

Bluffton Ohio Historical Society

Meeting Minutes – August 14, 2024

Attendees: (13) Ron Epp, Kelli Foster, Marv Foster, Liz Gordon-Hancock, Darrell Groman, Diane Huber, Scott Little, Bill Luginbuhl, Paula Scott, Keith Sommer, Victor Styer, Clair Winebar, Mark Yoder.

President Ron Epp called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM. Minutes of the July meeting which were emailed with the meeting announcement were accepted as read.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Clair Winebar's report was forwarded prior to the meeting via the meeting announcement email. The current balance as of August 13, 2024 is \$3,574.72. The report was approved as sent.

Wrap-Up of History Day 2024:

There was a good review of History Day 2024, including the following observations and suggestions for future events:

- The crowd was estimated at 275 to 300 people.
- Clair mentioned that the Bluffton Presbyterian Church was glad to be a part of the activities and enjoyed hosting in their yard.
- New memberships were received that day, including: Jim Enneking, Richard McGarrity, Deb Beer, Rich & Ruth Johnson, Ray & Maryann Ring, Fred & Pat Rodabaugh, Shirley Brown and Kathy Dickson.
- Liz created and passed around Thank You cards for sponsors and others that were involved in the day's activities.
- Better signage was suggested for future events downtown, and street closures could be improved.

New Business

- Ron and Dan think we need to narrow our vision. An example of this would be the building on W. Elm Street that is available. Do we want it? Has it been researched to see if it is worth saving? If we do not want it, it will be torn down. Liz stated that she would look into the history of the building and would report back to the BOHS.
- Additionally, what about a building for the Society? Should we begin a fund-raising campaign? Currently, we have a store-front museum on Main Street.
- The Swiss Historical Society is still hoping to raise an additional \$150,000 to \$200,000. Ron would like us to wait until their goal is met before we start our campaign.
- Bluffton will soon have a Dog Park, which is also raising funds. There are sidewalk projects in the near future, too.
- Paula suggested that we work on a budget first and determine what we want. She suggested thinking in terms of multiple ideas, such as a good, better and best scenario.

- Mark Yoder suggested as an option the idea of selling items that have been donated but are not Bluffton relevant. This would generate some funds for the BOHS.
- Ron would like to see some changes in the display cabinets on the third floor of Bluffton City Hall. He will discuss this with Village Administrator Jessie Blackburn.
- Liz asked whether the store front displays would change. The answer may be determined by what is in our collection.
- Liz suggested that we talk and record conversations with some of the community's older members such as Sam Diller and Dick Boehr. This sprung up a good conversation and plans are in the works to interview community members on non-meeting nights, perhaps at Maplecrest.
- Ron also announced that some of the Main Street railroad track rails were removed on S. Main St. and saved for us by the Village. Hopefully, they will make a nice display someday.
- Darrell suggested that we start saving photos and other mementos right now of current events. Kelli gave suggestions for saving photos and Liz offered assistance, also.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Program:

Kelli displayed several examples of microfilm of Bluffton newspapers obtained through the BGSU library dated 1877 and 1885. She discussed the new access that the Bluffton Public Library has to these older items.

Ron also showed a Reader's Digest article entitled "Tiny Museum". In the example shown, a small weatherproof box (similar to the food boxes and library boxes) was used to display historic items in a community.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 11, 2024. As has been said previously, Dan has reserved the use of this room for the rest of the year on the 2nd Wednesday evening of each month at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Little, Secretary