

**Forest Home Improvement Association
Annual Meeting
Forest Home Chapel
October 20, 2010
Draft Minutes**

In attendance: 26 Forest Home residents, including FHIA officers Michael Bend (President), Bill Arms (Treasurer), Beth Kelly (Secretary) and Drew Noden (Vice President), and Ithaca Town Supervisor Herb Engman. Michael Bend called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Treasurer's Report

Bill Arms, treasurer, delivered the year-end report (Oct. 1, 2009-Sept. 30, 2010) with a detailed rendering of expenses, income from dues and account balances. The year ended strong as a result of successful dues collection (suggested \$30/household) from the street captain initiative that was implemented by Michael Bend. Expenses included reimbursements to Bruce and Doug Brittain, 135 Warren Rd. for costs associated with the traffic calming plan (\$1,724.24, paying off all remaining debts); Forest Home Chapel yearly contribution (\$250.00); spring clean-up (\$71.70 for trash bags, tags & refreshments); and the September block party (\$75.00 for a face painter and \$41.80 for ice cream). The new print directory cost \$157.55.

Total number of residents who contributed dues: 51

Total dues collected: \$1,595.00

This year there were no expenses associated with the holiday party. The association should expect to receive a bill of about \$100 for web site maintenance. For complete details, the Treasurer's report is available on FHIA.org and copies were distributed at the meeting.

3. FH Directories and Welcome Packets

Last October the street captains distributed a questionnaire to collect current names, street addresses, e-mail addresses and phone numbers and also to ask residents if they were in favor of continuing to maintain an online directory or producing an up-to-date print directory. The percentage of those in favor of the online directory was low and so a new print directory was created. Each household received a copy. If anyone wants a new copy at any time they may e-mail foresthomenews@gmail.com. Also available upon request is a pdf of the directory to store on your computer.

Welcome packets are given to new neighbors and include the Forest Home Walking Tour and History, "The Story of Forest Home" by Albert Force (1994), some trash tags and the Forest Home Directory. Nanette Blakely (332 Forest Home Drive) mentioned the need to keep the e-mail listserv up to date. Residents who are not getting e-mail announcements should e-mail foresthomenews@gmail.com. The next time street captains are coming around they will ask if e-mails are being received.

IV. Forest Home Online Bulletin Board

Many people would like an online bulletin board where they can post announcements, photographs, messages, etc.. There is a Forest Home Facebook site and you can 'friend' the site to be connected. Some residents expressed security concerns with using Facebook and suggested that the Forest Home website may be the preferred route of communication. The officers agreed to discuss this during the coming year.

V. Social Activities Recap

There were numerous social activities over the past year and the enjoyment and value of these was discussed as well as the desire for similar events in the future. The Holiday Party last December, hosted by Mary Kane (200 Forest Home Drive), was a big success. Neighbors enjoyed scrumptious food and beverages and later gathered around for carol singing with Jennifer Kivisild leading at the keyboard. Mary has agreed to host again this year – keep your calendars open for Dec. 12. Bruce Brittain's historical walking tour in April was highly appreciated by about 25 people. In May 2010 there was a music event at the Chapel organized by Beth Kelly with a variety of music performed on recorders, flutes, horns, cello and piano by musicians ranging in age from 6 to 48. Afterwards everyone enjoyed desserts and conversation in the basement.

The block party attracted about 60-70 people and featured food, music from a boom box (people didn't perform live music – too windy), a face painter (lots of kids and some adults(!) got their faces painted) and ice cream. Kids played frisbee, the weather cooperated, and everyone mingled and had a great time. The road was blocked off from Warren Rd. to the downstream bridge. The Town of Ithaca provided barricades and Forest Home residents put them up and took them down. Treasurer Bill Arms reminded people that money from dues collection can be used for such events and the association is open to different ideas for future activities.

The Blueberry Social that took place over the summer was something the Chapel asked if we would co-sponsor and so a message was sent out to the FHIA listserv, but the event turned out to be a fundraiser for the Chapel where there was money charged for food and such. The FHIA concluded that in the future fundraiser type of events would be something the Chapel would conduct on its own.

Other ideas for social activities included garden parties, book talks, more music events and another historical walking tour.

VI. Historic Preservation Working Group

Ed Oyer (117B McIntyre Place) congratulated Bruce Brittain and Liese Bronfenbrenner (former resident, now at Kendal) for their superb history contributions and encouraged everyone to check out the website for [***Free Hollow: The First One Hundred Years of Forest Home***](#). Also on the website are the first two chapters of Liese's book "Free Hollow to Forest Home." The full text of the book will be posted soon.

The questionnaire that was circulated asked about people's homes and their history and 14 people responded with information. A new brochure is underway and guides for Bruce Brittain's walking tour were given to those who requested one. Bruce inserted current street addresses on Albert Force's "Free Hollow" piece mentioned above. Fourteen people are currently on the listserv for the Historic Preservation Group; if you want to be included contact

foresthomenews@gmail.com. Ed also pointed out that 130 Forest Home Drive was significant as the place where Jim Spencer and colleagues at Cornell produced the document that recommended the location of Brasilia, the capital of Brazil.

VII. Traffic Calming

Phase I

Phase I of the Traffic Calming initiative is nearing completion with the installation of pillars, lamps, curbs and speed tables at each of the neighborhood's six entrances, and the placement of mid-block speed tables on Warren Road, Judd Falls Road (2), and the 300 block of Forest Home Drive.

The Spanswicks (111 Judd Falls Rd.) said they weren't informed about the drain cover on their front lawn and feel the traffic calming construction and the placement of a speed table in front of their house unduly affects their property and quality of life. Helen Spanswick read a letter stating that illness prevented her and Roger from attending planning meetings, but they feel the process was marred by poor communication and that they would not have assented to having a speed table in front of their house. Michael Bend noted that construction plans have been available on the FHIA website, along with the Traffic Calming Plan, letters from members of the community, and other related documents. Construction plans are also on the Town's website (via the Public Works Committee link).

Elizabeth Sanders (16 The Byway) raised a question about the approval process for moving forward with Phase 1 construction. Town Supervisor Herb Engman (120 Warren Rd) said he had met with the community at an open meeting last year to make sure that the neighborhood supported the plan. Michael Bend noted that the FHIA officers mailed out a survey to all residents and that 91 respondents were in favor and 17 were opposed to the plan. (The survey is posted on FHIA.org.) Michael explained that when federal stimulus money became available, the Town hired a contractor to develop detailed construction plans. Michael also said that FH residents will have the opportunity to discuss and approve or reject any other elements of the Traffic Calming Report before they are implemented.

A concern was raised that the lamps for the entrance features will consume electricity and the light will kill insects and disrupt nocturnal creatures' habits. Two specific questions were raised about the lamps on the entrance features:

- Are the lamps on top of the pillars solar powered? Answer: No.
- Can they be turned off at night? Answer: No

Several other questions and concerns were raised:

- The narrowing of the roadway would congest traffic.
- The curbs and entrance pillars force bicyclists into the traffic lanes.
- Where do pedestrians walk if the pillars obstruct the walkways?

- How can walkways be constructed in the future with the entrance features?
- How can future bike lanes be accommodated?
- The blind curve on the 300 block of Forest Home Dr. seems dangerous for cyclists. A new curb could leave bikers with no exit in case a car doesn't see them. Perhaps a bike sign could be erected.

Bruce Brittain commented:

- All 6 entrances include a pedestrian walkway.
- Exact pillar location was determined by what was underground, but no pillar juts into the roadway.
- Future pedestrian facilities have been taken into account.

It was agreed that the FHIA would send out a questionnaire/survey to residents about their reactions/concerns, etc., after the Phase I traffic calming features have been in use for some time to identify any possible modifications that need to be made.

David Gross (122 Judd Falls Rd.) said that he wanted to stress how moving forward with the Traffic Calming plan involved considerable political challenges and that while he, like everyone, has his disagreements with parts of the report, in his opinion FHIA had a fair process with open meetings and much encouragement to the community to participate.

Phase II

Michael Bend reported that an Alternative Transportation Working Group, headed by Abe Stroock, has developed several elements for Phase 2 of the traffic calming plan, focusing on improving walkability in the neighborhood. None of these elements will require major road work, making them relatively easy to implement. FHIA has submitted these recommendations to the Town, but the Town has not responded. Herb Engman indicated that the issues for the Town were the ambiguity of the Town's right of way authority and money. The county was sued by Coddington Rd. residents about how much property is owned by the county and as a result deeds now have to be researched to determine where the right of way is from the center of the road; Herb said the County and Town expect any attempt to claim property for use as sidewalks or walkways to be contested by homeowners. This should not affect plans that do not require the taking of property, however. In those cases, the main issue is cost. Herb noted that the Warren Rd. rebuild is scheduled for 2012, which should provide an opportunity for improvements to pedestrian facilities.

The question was raised if owners voluntarily give up lawn for walkways, who then maintains those stretches and at whose expense? Herb said that this depends on whether the County or Town maintains the road, as well as on practical considerations such as the width of the walkways and the equipment and personnel required to perform winter maintenance.

- **TCAT Routes**

David Gross said more members of the community need to voice their concerns to TCAT to make route changes. Eighty buses currently travel through the neighborhood each day, few of which actually serve residents. Pressure from residents has been successful in eliminating the Groton route through Forest Home and the #41 is now a smaller bus. A committee or working group needs to be formed for this.

VIII. Forest Home Walkway repairs

Teresa Craighead (21 Fairway Drive) noted several problems with the Forest Home Walkway: the rope railing does not extend as far as it should; the handrail is too low; and the lower part of the trail is treacherous. Herb Engman said he had received a quote of \$100,000 for the necessary repairs, which he thought was prohibitively high, but he said he would like to come up with a less expensive solution to the most immediate problems. Several community members said they would be willing to help with repairs, and Herb said this would have to be cleared with the Town because of codes and other legal requirements.

IX. Upstream Bridge Renovation

Bruce Brittain is the liaison from FH with the Town and County on this project. Bruce reported that the deck will be replaced with concrete to increase the weight capacity to 50 tons, but that the road on either side will retain its 5-ton weight limit, and that large trucks will still not be able to negotiate the S curve on the 200 block of Forest Home Drive, so neighbors need not worry that overweight vehicles will be tempted to cross. Although they will not be structurally important, the old trusses will be restored, and the railings will match those on the downstream bridge. The renovation will include the creation of a 4-5 foot walkway by 236 Forest Home Drive (the Shipes' old house) at the north corner of the bridge, where pedestrians are currently forced to walk in the traffic lane.

The County originally planned to secure permanent easements from adjacent property owners for the construction of bridge abutments; these were large enough to have accommodated a two-lane bridge. John Lampman, who is directing the project for the County, assured Bruce that there were no plans for a two-lane bridge. Lampman said he would be content with temporary easements, covering only the period of construction. State authorities may insist on permanent easements, however. Plans for the bridge renovation are available at the County website: <http://www.tompkins-co.org/highway/FHm-FDR-text.pdf>.

X. Cornell Noise

There was a brief discussion about noise from Cornell buildings. Cornell authorized pre- and post-construction tests of the new Animal Health Diagnostic Center on Caldwell Rd.; although there have been no complaints about noise from the building, Bruce and Doug Brittain determined that the tests were not properly done. Michael Bend has asked the university to test again but has received no response so far. Noise is an ongoing issue; one concern is that the current guidelines only limit the amount of noise that can be added to the environment by a particular project. This means that the noise floor can

continue to rise as each new building is added. The university has asked Forest Home to help develop better guidelines. Input from neighbors is welcome.

XI. Town Stream Setback Law

The Town has tried to address concerns from Forest Home residents about the new stream setback law. For more information about revisions to this law please refer to the most recent Town Newsletter <http://www.town.ithaca.ny.us/>

XII. Old Business

Historic find: Bruce Brittain discovered that Judd Falls Rd. was a brick road many years ago and even brought some old bricks in that were uncovered during the recent construction associated with the new entry feature.

Deer Control: David Gross reported that Cornell's 5-year plan is in its final stages. University biologists are happy with results of sterilization, hunting permits, etc. David asked that residents please stay engaged on this topic, as the alternative to Cornell's current multi-pronged approach would likely be fencing, which the community has opposed.

XIII. Election of Officers

The FHIA nominating committee offered a slate of officers for 2010-2011. The following residents were elected by a show of hands:

President: Jon Miller (4 The Byway)

Vice President: Max Evjen (116 Warren Rd)

Secretary: Beth Kelly (105 Halcyon Hil Rd)

Treasurer: Bill Arms (235 Forest Home Drive)

Immediate Past President (*ex officio*): Michael Bend (127 Warren Rd)

Meeting was adjourned at 9:08 pm.