FIPPOA Spring Membership Meeting

May 21, 2022 10:30 am

Whyte Hall

Approximately 220 people in attendance

Call to Order and Introductions

FIPPOA President Henry Robin called the meeting to order at 10:35 am and introduced the Board:

- Alan Brodherson - who has served on the FIPPOA board for many years including several as its Secretary before he took a hiatus and rejoined the board last year.
- Greg Henniger – chairs our Zoning Committee, which acts in an advisory capacity at the request of the Town of Brookhaven Zoning and Appeals Board.
- Chris Mai – has been leading the FIPPOA website and branding initiative that began last year. He also Co-chairs our membership committee.
- Charles Montorio-Archer - one of our three newest board members, elected last Fall. In addition to serving as a Director on the Pines Care Center Board, Charles is one of the Tri-Chairs and founding members of CoBE, FIPPOA's Committee on Black Equality.
- Jay Pagano - our immediate past President for 10 years and currently serving as the Chair of the AIDS Memorial Task Force
- Nate Pinsley – was elected to the board last Fall. Nate is Co-chair of our Whyte Hall Operating Committee and is Tri-Chairing the Community TAG Sale taking place June 4th sponsored by FIPPOA, together with the Catholic Mass and Jewish Congregation in the Pines.
- Leland Rechis – One of the six people who you can personally thank for bringing Verizon FIOS High Speed Internet to the Pines as a member of the now "Mission Accomplished" FIPPOA Internet Task Force. He is also a

member of the Fire Department Auxiliary and is our board liaison to the Department.

- Russell Saray – is the chair of the Seashore Defense Fund and, when he was Co-chairing our Membership Committee, was one of the creators of the Sandbook, a "coffee table" sourcebook to everything you would ever need to know about the Pines. Last year, he was the force behind the Sandbook's 2.0 Update, current resource information now available on the now revised and vastly improved FIPPOA website.
- Matt Tague - co-chairs our Membership committee and also sits on the Trailblazers Park Task Force. But what Matt is best known for these days is, together with his husband Ross, becoming Dads to Luca, born just last month. Congratulations & Mazel Tov!
- Ed Schulhafer – needs no introduction as has been directly involved in so many Pines initiatives over the past several decades including as one of the original founders of the Pines Care Center, where he continues as a Director. Ed is an immediate past Vice President of FIPPOA, and served on the highly successful FIPPOA Internet Task Force.
- Jim Vandernoth – also a long-term board member and much appreciated FIPPOA leader as the Harbor Chair. Not only does he work with our awesome staff to manage the harbor and marina, he also keeps all activity in the harbor – such as ticket sales, advertising, and the many other things that take place there – smoothly organized all summer long.

<u>FIPPOA Executive Officers and members of the Executive Committee:</u>

These three Board members meet Henry for an hour on a weekly basis to set priorities and discuss how to address both challenges and opportunities facing FIPPOA and the community. And of course, there are also many conversations between our Monday evening meetings.

- Gary Clinton - Secretary, has been a FIPPOA Board member for 20 of the past 25 years; Gary oversees the Wagon Rack, and together with Doug Harris, co-Chairs the Trailblazers Park Task Force
- Eric Sawyer – Treasurer and Co-Chair of our Whyte Hall Operating Committee.

- Allan Baum – Vice President, member of the Joint FIPPOA/Chamber of Commerce Boulevard Task Force and the Executive Producer of the Pines Party.

Henry then introduced the FIPPOA Staff:

- Karen McCutcheon, Community Manager. Karen is charged with implementing and enforcing the rules and procedures adopted by the FIPPOA board. The senior staff role of Community Manager was inaugurated with Karen's hiring two years ago, and the entire Board appreciates how she has helped to professionalize FIPPOA's role in managing the community.
- Dennis Murphy, Harbor Master. Together with his team, Dennis kept the harbor open during Covid. For the past few seasons, the harbor has been sold out with a wait list for seasonal slip rentals. This is a testimony to the success with which he manages the harbor and freight dock. This year's dockhands who are present today are Samathan, Justin, Adam, Connor, Chris
- Joe Micheels, Facilities Manager. FIPPOA owns and maintains a portfolio of physical assets including Whyte Hall, the harbor, marina, freight dock, post office, police station, and the contractor enclosures and parking corrals built on Fire Island Boulevard and leased to FIPPOA by the Town of Brookhaven. Joe has been overseeing major building renovations, and in many instances, he roll-up his sleeves, grabs a hammer and takes care of repairs and building projects himself. Together with his wife, Mary Beth, Joe is a Pines homeowner and a member of the Fire Department both here and on the mainland.
- Sharon Hanley: Sharon is our newest FIPPOA team member, having officially started just a few days ago in the newly created role of Events Manager. Sharon will be overseeing all our events at Whyte Hall including rental contracts and working with our users on their usage requirements. She brings valuable audio-visual operating experience to the role.
- We currently have two open positions. One is an Administrative Assistant working in our FIPPOA office. The second is a Bookkeeping or Finance

Manager. If anyone in the community is interested in – or knows someone who is interested in either of these two positions - please contact Karen or Henry. We would love to hire from within the community if possible.

Henry thanked essential service providers in the Community

First is the **Mobility Cart Program**, brought to you by The Pines Foundation, the charitable sister organization to FIPPOA, and its 8 Volunteer Drivers.

- Our drivers completed just under 500 trips last season. It is common, for example on a July weekend day, for them to complete more than 25 requests per day.
- With our volunteers who extend their season, the program begins as early as March when the walks are safe from ice and continues as late as January
- There are residents of the Pines who regularly tell us they could not be here at all if it were not for this program.
- Henry thanked drivers Larry Talamy, Jerry Gashen, Randy Lauwaser, Jim Skicki, Doug Wolfe, Robert Gelmeyer, Gene Cook, and Bob McGarity.

Second is the **Pines Post Office**. FIPPOA contracts with the US Postal Service to provide seasonal service, and while the USPS provides some financial support, it is FIPPOA that subsides the daily operations and provides all the capital to maintain the physical space.

- For the 2020 Season, the first year of the pandemic when many residents sought safe refuge in the Pines, the post office delivered 9,925 packages, followed last season with a still impressive distribution of 8,750.
- There are a total of 308 post office mail boxes, some of which are shared by more than one resident living at different Pines addresses.
- The post office wouldn't operate without a team of dedicate and very hard-working volunteers. Thanks to Postmaster Gene Cook, together with his two assistants Randy Lauwaser & Joel Rosenbluth, and 6 regular volunteers, they keep the post office open and the packages delivered.

The **Fire Island Pines Fire Department**. This year marks the FIPFD's 63rd year of service to the community. Not only are our Fire Fighters all community

volunteers, they are also residents and employees, who like the rest of us, come to the Pines to enjoy all that it has to offer or to earn a living. Yet, they are always prepared to respond to an alarm any time of day or night. And they dedicate a portion of their time on most weekends with training and drills to maintain their skills.

Last year, there were 58 alarms in the community of which 7 were structural fires, including one at Henry's next-door neighbor's home where he saw firsthand how terrify a fire can be and how professional our Department is.

Henry thanked the dedicated men and women of the **Fire Department Auxiliary** for their commitment and service to keeping our community and all its residents and visitors safe.

The Fire Island Pines Board of Fire Commissioners, elected by the registered voters of Fire Island Pines, are responsible for the tax-based budget for the Fire Island Pines Volunteer Fire Department. The current Commissioners are Frank Corradino (chair), Doug Teague, Walter Boss, Rosemary Collucio, and Gene Cool, supported by Secretary Treasurer Patrick Forrett.

Welcoming New Homeowners

- Henry noted that it is a long-standing FIPPOA tradition to ask first-time Pines homeowners to introduce themselves and state where they have purchased a property. The owners of 15 recently-purchased properties did so and Henry welcomed them.
- Henry noted an invitation to all of our new/newish homeowners to attend BOFFO's new homeowner reception on June 3rd at the lovely Bayfront home of BOFFO Board member Justin Blake. For more info or to rsvp, email Mina@boffo.art or talk with Faris Al Shathir, BOFFO's Executive Director and Co-founder.

The State of The Pines Real Estate Market

Data is for new home sales that are a matter of public record. The records of the Coops are not available.

2019

# of Home Sales	Median Price	Average Price	High
19	$752,000	$821,000	$2.2MM

2020

# of Home Sales	Median Price	Average Price	High
50 (2.6x)	$815,000 (+8.4%)	$897,621 (+9.3%)	$2.75MM

2021

# of Home Sales	Median Price	Average Price	High
67 (1.4x)	$971,250 (+19.2%)	$1,195,814 (+33.2%)	$3.35MM

In the past three years, 136 homes have changed ownership, which equates to about 20-25% of all homes in the Pines. We clearly have a changing, and in many cases, younger community of owners coming to the Pines.

Henry noted that there is a real downside to these statistics by making the Pines less financially accessible to new home buyers when prices increases as they have in recent years, he acknowledged that multi-million sales are becoming increasingly common. In 2021, 18 homes or 26% of all sales were in the $1-2 million range, and 8 homes or 12% in excess of $2 million, meaning that more than 1/3 of all homes sold came with a seven-figure price tag.

- Coop Board member Michael Nardi stated that 20 Coops have been sold in the past two years

Community Long-term Planning: Informing the Future of Fire Island Pines

- Henry described the process leading to the creation of three new Task Forces, based on last year's focus groups and on the survey

distributed to our email list of 1500 people. He noted that we achieved a very high response rate of 40%.

- For a detailed summary, please see the attached document "Informing the Future of Fire Island Pines."

Other Findings from the Focus Groups

There is the need to increase understanding of the role and responsibilities of FIPPOA

- Some people view FIPPOA's role to represent the interest of the "property owners" while others see the organization playing a larger role in the community.
- Some people look to FIPPOA as a community organization while others look to it as more of a governing authority.

There are conflicting desires for the future of the Pines.

- There is a desire to preserve the "remote" identity of the Pines, YET ALSO a desire to increase access to the community.
- There is a desire to maintain the "bohemian, small town" nature of the Pines, YET ALSO a desire for more stores, restaurants, and community amenities.
- There is a desire to be good environmental stewards of the FINS, YET ALSO a desire for consumption that produces a large amount of waste.
- There is a desire for the Pines to remain a haven for gay men, and AT THE SAME TIME a desire to become a more diverse and inclusive community.
- There is a desire for the Pines to remain a community of owners and long-term renters, YET ALSO a desire to create a welcoming environment for short-term renters and visitors.
- There is a desire for FIPPOA to serve as a platform for education and coordinated action.; for example, hosting educational sessions on infrastructure issues.
- There is a desire for FIPPOA to serve as a trusted source of real-time news and information about the community and about services that are important to homeowners and renters.

The Task Force charge is:

1. Review the findings from the long-range planning reports – both the Focus Groups and the Community Survey.
2. Select issue(s) to focus on from among the items identified as "in scope" by the FIPPOA Board of Directors.
3. Explore issues in greater depth and consider alternatives for how FIPPOA might respond.
4. Develop recommendations and a proposed action plan, including a project cost estimate, for the Board's consideration and action.

Henry noted that since the newsletter announcement (about 3 weeks ago), he:

- Has been reaching out and meeting with community members to discuss their participation on one of the three TFs
- Is close to having 12 – 16 or 4 to 5 per TF committed.
- Plans to announce the TF membership during the first half of June, and to have 1st meetings 2nd half of June to commence the work.

Trash Collection

Henry noted the following:

- January 1, 2021 the Town of Brookhaven entered into a contract with a new garbage contractor replacing Tony's Barge, which had served the Pines for decades.
- Last season, there were many growing pains with Brownie, our new contractor, and he is pleased to report that by working with Brownie and the Town of Brookhaven Waste Management Department, we have seen certain important improvements this year. Most notably, the operation on garbage days – Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays is **more efficient and less visible on the Boulevard** than it was for most of last year.
- That said, there are still challenges, most specifically, missed pick-ups. If your garbage is properly organized and placed outside your house or in your garbage shed in advance of designated curbside pick-up days, then you should immediately email Brownie with a cc to 311@fippoa.org,

FIPPOA's general email address for community questions, suggestions, feedback and complaints.

- Karen McCutcheon and Henry recently had a meeting in the Pines with Brookhaven's new Commissioner of Waste Management, and she also encourages you to address complaints to her office either by completing a specific Brookhaven town form or phone or both. Henry's May 11th newsletter entitled "Spring Has Sprung in the Pines," under the section "Missed Garbage Pick-ups" has the link directly to complete the Town's form and the phone number you can call. If you didn't save the newsletter – or print and frame it 😊 - you may get TOB's contact information by request at 311@fippoa.org or go to FIPPOA's website where the past newsletters are available.
- Bulk Day Pick-Ups – Community Clean-up – Henry observed that many residents don't realize what can be picked up on Bulk Day Wednesdays.
- He has seen examples of items that should be picked up marked with a Brownie sticker that they are either over weigh or over limit.
- Wednesday Bulk pick up is 4 items per household and includes refrigerators and other large and heavy items;
- Monday and Thursday, household garbage and Landscaping debris which must be bagged or bundled as per guidelines and bags may be no heavier than 50lbs. Limit to 5 landscaping debris items and must be homeowner performed work, not by a hired contractor.

Treasurer's Report

Eric Sawyer reported that FIPPOA has a global surplus in recent years. FIPPOA has three primary sources of income:

- Harbor: long-term contracts with the ferry, freight and trash services; contractor and residents slips; transient slips; monitored use of the freight dock by contractors.
- Membership dues of approximately $105,000
- Boulevard management: under FIPPOA's lease agreement with the Town of Brookhaven, we fund and manage the infrastructure of parking enclosures, corrals, and parking areas. However, the rental fees we received are

exceeded by the cost of construction and management, so the Boulevard operates at a loss.

The Pines Foundation has three sources of revenue:

- The endowment, which is largely based on the Brockman bequest and the sale of the Bay Beach property.
- Whyte Hall, which operates at a loss
- The Pines Party, proceeds from which support a grant to the Stonewall Foundation, money put into the reserve fund, and operation.

Eric noted that the cost of personnel and the cost of insurance are the fastest-rising costs.

Juneteenth Weekend

Henry noted that the Committee on Black Equality was formed nearly two years ago after a Pines beach protest motivated by the brutal murder of George Floyd. FIPPOA was at a moment in time where action rather than just words were necessary so that we could seriously look at our own community to determine how we could rise to the moment of heightened awareness of the need for social justice and equity.

CoBE was formed as an active, standing FIPPOA Committee. Toward the end of the 2020 season, CoBE made 14 recommendations to the FIPPOA board, several of which have been or are in the process of being adopted. We will describe two of those recommendations today, the first of which is the community-wide celebration in the Pines during the Juneteenth weekend.

The members of CoBE are Angelo DeSanto, Doug Harris, Harry Hayes, Charles Montorio-Archer (Chair), Seneca Mudd, Crayton Robey, Henry Robin (Chair), Tomik Dash, Victor Jeffreys (Chair), and Robin Scott.

Charles Montorio-Archer described plans for Juneteenth Weekend, June 17 to 19.

- A series of June Teas, featuring Black DJs.
- In cooperation with FIPAP and BOFFO, an artist-in-residence program, featuring excerpts from How To You - A Musical Guide to Black Boyhood,

with a cocktail reception and a talk-back between writer/composer Joriah Kwame and director Kimille Howards.
- A salon-style discussion on Sunday.
- A Makers Fair at Denizen featuring BIPOC artists and designers

Henry expressed gratitude to FIPAP for organizing this event featuring their artist-in-residence Joriah Kwame and for BOFFO's and FIPPOA's support and collaboration, noting that it is particularly meaningful that the Juneteenth weekend is what is bringing all three organizations together.

He noted that this year marks FIPAP's first artist in residency program together with Barn On Fire, and he encouraged everyone to mark their calendars for June 25th when their residency program culminates with a free public presentation, entitled "Barn on Fire – New Musical Residency Program Performance" – being held at Whyte Hall. Please go to FIPAP.org to secure your complementary tickets. For more information, you can also talk with Steven Allan Black, FIPAP's President, or Nicole Lafountaine, FIPAP Board member and one of the forces behind this their first residency program

Pines Party

Allan Baum reported the following:

- Tickets sales to date have broken records. Prices will increase after May 31.
- The Journal is expected to be the largest and most profitable on record.
- The Auction is also on track to break records in terms of items and income, running online from mid-July to mid-August,
- Cabana sales will meet their maximum in a short time, with only one remaining available.

Trailblazers Park

- Henry stated that, like Juneteenth celebrations, Trailblazers Park grew out of the recommendations of the Committee on Black Equality, which recommended that FIPPOA, in partnership with CoBE, explore naming

opportunities/recognition in public spaces (such as the harbor) of the contributions of Black and POC to the LGBTQAI+ community.

- Shortly after receiving this recommendation, FIPPOA's board voted to change the name of Harbor Park – the area in the harbor where residents and visitors disembark the ferry upon arrival in the Pines and the area to the east of the Harbor - to Trailblazers Park
- Two months later, Henry appointed the Trailblazers Park Task Force and charged it with determining the Trailblazers to be honored and the manner in which they will be recognized in the newly named Trailblazers Park public space.
- Under the leadership of Task Force Co-chairs, FIPPOA Board member Gary Clinton and CoBE committee member Doug Harris, the TF reached out to the community on several occasions seeking nominations.
- The chosen Trailblazers are a diverse group who through advocacy, action, example, and personal sacrifice have brought about positive change in the rights and recognition of the LGBTQ+ community. And they also reflect the Board's charge to celebrate Black People, People of Color, Trans People, Women and people from multiple marginalized communities.
- As we informed you last fall, the Task Force, following a public RFP process, selected TM Davy's concept and design for Trailblazers Park, and engaged him to oversee the artistic aspects of the installation. TM presented his concept and design to FIPPOA at our fall meeting last year.
- In the current rendering of Trailblazers Park (displayed on the deck) we see a drinking fountain, symbolic of the civil rights movement and a way of welcoming visitors to the community, covered with a mosaic of the images of Marsha P Johnson and Silvia Rivera designed by TM.
- Above the fountain are draped a series of flags, 16 in total, each designed by individual Pines community artists, and each commemorating one or more of the celebrated Trailblazers. Since the flags will rotate in 2-year cycles in future years, we anticipate a total of 48 artists designing 48 flags to commemorate the Trailblazers we are honoring through the summer of 2027.
- Please save the date for the morning of Saturday, July 16th for the dedication ceremony for Trailblazers Park and a post ribbon-cutting

community celebration. And please be sure to take a look at TM's concept rendering when this meeting concludes.

Website Design and Rebranding

- Henry reported that the FIPPOA Board hired Will Kim, owner of Will Kim Creative, last year to advise the board on updating the FIPPOA brand and implementing a much-needed website redesign.
- Under the leadership of board members Chris Mai and Tami Hausman, together with Karen McCutcheon, FIPPOA completed our partnership with Will Kim and introduced our new brand concept and launched our redesigned website during the past Winter months. FIPPOA is particularly grateful to Chris, who has put hours of his time and talent into implementing the roll-out and still improving upon the website as a work in progress.
- It is our objective to show consistency across all FIPPOA and Pines Foundation initiatives and to visibly promote all aspects of the Pines life and experience that are essentially "brought to you by FIPPOA." You should already see the impact of the work on our website, in all our digital correspondence, and in the weeks to come, you should see it on the buildings, spaces, and services we own and operate in the Pines. As a preview of things to come, please take the time to look at the imagines that Chris as assembled on this end of the deck.

Sayville Ferry Service (SFS) Seeks Rate Increase

- Henry reported that he recently learned that SFS is seeking a rate increase, its first in five years.
- SFS is regulated by the Suffolk County legislature; it is a regulated monopoly providing an essential service to the Pines. Without it, we wouldn't be able to get back and forth from our homes.
- When SFS wants to increase its rates, it must submit an application with financials to the County regulators. The regulators will grant a rate increase if the ferry service can demonstrate that it will be operating in the red

based on current and future expenses if a rate increase is not granted. SFS last received permission to increase rates 5 years ago, and based on their current financial operating condition, are putting in for an increase this year. This is primarily being driven by increases in fuel costs and the increase in NYS minimum wage, which went from $11/hour to $15 since the last rate increase.

- The rate increase requested is single round-trip from $18 to $20 and commuter 40 trip from $285 to $330. It is expected to be approved, with a start day soon after.
- When the application is available, Henry's plan is link it in a newsletter for anyone who wishes to review it. He hopes to provide as much advance notice as possible the effective date.

Fall Membership Meeting and Elections

- Henry announced that Claudia Tropp has agreed to serve as Nominations Chair.
- The election will be held on Saturday, September 17. There will be elections for all four Executive Committee offices, as well as the Directors of the Class of 2026.
- Further information will be forthcoming through the President's Newsletter.

Open Community Forum

- A resident expressed concern that the Pines is at risk of losing its community spirit, as it is increasingly driven by profit-making owners, leading to a significant increase in short-term rentals, which in turn lead to a lack of respect for neighbors, noise, and a lack of commitment. He stated that we need to be doing more to protect our legacy.
- A resident raised the issue of continuing noise problems and the door-to-door delivery of flyers. He noted that there are a very small number of

individuals providing delivery services and businesses that use them, and urged FIPPOA to request that these businesses have greater sensitivity to the problems.

- Responding to the noise issue, Henry urged a neighbor-to-neighbor approach, involving the police as a last resort.
- A resident expressed disappointment in the lack of glass recycling, Henry stated that the Town of Brookhaven has ceased glass recycling because they find it not economically viable. He noted that one of the new Task Forces will be charged with exploring how we might reinstitute glass recycling in the Pines.
- A resident raised the continuing concerns he and forty other signatories have with H2O Limo, which they state is travelling too close to the shore line, at a high rate of speed, creating hazards to safety, causing damage to the environment, and diminishing the quality of life along the bay. He noted that H2O now has more boats, and that the FI Water Taxi may feel compelled to follow the same route in order to remain competitive,
- Responding, Henry noted that he and his Cherry Grove counterpart met with H2O's owner last year and told him of the complaints. The owner agreed to consider some changes. Henry further noted that the entire matter of waterborne transportation on the Great South Bay is of concern to the Fire Island Association and is now being reviewed by Suffolk County. Henry stated that he will stay involved and do what he can to address the concerns.
- A resident asked for Henry's insight into the process FINS is undertaking to review and perhaps revise its own rules governing motorized vehicles on the beach. Henry responded that the communities on the western end of Fire Island might be particularly impacted because driving on the beach is far more common there than here on the eastern end, due to there being more year-round and winter residents, and more contractors using the Causeway rather than ferries. Henry mentioned that he participates each week in a meeting of the Fire Island Association and this is a frequent topic.
- A resident noted that the Boulevard remains a problem. Henry responded that, while FIPPOA has control over the green space along the south side of the Boulevard, the Highway Department of the Town of Brookhaven has

responsibility for the roadway, and that FIPPOA actively engages with them. He noted that last year, when the Highway's grading equipment was broken, Karen pushed then to rent a working piece of equipment to grade the Boulevard, which they did. Henry stated that FIPPOA might hire a civil engineer of its own to study the Boulevard situation and make recommendations that we could pursue with Brookhaven.

- A resident expressed concern that the waterborne transportation of passengers and material is increasingly monopolistic. Henry replied that through there may be some slight risk in the future, there is great benefit in having an experienced and dedicated business owner, Ken Stein, who is willing and able to service the Pines. He noted particularly the recent challenge concerning first the Brownie Company's and later Tony's Barge Service's decision to leave the roll-off business (presenting a serious challenge to the Pines), and the willingness of Ken Stein and Tommy Esposito Jr. to enter the business.
- Continuing his response, Henry noted that the Pines received very good ferry service, more frequent and at a lower cost than the western FI communities served by ferry companies out of Bay Shore.
- A resident spoke of the need to remain engaged in efforts to combat beach erosion.
- A resident asked if the FIPPOA PAC has a role to play in combatting an increasing assault on LGBTQI+ rights, women's rights, etc. Henry responded that while the PAC is organized around issues that directly impact the Pines, we may have a role to play in education.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30.