encouraged FH residents to apply. There was brief discussion of interest in reviving the FHIA social committee, and in restarting the lecture series; it was also noted that Karen Westmont has proposed to launch a history or historical preservation committee. No decisions were made nor action taken.

**Nominating Committee Report & Election of New Officers:** Jon Miller, chair of the nominating committee (composed of the four past presidents of the FHIA), announced a slate of new officers nominated by the committee. They were Trevor Pinch, president; Michael Bend, vice president; Amita Verma, treasurer; and Harriet Brittain, secretary. Jon gave brief biographies of each nominee. No other nominations were offered by the floor. Doug Brittain moved that the slate be elected as presented by the nominating committee. A vote, by show of hands, was unanimous in favor of the motion.

The meeting was adjourned by FHIA president Trevor Pinch at approximately 9:35 pm.

Minutes by Jon Miller

