

The Hillside Trust  
Minutes of the Board of Trustees  
May 8, 2025

PRESENT: Rick Block, Arlene Golembiewski, Chris Jenco, Chris Perme, Amanda Voss, Polly Whittaker.

Also present: Eric Russo.

CALL TO ORDER: the meeting was called to order at 8:40

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Amanda motioned to approve the March 13, 2025, board minutes seconded by Chris Jenco. All voted in favor of approving.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

*Financials:* Eric reported the following balances: the Operating Checking Fund has \$74,305; the Operating Savings has \$100,046; the Land Conservation Fund has \$344,156; the Operating Endowment Fund has \$610,483; the Short-Term Investment Fund has \$109,470; the Bahr Restricted Fund has \$10,006; and the Lafayette Woods Escrow Fund has \$3,963. The total cash, minus the Lafayette Woods Escrow Fund is \$1,248,466.

Eric referred the Board to the YTD budget document that was emailed previously for any questions or comments. Eric also highlighted that \$1600 was paid to Cesar Ortega who covered the sod on Corbin Dr with a plastic membrane and mulch, the funds of which came from the Land Conservation Fund.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

*Pope Coleman Event:* Eric reported that this year's event grossed a record of \$122,550. Part of this amount includes a \$10,000 check that was brought to the event by Geraldine Warner, in honor of Cathryn Hilker. The amount of \$40,525 was spent on the event, resulting in a net return of \$82,025. By comparison, last year's event netted \$58,667.

Eric reported that the Development Committee has selected Marilyn Wall, Sue Friedlander (posthumously), and Fiona the Hippo from the Cincinnati Zoo. Marilyn was thrilled to accept the award, and Chris Jenco indicated that he favors the award being given to his grandmother and believes the family will support it as well. Thane Maynard's secretary indicated that she will run the Fiona nomination past the Marketing Department and get back to Eric next week with an answer.

Polly noted that Eric's mother-in-law suggested to her that we acknowledge previous award winners at a given event with some sort of pin or other special designation. Rick suggested that we list previous award winners in our program. The Development Committee will work on these suggestions, and it will streamline the dinner selection process for ease of service.

Finally, Eric questioned whether we really need to have a keynote speaker for the event moving forward. The Board responded that it is not necessary, as it is time-consuming, and Eric could use that time to talk about The Hillside Trust and summarize its current efforts.

*Major Donor Marketing Piece:* Eric noted that he has converted the 2008 Hillside Trust marketing piece into a Word document ready for editing. Rick indicated that the Bernheim Forest and Arboretum is updating its own marketing piece and he forwarded Eric a draft copy of the document via email. Eric will provide a draft copy of The Hillside Trust's marketing piece at the next Development Committee meeting.

#### LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT:

*Lafayette Woods:* Eric reported that the property did in fact sell, and for a price of \$1,000,000 to Genet Singh, owner of the Clifton Market. Eric met with Genet and Patrick Donnelly, a resident of Clifton in early April to introduce one another. Genet expressed an interest in working with The Hillside Trust and the Clifton community as she has plans to develop the property within the next three years.

*Coombe Preserve (Corbin Dr) Hyde Park:* Eric reported that Polly's landscaper, Cesar Ortega, covered the Corbin Dr sod with a plastic membrane over which he placed several inches of mulch. The cost for his services was \$1600, which came out of the Land Conservation Fund.

*City Forestry Assessment Issue:* no update to report.

#### LAND USE ADVISORY UPDATE:

*City of Cincinnati Hillside Overlay District Code Revision:* Eric reported that he has been invited to partner with City Planning, Zoning and Buildings & Inspections to facilitate resident input on updating the Hillside Overlay District regulations. These regulations have been in place since 2004, and the city is looking to streamline the administration of them. Eric noted that he is skeptical about the city's intentions for including The Hillside Trust's involvement in this process, suspecting that it is a political move.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

*Check Writing Procedures:* Eric reported that he met with Advisory Committee member, Thea Langsam and Hillside Trust accountant, Melissa Linnemann on May 1<sup>st</sup> via Zoom regarding check writing procedures and protocols. Thea is going to devise draft language for the board's consideration. In the meantime, both Melissa and Thea suggested that our Treasurer, Dave Cors have independent access to all Hillside Trust bank accounts for independent review. Eric will make the login information available to Dave.

*Web Page Update:* Eric reported that his daughter, Elly is working on the web page transfer and will have a draft version completed in time for the education committee's next meeting

on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

*Annual Meeting:* Eric indicated that he wants to establish a date for this year's annual organizational meeting. He proposed two dates in October, either Thursday the 16<sup>th</sup> or Thursday the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The board liked the date of October 16<sup>th</sup>. Eric is going to set it up at the Junior League again, and he suggested that tree expert, Dave Gamstetter be this year's speaker. The board concurred.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9: 40am. Amanda motioned to close the meeting, seconded by Polly.

**NEXT BOARD MEETING:** Thursday September 11<sup>th</sup>.