

FIPPOA Fall Membership Meeting

September 17, 2022 10:30 am

Whyte Hall

Approximately 160 people in attendance

Call to Order and Introductions

FIPPOA President Henry Robin called the meeting to order at 10:35 am and noted the presence of a camera at the back of the deck. Pines resident Joe Conforti is the executive producer of a documentary that has been filming in the Pines this summer. Its focus will be on the Pines Party and Trailblazers Park. Today's filming will only include the presenters onstage and no other part of the meeting.

Henry then introduced the FIPPOA Board:

- Chris Mai – has been leading the FIPPOA website and branding initiative that began last year and has achieved significant results. He also Co-chairs our Membership Committee.
- Charles Montorio-Archer - one of our three newest board members, elected last Fall. Charles is one of the Tri-Chairs and founding members of CoBE, FIPPOA's Committee on Black Equality, and is also a member of the AIDS Memorial Task Force.
- Jay Pagano - our immediate past President (a position he held 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, headed up this Spring's very successful tag sale, and is now spearheading an exciting community event for next season, which he will introduce later in this meeting.
- Leland Rechis – is a member of the Fire Department Auxiliary and is our board liaison to the Department. Leland is Chair of the Infrastructure and Services Task Force. Leland served on the FIPPOA Internet Task Force, which brought FIOS to the Pines.

- Matt Tague - co-chairs our Membership committee and also sits on the Trailblazers Park Task Force.
- Ed Schulhafer – Ed is an immediate past Vice President of FIPPOA, served on the highly successful FIPPOA Internet Task Force and now serves on the Infrastructure and Services Task Force.
- Allan Baum, Alan Brodherson, Greg Henniger, Russell Saray and Eric Sawyer are seeking to retain their Board and/or Executive Committee positions in today's election, and will be speaking about themselves, as will Henry.
- Jim Vandernoth – after sixteen years as a Board member, Jim has decided not to seek re-election. Jim's primary responsibility has been to oversee the Pines Harbor and Marina operations. He knows all the boaters personally and has successfully worked to bring harbor and marina operations to new and higher standards. In her role as Community Manager, Karen McCutcheon has recently taken on primary oversight of the Harbor and Marina. Jim has kindly offered to continue, as a volunteer, to oversee ticket sales and merchandise sales in the Harbor.
- Gary Clinton – ends his one-year term as Secretary today. Following Tami Hausman's decision not to seek re-election last year, Gary agreed to step in as Secretary for one-year, which facilitated the membership electing a new Secretary in this year's Executive Committee election. The Executive Committee, the Board, and the Pines community have benefitted from Gary's strategic thinking, wisdom, and experience.

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 three years ago, and the entire Board appreciates how she has helped to professionalize FIPPOA's role in managing the community.
- Dennis Murphy, Harbor Master. For the past several seasons, the harbor has been sold out with a wait list for seasonal slip rentals. This is a testimony to the success with which Dennis manages the harbor.

- 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 rolls-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, Events Manager Sharon joined us this year overseeing all our events at Whyte Hall including rental contracts and working with our users on their requirements. Whyte Hall has had some form of activity planned for nearly every day and/or night this season. Sharon also oversees FIPPOA events not held at Whyte Hall.
- Gabriella Casella-Nicosia, Administrative Assistant. Because of her familiarity and deep involvement in the Pines, Gabby was able to hit the ground running when she took on this position this summer. Gabby and her husband Steve Nicosia (of Pines Liquor Shop fame) own a home here, and Gabby is a member of the Board of the Pines Conservation Society.

Henry noted the recent passing of Doug Teague, a mainstay of the community for decades, as a 39-year member of the Fire Department, a Fire Commissioner, a Fire Chief, and a business owner. Henry extended condolences to Doug's wife Holly, their children and his many friends.

Henry thanked the essential service providers in the Community:

- The Fire Department, the Fire Department Auxiliary, and the Fire Commissioners: we are deeply grateful to the 26 Firefighters, 17 members of the Fire Department Auxiliary, and 5 Fire Commissioners. The report detailing the Fire Departments service this year was distributed via email with the announcement of this meeting.
- The Mobility Cart Drivers: thus far this year, the drivers have provided the invaluable service of 540 trips (compared to 484 at this point last year).

- The Post Office Staff: there are 4 volunteers working every day the post office is open, and 8 volunteers who work part-time. As of today, approximately 9600 packages have been offloaded from the ferry, moved to the Post Office, identified, sorted, stored for pick-up, and notices sent to the addressees. We will most certainly surpass the 10,000 packages last year.
- Community volunteers: Spring and Fall community clean-ups. Beach clean-ups. Community meetings, election volunteers, and other volunteer needs that develop.
- If you are interested in any of the above-mentioned activities or know someone who is, reach out to Henry, Karen, the FIPPOA staff or Board, the Fire Department, or complete a volunteer form at FIPPOA.org “get involved.”

Fall Board Election

- Henry stated that there are four candidates running for four Board seats, each for a 4-year term. We are also electing all four of our Executive Committee positions, each for a 2-year term: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. He thanked Claudia Tropp, Nominations Chair, for organizing this year's candidates slate.
- Gary Clinton noted that in accordance with our election rules, all votes received in the mail by close-of-business yesterday have been counted. Members whose votes were not received by then were handed a new ballot when checking in this morning.
- Gary stated that each of the seven candidates have been allocated three minutes to speak and will appear in alphabetic order.
- Presenting their remarks were: Allan Baum, Alan Brodherson, Greg Henniger, Andrew Kirtzman, Henry Robin, Russell Saray, and Eric Sawyer.
- Following the presentations, members voted, and their ballots were collected.
- Gary expressed thanks to the volunteers who verify and count the ballots: Gene Cook, Michael Goldstein, Allen Kramer, and Joel Rosenbluth.

Membership Update

- Membership Committee Co-Chairs Chris Mai and Matt Tague stated that over the years, the membership goal was to enroll the owners of at least 400 of the Pines approximately 650 properties. As of today, there are 476 properties represented among FIPPOA membership, which is 73%. Last year at this time, there were 453, which is an increase of 5%.

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

Henry presented the following comments:

- While FIPPOA is very good at responding to demands and needs as they arise, in the past two years we have set out on the process of identifying challenges and opportunities that, while not critical today, may be so in the future.
- He 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 1600 people. He noted that we received 640 responses, a very high rate, and conducted ten focus groups.
- The new Task Forces - Infrastructure and Services, Mitigating the Impact of Climate Change, and Environmental Stewardship - have been working to identify the scope of what they will cover and deliver to the community as they meet on a bi-weekly basis.
- Two members of the three Task Forces, Mark McElreath and Claudia Tropp, reported that currently defined in scope items for the three TF's to explore over the Winter and into next season include:
 - Exploring the potential for solar energy in the Pines
 - Improving drainage on the Boulevard; upgrading the roadway
 - Strengthening our existing recycling program with the objective of including glass recycling
 - Working with PSEG to determine if the electric grid is positioned for the increase in electric usage in the community
 - Working with Cameron Engineering, which Suffolk County has hired to do an analysis of wastewater run-off on Fire Island and its towns and villages including the Pines.

- Looking in general at the impact on rising ground water and how the community and/or individual property owners may address future concerns.
- The possibility for composting

These are just to name a few, but not all the items the task forces hope to address over the coming year or two.

Committee on Black Equality (CoBE)

Henry noted that in slightly more than two years, CoBE has advised the FIPPOA board and led our community efforts to make the Pines more welcoming to People of Color generally and to Black people specifically. He introduced CoBE members Doug Harris and Harry Hayes, thanking them and all CoBE members for their work, and asking Harry and Doug to speak.

- Doug and Harry reported that since its inception as a FIPPOA committee in 2020, CoBE has helped bring awareness of issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) to the Pines community, through community salon-style conversation, collaborations, Juneteenth events, and recommendations to FIPPOA.
- Presenting opportunities for unconscious bias training
- Board discussion of the book “White Fragility.”
- Salon conversations and community meetings: “To Pee Or Not To Pee” and “What Would Marsha do?”
- Urging FIPPOA to recognize figures in LGBT civil rights, with an emphasis on People of Color, which led to the creation of Trailblazers Park.
- Collaboration with FIPAP and the production of “How To You: A Musical Guide to Black Boyhood.”
- Sponsoring Black DJs at Juneteenth teas.
- Recommending that FIPPOA recognize BOFFO as a Pines organization.
- Doug then presented a report of Trailblazers Park, particularly thanking TM Davy, the other artists involved, Scott Bromley, and Liam O’Malley Davy. He noted that the Task Force is still looking for nominations for future Trailblazers

Pines Party

Allan Baum reported the following based on preliminary financial reports

- Overall revenue is up \$50,000 over 2021, despite the need to limit ticket sales due to the smaller beach.
- Increased revenue was seen in ticket sales (due to higher price points), program sales, corporate sponsorships, and the auction.
- Expenses also rose, with notable increases in staffing, housing, insurance, and overall production costs.
- We can anticipate a net profit of approximately \$300,000.
- The Board has made 2022 grants of \$70,000 to the Stonewall Foundation, (which places us among the top 6 or 7 donors to Stonewall), and \$10,000 to the Seashore Defense Fund.
- Allan thanked the Pines Party Committee, Guy Smith and Robert Montenegro, Frank Liberto, the sponsors, and the hundreds of volunteers.
- The Pines Party dates for 2023 will be July 21 to 23.
- Allan will continue to serve as the Executive Producer for Pines Party 2023.

Doing More With More: FIPPOA Community Spending

Due to strong revenue numbers from membership, Harbor/Marina, investments, freight dock, various rental, and particularly due to the revenue from the Pines Party, we have enjoyed several years with healthy surpluses. Therefore, Henry noted, it is incumbent on FIPPOA to invest more back into the community, to “do more with more,” which we have been doing for the past two years.

- Staffing: for the first time, FIPPOA is fully staffed, with a full-time Community Manager, a full-time Administrative Assistant, and a full-year part-time Facilities Manager. Working seasonally are our

Harbormaster and 5 dock hands, and our Events Manager. We are sure you can see the impact of our full-time staff

- Personnel costs are the single largest expense for FIPPOA and the Pines Foundation.
- Though we have successfully outsourced our accounting functions, we would prefer to bring someone on directly, with remote work possible, and ideally with a connection to the Pines. If you have a candidate who might be interested, please contact Henry, Eric Sawyer, or Karen McCutcheon.
- Maintenance and Repair of Whyte Hall: \$50,000 this year, with another \$25,000 this winter to upgrade the Pines Care Center Doctor's apartment, adding an emergency exit in addition to other repairs and upgrades.
- Harbor Maintenance: \$52,000 for dredging, board replacement on the Pier and East Hook, new winter bubbler system to protect the poles. All of this is much easier to accomplish with a Facilities Manager on staff.
- Boulevard and Beach: at one point we relied on Brookhaven, our trash service provider, and volunteers to keep the community looking clean. We now spend money on sweep cleaning the Boulevard at the start of the season, added additional beach garbage pickups during summer weekends, and having spring and fall community dumpster cleanups. All told, supplemental cleanups cost about \$25,000 each year.
- Pines Foundation Programs that were once predominantly funded by donations now require considerable resources from our treasurer to fully fund.
- Examples: Mobility Cart requires about \$4000 to supplement donations for ongoing maintenance. In addition, we plan to build

a shed to house the carts to keep them in good order and extend longevity.

- Rodent and tick/Lyme disease control: \$29,000.
- Post Office: we supplement the USPO payments with at least \$20,000, including capital expenditures for equipment, utilities, and maintaining the storage facilities.
- The Invasion: the commercial district no longer provides entertainment in advance of the arrival of Panzi and the Drag Queens. FIPPOA has assumed production of an hour of entertainment for the past two years, featuring a drag queen MC and others. Total cost includes entertainment, sound, security, setup and cleanup, and toilet facilities is approximately \$18,000.
- Our new website and branding, a significant improvement thanks to the efforts of Board Member Chris Mai and a professional team, cost \$50,000 last year and \$4400 in upgrades this year.
- Trailblazers Park was built with \$75,000 of the proceeds from Pines Party 2021 and \$85,000 from the Pines Foundation.

Monkey Pox Vaccine

- Immediately upon hearing news about the spread of Monkey Pox this June, Henry contacted the Governor's Office, The NYS Department of Health, the Suffolk County Health Department, and Northwell Health and made the case for the Pines and Grove to be early vaccination sites.
- Over the summer, both before the Pines Party and afterward, five "first vaccination pods" were available between the two communities, with 8123 doses administered (6122 at Northwell

Health's facility in the Grove and 1911 at a satellite facility they set up in Whyte Hall). Second vaccinations were also provided.

- Henry expressed particular gratitude to Northwell Health, which provided exceptional service, travelling to the Pines from their location in the Grove

Joint FIPPOA/Chamber of Commerce Task Force: Parking on the Boulevard

- The Joint Task Force continues its efforts to move commercial vehicles off the Boulevard in non-working hours. It has designated a parking area between Pine and Widgeon, concealed from sight as much as possible. Board Member Nate Pinsley, who lives in the area, is leading the efforts to keep the neighbors informed. We hope to have this in place at the start of next season.

Pines 70th Anniversary Celebration

- Henry introduced Nate Pinsley, who will co-chair the planning for a Pines 70th Anniversary Celebration in 2023.
- Nate announced that Vinnie Petrarca will co-chair.
- Nate noted that the Committee is being formed and is intended to be representative of the Pines. Anyone interested in joining the committee should contact Nate or Vinnie.
- The celebration may develop as a series of events. It will not be a fundraising event,
- Decisions on dates, funding, design, and marketing will be made over the months ahead.

Town of Brookhaven Councilman Neil Foley

- Henry spoke warmly about Brookhaven Town Councilman Neil Foley, whose district includes the Pines. Neil has been a strong, reliable, and a true friend to Fire Island Pines. Neil has served as our Council person for eight years and is a major advocate of ours in virtually every issue in which Brookhaven government impacts the Pines.
- A fundraiser for Neil will take place from 4 to 6 pm today at the home of Chris and Teresa Lovito. Henry urged members to attend and support Neil.

Open Community Forum

- A resident expressed concern about the condition of the boardwalks and asked if FIPPOA could take on their maintenance. Henry replied that Pines homeowners pay considerable Highway Department taxes, and that the responsibility is with the Town of Brookhaven. He noted that having done overall replacement project some years ago, the Highway Department is now doing repairs as needed. FIPPOA through Karen McCutcheon keeps on top of the Highway Department regarding need repairs. Henry urged residents to report needed repairs directly to Brookhaven AND to report the needs to 311@fippoa.org.
- A resident expressed concern about motorized bikes and similar traffic on the boardwalks, suggested that FIPPOA make the rules clearer via posting or announcements,
- A resident raised concern about the dust blowing off the Boulevard.
- A resident expressed concern about water quality because, he heard, there was damage to the Pines well and so water was coming from sources on Long Island. Walter Boss replied that

while one of the two Pines well is being refurbished, the Fire Island water supply is based on a series of interconnected wells in several Fire Island communities: when one well is down, the other wells come into service. Similarly, when there is a need for increased water pressure, other wells come into service to provide additional pressure. Further, the water quality in the system serving Fire Island is superb, tested regularly, and there is no reason to be concerned about it.

- A resident express disappointment about the reinstallation of the 1957 Home Guardian “WE BELIEVE” sign. He stated that the sign itself seems biased against the LGBTQ community, and that the word “clean” has a particular meaning in today’s culture. Henry replied that FIPPOA will be working with a historian to develop an explanatory sign that will place the 1957 in context, noting in essence that the Pines as it actually developed triumphed over the intentions of the people who created the sign in 1957.
- A resident raised questions about the ferry schedule, particularly on Friday nights. Henry responded that Ken Stein is very aware of ridership trends, and he noted that the late-season Thursday 7:30PM boat that was the community’s priority based on feedback from our Fall meeting a couple of years ago continues to be on the schedule through the late Fall.
- Residents raised concerns about smoking on the boardwalks, rules governing carts on the boardwalks, and the fall dumpster dates.
- A resident asked about progress on the AIDS Memorial. Henry and Eric spoke briefly about the complicated history of determining a location, including neighboring properties, and FINS, and stated that the project continues.

Election Results

Gary Clinton announced the election results.

There were 220 ballots cast:

Board of Directors (four-year terms)

Alan Brodherson	184*
Greg Henniger	179*
Andrew Kirtzman	176*
Henry Robin	182*
Write-Ins	5 for various individuals

President

Henry Robin	190*
Write-Ins	9 for various individuals

Vice President

Allan Baum	191*
Write-Ins	1

Secretary

Alan Brodherson	110*
Russell Saray	106
Write-Ins	3 for various individuals

Treasurer

Eric Sawyer 192*

Write-In 1

* candidate was elected

Henry thanked the candidates for running.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm