

## Pierce House Property Committee Meeting Minutes

March 2, 2021 on Zoom

Attendees: Terry Green (Chair), Peter Braun, Barbara Peskin, Margi Byrnes, Ann Crosby, Victoria Otis (Pierce House Director), Dan Pereira (Assistant Town Manager), Jennifer Glass (Select Board), Deb Wallace (Finance Committee).

Welcome - Meeting came to order at 4:02. Minutes from the February 2, 2021 meeting were reviewed and approved.

**Financial Report:** Victoria reviewed the most recent financial report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. She noted that the tent-rental contract includes a potential rebate based on the renter's overall volume of business. She also noted that the cleaning fee had been raised to \$300, effective for new contracts, and that she will continue to pursue collection of the \$250 kitchen fee required under existing contracts. The Landscaping line item was discussed in detail, including that the main expense is approximately \$8,000/year for gardening provided by Thyme In The Garden, while the remainder consists of Lynch Tree's services for grub treatment, tree-trimming and occasional mosquito spraying and the PH's allocation of the Town's mowing expense. It was also reported that Lynch Tree requests full annual payment in advance or charges an extra 5% for monthly billings. It was the consensus of the PHC that the Thyme In The Garden and Lynch Tree services should be reviewed in detail to ascertain if less expensive and/or more efficient arrangements could be considered, such as piggybacking on Town contracts or requesting proposals from other vendors. Dan and Victoria will handle this review and analysis and report back to the PHC.

Peter reported that he had met with Tim Higgins, Dan, and Colleen Wilkins, and that as a result Colleen will design a different format for the monthly financial report that will feature and focus on actual revenues and expenses, footnoting information about the status of the trust, savings account and Town subsidy. He anticipates initial presentation of the new form of report for the April meeting.

### **Director Report :**

Victoria continues to actively seek bookings.

### **Capital Planning:**

Dan clarified that the PHC will be requested to submit its capital plan items sometime this coming spring, in anticipation of the Town's FY'23 budget process. It was also clarified that the PHC's capital plan should look forward at least five years, prioritize the submitted items, and include operating-budget implications (e.g. ongoing maintenance). It was the consensus of the PHC that the following items should be considered further for inclusion in the capital plan: metal or granite post/chain fencing (as in the Boston Public Garden, for example) on both sides of the driveway, to deter parking on the lawn; refinishing the wooden floors; updating the first-

floor bathroom (including the floors of the bathroom and adjacent pantry); examination of the roof and repair or replace as needed; a feasibility study for the large pond revitalization; and a pollinator garden, the concept for which had been discussed by Barbara with the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust (Geoff McGean). It was also noted that the pond revitalization and pollinator garden concepts could be part of a comprehensive updating of the grounds and that the PHC and LLCT might potentially be able to work together on the planning, funding, and/or implementation of both projects. Terry will discuss this further with the LLCT and report back to the PHC, including potentially requesting an LLCT representative to attend an upcoming PHC meeting. Dan also confirmed that the PHC budget (expenses) will not include capital expenses.

**Fund-Raising Concept:**

Peter reiterated that while the PHC is allowed to accept unsolicited donations, it cannot legally be involved in soliciting donations or establishing and implementing a “Friends of the Pierce House” organization. Such an organization and activities would need to be handled by other interested Town residents.

**Newsletter:**

Peter reiterated his willingness to research and compose content for an occasional one-page newsletter to the Town that could be circulated electronically via the Lincoln Squirrel and LincolnTalk, in hard copy at public sites such as the Library, and possibly through mailing. He requested that the basic design and format be proposed by Victoria. Barbara volunteered to help with the layout.

**Director’s Compensation:**

It was noted that the PH’s COVID-related revenue shortfall will materially decrease Victoria’s compensation total, due to its percentage-of-revenue aspect. It was also noted that future pandemics or other such unforeseeable impacts on the PH’s revenue-generating activities could occur. It was therefore the consensus of the PHC that consideration should be given to making up the shortfall for this year and replacing the current contract with a more standard fixed rate contract (potentially including bonus opportunities based on pre-established expectations and/or annual review). It was noted that this is the only Town-employee compensation arrangement that has a percentage-of-revenue component. Terry and Deb will review these questions with Tim Higgins, and they will report back to the PHC soon.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p. m.