Evanston History Center  
Annual Meeting  
June 30, 2021

The 124th annual meeting of the Evanston History Center was called to order via Zoom at 7:03 p.m. by Sharon Ephraim, president, with a quorum of members in attendance.

Sharon told members EHC made various changes over the past year, including revising the board’s committee structure and initiating a comprehensive branding approach intended to attract members and reach out to the community. EHC maintained programming during the COVID-19 pandemic by holding virtual Under-the-Buffalo lectures that drew record attendance and by creating a second Mother’s Day House Walk-By. EHC plans to continue holding many programs both in-person and virtually.

Sharon thanked Trustee Emeritus Eston Gross for developing a strong slate of board candidates and thanked retiring trustees as well as Executive Director Eden Juron Pearlman.

A motion to accept the minutes of the 123rd Annual Meeting as previously submitted was seconded and approved by consent.

Treasurer Max Grebenschikov said the staff had done an excellent job in a difficult year managing limited revenues and downscaling expenses. EHC finished the year at 90% of budgeted $270,000 revenues and 89% of budgeted $415,000 expenses, and endowment investments performed at or above the market with 21% returns at AllianceBernstein and 31% returns at Schwab. EHC applied for and received Paycheck Protection Program funds from the federal Small Business Administration during the Pandemic. Expected state grant money will help fund some capital expenses over the next year.

Eden told members the Dawes House would reopen July 1 for visits without reservations, and has reopened for private events once again. EHC already reinstated some walking tours and created some new, self-guided tours.
She said the pandemic resulted in EHC’s first-ever Facebook Live exhibit opening for last year’s Women’s Suffrage exhibit, and provided various new opportunities, such as getting both speakers and audiences from distant locations. A new exhibit, Dioramarama, featuring items from EHC’s collection, will open in July and run through December.

During the past year, the final phase of the Capital Campaign began, with a goal of $750,000 to help restore the East Terrace walls, stairs, railings and lighting. Restoration of the front entrance was completed.

Trustee Roger Price introduced a motion to change EHC’s Bylaws as follows:

1. Number of Trustees. Article IV, Section 1 (a) shall be amended to state: (a) The Board of Trustees shall consist of no more than twenty-four (24) Trustees elected by the members at the annual meeting.

2. Nominations. Article IV, Section 1(b) shall be amended to state: (b) At a meeting of the Board of Trustees held at least one (1) month prior to the annual meeting of the members, a Nominating Committee shall present to the Board of Trustees for approval a slate of candidates for election to fill vacancies of officers and Trustees of the Board.

3. Election of officers. The first sentence of Article VI, Section 1 shall be deleted. (That sentence currently provides for officers to be elected by the Board of Trustees at its first meeting in July.)

4. Duties of the Secretary. Article VII, Section 3 shall be amended to include: The Secretary shall notify members of the list of candidates approved by the Board for positions as officers and Trustees at least fourteen (14) days prior to the annual meeting for the election of such candidates.

5. Annual meetings. The first sentence of Article VIII, Section (1)(a) shall be amended to state: (a) The Annual Meeting of members of the Center shall be held during the month of June in the City of Evanston for the purpose of electing officers and Trustees and for the transaction of other business that may lawfully come before the meeting.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Eston then introduced a slate of officers consisting of Sharon as President, Geoff Bonn as Treasurer, Michael Sullivan as Secretary, and Elizabeth Randgaard as VP-Marketing, each for a two-year-term; and Mike Ford, Kim Hiltwein and Roger Price
as continuing vice-presidents of the Facilities and Collections, Education and Programs and Membership committees, respectively. The motion was seconded and approved.

A motion was made to approve a slate of Trustee candidates for two-year board terms consisting of Eduardo Gomez, Cynthia Hoffman, Ross Mathee, Elizabeth Middleton, Jenifer McCartney, Katie Tucker Trippi, and Susan Turner as well as second-term Trustee Tosha Wilson. The motion was seconded and approved.

Eden introduced Evanstonian Judy Pollock, president of the Chicago Audubon Society, as the keynote speaker. She discussed Evanston’s historically unique terrain for birds, with more wet prairie and marshland than other areas. She introduced the Nexrad radar map showing great activity along Evanston’s lakefront, where migratory birds land. Recent counts show 4-5% declines per year in the number of birds migrating through the middle of the country, she said.

While wetland birds are increasing, grassland and Eastern forest birds are in decline because of three factors: loss of habitat, outdoor cats and the prevalence of windows. Among the birds that were not here years ago but have made their way north are cardinals, red-bellied woodpeckers and cormorants. Several Evanston groups are working to restore habitats at such sites as Ladd Arboretum and Canal Shores, she said. She recommended ebird.org to find out what birds are in your vicinity in real time, and the Merlin app to determine birds by sight. Birds do not depend on people to feed them, she noted. Instead, migrating birds need layers of plantings that produce seeds, berries and nectar, so she suggested dense plantings and native trees.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Neiman Reed
Secretary