

Historic Wooster Square Association, Inc.



**Board Meeting  
August 24, 2022  
6:00-7:00pm**

**In-Person – Sarah Greenblatt’s Deck**

**Minutes**

**Present**

Sara Aburumi, Cordalie Benoit, Charlotte Eliscu, Edward Dunar, Sarah Greenblatt, Keith Lorch, Charlie Murphy, Charlotte Murphy, Tamara Munoz, Bonnie Rosenberg, Cheryl Szczarba

**Welcome All**

Cordalie welcomed all to our first in-person meeting in a year and asked for brief introductions while welcoming two new members to the Board – Sara Aburumi and Tamara Munoz.

**Approval of Minutes**

Sarah asked for approval of the May Board and August Special Meetings. Cheryl moved that both minutes be approved, Edward seconded, and all present approved the minutes.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Keith reviewed the Treasurer’s Report and explained that we have submitted 9 years of 990s non-profit tax forms and await the IRS re-instatement of 501(c)(4) tax status. The rules changed in 2007 requiring that all non-profits file a 990 report, which we hadn’t. We were able to submit the 3 past year’s 990’s filed/signed to the state for the American Recovery Plan Act funds we hope to receive. Keith explained that moving forward, the Treasurer’s Report will also include bank statements with cancelled checks for review by the Board.

Keith moved two new fiscal policies, based on the request from the state. Cheryl seconded the motion. The Board unanimously passed these motions:

1. All checks written for over \$3,000 will be signed by the Treasurer and President.
2. The Association will have an end of fiscal year audit by the President of all financial records for that fiscal year.

**State Funding Update**

Sarah updated the status of the ARPA federal grant which will be disbursed by the State. She and Keith submitted the required financial self-assessment in late July and heard from our contact, Liz Shapiro (Director of Arts, Preservation & Museums at the CT Office of the Arts and State Historic Preservation within the Department of Economic and Community Development) that we needed to provide written policies for certain sections of the Self-Assessment. While

we have these policies written, Sarah explained that she needs to match them with the sections they need more information about, which is taking a bit longer than anticipated. She let Liz know she'd have the policies during the week of August 29. Sarah will share the revised policies and ask for approval if there is new language needed.

The Board discussed the process of reviewing the budget and updating it with the City as prices have increased and the \$500K may not go as far. Also, it was agreed that once there is a decision about the grant, we would hold a meeting in collaboration with Alder Cupo to update the community and seek feedback on how to prioritize the grant activities. It was agreed as well that we meet (again) with the DTWSCMT.

Sarah shared that this work would fall under an Interest Area Committee of Street & Pedestrian Safety, and that we'd want to engage HWSA members and other community members in the work – bringing in new members to the Association as well.

### **HWSA Leadership**

Cordalie explained that at our first meeting after the Annual Meeting, the Board usually considers and then selects its Officers. She has served since 2017 or 18, and she will be stepping down as President. She would like to remain on the Board and Executive Committee, Ex Officio if asked, to provide support as the Association moves forward. She indicated that we need a President, Treasurer and Secretary – that Keith has agreed to continue as Treasurer through the ARPA grant process, and that Sarah has agreed to serve as President. After explaining the role of the Secretary, Sara Aburumi agreed to step up as Secretary. Sarah G agreed to orient Sara A to the Secretary role.

The Board discussed an update on the Archiving process of the HWSA materials that have been brought to the New Haven Museum – mostly in boxes or notebooks reflecting our work over the past almost 40 years. The past few years of our minutes and other materials are in digital form, but previous materials haven't been digitalized. Bonnie shared that the Museum might have volunteer retired archivists that can help with this process – next steps will be to check on that possibility.

### **HWSA Interest Areas Updates**

The Board discussed the various interest area committees and updates that need leadership and action as we move forward – including community and Association members as possible.

- **Membership** – Cheryl is working to update our brochure and expand our outreach to new members of the community. She and Sarah plan to develop a flyer for HWSA and WSW to share with new developments and consider ways to engage new residents in our work.
- **Communications** – Charlotte M – has been an ex-officio position and worked recently with Charlotte E on updates; but we now have a volunteer in the community (who builds websites professionally) who has agreed to rebuild our website. We will share the plan to seek Board approval before moving forward.
- **Parks and Trees Upkeep** – Sarah, Cordalie, Elsie and Sara Ohly met with new graduate students at the Yale School of Environmental Science/URI program who were oriented to

several parks in the city and engaged in a size/growth inventory of the trees in the parks. On three Tuesdays in August, we met with three different groups to share how the HWSA is involved in our community. During the last visit on 8.23, two students who live in Wooster Square asked to get involved. We also discussed that Bill Carone resigned as head of the Parks Department; Cheryl mentioned she had worked well with Sean O’Grady around the CBF but he hasn’t been responding to her contacts the past few weeks. Keith asked who to send the “well done” letter we want to share at Peter Thompson’s suggestion. He’ll talk more with Peter to get the details of what’s gone well this year and then figure out who to send the letter to.

- **Neighborhood Upkeep** – we want to coordinate with Alder Cupo and LCI to bring community together for cleanup of walkways, green spaces and gardens in Fall and Spring
- **Historic Preservation & Neighborhood Development** – advocate for reasonable preservation and development in our neighborhood, working with the City and Commissions to advocate for our point of view.
- **Events** – Pumpkin Painting (may need a permit if we have food); Cherry Blossom Festival & Painting Cherry Blossoms on the Park sidewalks just before the Festival; tours of the neighborhood, houses/architecture, trees; tree/menorah lighting; and concerts/movies in the Park or local churches.

### **Alder Updates**

Will seek updates for our next meeting

### **Other Business**

Charlie suggested we reach out to the leadership of the condos around the square to get to know them and let them know about the work of the HWSA. He will begin with the condo’s around Hughes, Greene and Academy.

### **Next Meetings**

4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month:

September 28

October 26

November and December will be scheduled as needed.

### **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm

Respectfully Submitted by,

*Sarah B. Greenblatt*, Secretary

# Historic Wooster Square Association, Inc.



## Board Meeting Minutes May 25, 2022 6:00-7:00pm

**Present:** Cordalie Benoit, Edward Dunar, Sarah Greenblatt, Barbara Lamb, Keith Lorch, Charlie Murphy, Charlotte Murphy, Bonnie Rosenberg, Cheryl Szczarba

Cordalie welcomed everyone to our first meeting since January.

**Minutes Approval.** Charlotte Murphy moved we accept the minutes from January 26, 2022 and Keith seconded. Discussion – Barbara Lamb added that she was present at that meeting. All approved the minutes as amended.

**Treasurer's Report.** Keith shared the Treasurer's Report and mentioned that Cherry Blossom Celebration funds are still due to the Conservancy, including the second half of the Mayor's Grant. Cheryl added that the CBC is so far \$220 in the black, which is great given that we started planning 3 months late.

Keith also shared that he, Cordalie and Sarah have been working to bring the HWSA into IRS compliance with 990 filing requirements as a 501(c)(4); and in trying to do this, he learned that the IRS doesn't have a record of our incorporation and establishment of 501(c)(4) status. He explained that we have the documents to show that we were incorporated in 1990 and established as a 501(c)(4). Cordalie explained that prior to 2007 filings weren't required for groups with less than \$25K income, and then rules established that 990s required by postcard for corporations with less than \$50K. Since we hadn't filed 990s after 2007, we seem to have lost our tax exempt status. Keith is in the process of re-establishing our 501(c)(4) status; filling out back 990s to 2011 (we have documentation for 2011-2021, not further back). We will also share our early IRS approvals going back to 1990. Cordalie advised that the HWSA should be ok to take the state \$500K if it is awarded as we are a 501(c)(4) doing business as a neighborhood organization – not a charity – spending our funds to improve our neighborhood. Charlie suggested we ask Rosa's office for assistance as needed – due to her strong commitment to Wooster Square.

**CB Celebration Update.** Cheryl reported how wonderful the Cherry Blossom Celebration was and that feedback indicates people were happy with the changes made. She reported that we await word on the grant proposal from the Library but that we did receive the Mayor's grant. Sarah shared that we held a debrief and will be writing up those notes. Cheryl suggested that next year Wooster Place in addition to Academy Street should be closed to ease the traffic delays on Wooster Place/Greene Street. We took in \$85 in donations at the CB Celebration for posters & pillows.

**State Funding Update.** Sarah reported that the State has delayed the decision on our grant proposal as they are reviewing its compliance with federal requirements. She has talked with and written to both Roland Lemar (State Rep) and Martin Looney (State Senator) and awaits their responses.

**Discussion of HWSA Advocacy Role.** In response to requests that the HWSA sponsor a petition regarding plans for the 78 Olive Street development, and the Board taking an email vote not sponsor the petition, Cordalie suggested the Board review the advocacy role of the Association and its Board. She explained that we originally were formed to protect the Historic District, but we have expanded recently to preserve, enhance and celebrate the quality of life in our entire Wooster Square neighborhood. With this expanded role, she suggested that can take stands on issues that might impact our neighborhood – observing, doing our research/homework, and taking a stand.

Edward shared that he and Rahul weren't sure what the extent of our role could be in relation to the 78 Olive Street proposal. Sarah clarified that when Rahul and Anstress asked if the members of HWSA could be referenced in the petition, and then asked if the HWSA would sponsor the petition, she shared that we couldn't do that without a Board vote. Unfortunately, there was not enough time for the Association Board to make an informed decision, hence the vote not to sponsor the petition. Sarah suggested in the future, we might have a committee that is responsible for being involved neighborhood development discussions so that we can take a more informed positions as needed.

**Plan for Annual Meeting / Board Nominations.** Decision to hold Annual Meeting outdoors around the DeLauro Table on Wednesday June 22, 2022 at 6pm. Cordalie will provide an update of our activities over the past year, there would be a vote on nominated new Board members, and an informal discussion with Roland Lemar - if he were available that date. The short meeting would be followed by a tree tour in WS Park, led by Cordalie. Rain date could be the next week. We discussed providing drinks and individualized snacks similar to what we did with the tree trimming in 2020. The Board can have up to 21 members. Bonnie and Sarah agreed to interview three new neighbors who may be interested, and Cheryl agreed to send out an announcement of the Annual Meeting along with letting people know we are looking for new Board members.

**Membership Update.** Cheryl reported that we have added 4 new members – 3 individual homeowners and 1 renter. Good Copy is ready to print another mailer to recruit new members. Cheryl will place displays in the new apartment buildings for our brochures.

**Other Business.**

- Bonnie suggested we work with City to effectively prune our trees; Charlie suggested we work with URI to update our Cherry Tree Management Plan and make a modest contribution to them. City has a contract to take care of big trees with Care of Trees. Cordalie moved and Keith seconded that we spend up to \$4K on pruning of Cherry Trees and set aside \$500 in reserves for URI to accurately update the maintenance plan. Motion passed. Care of Trees – Charlie will check with Elsie about the contact; Cordalie will contact URI.
- St. Michael's lights – need to contact the Mayor about our requests.
- Piece of granite stone around David Wooster Memorial in the middle of the Park needs replacing.
- Harvey's Bench – Bonnie has contacted a company that can make the Victorian mold and install the pieces for \$3800 – they make the molds twice a year, with June the next time. There are 2-3 bench spaces in the Park – this will be one of them. Billie Iovanne can ask those on waiting list to fill the other bench spaces. Sarah and Cheryl agreed to walk through the park to verify the number of bench spaces available.
- Cheryl suggested we check with LCI re: tree stumps that are left tall after cutting down trees – can they be cut lower so that plants might be planted around them? Near 541 Chapel and along Warren Street.
- HDC – Mayor asked Charlie to recommend new Commissioners, as the City having a hard time finding people to step up.

**Adjourned at 7pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

*Sarah B. Greenblatt*, Secretary

Historic Wooster Square Association, Inc.



**Urgent Board Meeting**

**August 9, 2022**

**6:00-7:00pm**

**Minutes**

**Present**

Cordalie Benoit, Edward Dunar, Sarah Greenblatt, Ellen Keane, Keith Lorch, Tammy Munoz (arrived late), Bonnie Rosenberg, Cheryl Szczarba

**Welcome**

Cordalie welcomed all to the special meeting to review our updated Financial Policies and determined that we have a quorum for a vote (with 7 of 14 voting members present as the meeting began).

**Updated Financial Policies**

Keith shared that the State is required by the federal government to ask all American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) grantees to complete a financial self-assessment to show that they can effectively manage fiscal aspects of the grant. He, Sarah and Cordalie reviewed the 20+ pages of fiscal questions and determined that while we have effective policies and procedures in place, many are not written down. While the Updated Financial Policies presented for review/approval are detailed, they reflect the policies we have and the policies the self-assessment asks for. Keith indicated that we responded to many of the questions with N/A because we have no staff and therefore no policies related to payroll, payroll taxes and benefits/compensation.

Those present were happy with these policies, reflecting the details asked by the federal government as well as the good practices we have had in place. Charlie and Charlotte Murphy could not be present but also reviewed the policies, indicated they are a little too detailed yet agreed with them.

Ellen Keane moved to approve the updated finance policies as written. Cheryl Szczarba seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**URI Tree Inventory (August 9, 16, 23)**

Sarah shared that URI is teaching incoming students at the Yale School of the Environment how to inventory trees in three parks over three weeks in August. Three groups of different groups of students will be in Wooster Square Park on the above dates. Cordalie, Sarah G will welcome them each week and share how the neighborhood friends of Wooster Square support the

quality of life in Wooster Square. Bonnie and Elsie Chapman will be part of the group on 8.16 and Sara Ohly will join them on 8.23. Others are welcome to be part of this effort.

The Association will continue to work with Parks and URI to inventory and plan for the care of the trees in our Park with more detailed discussions at upcoming regular Board meetings.

#### **New Board Member Nomination – Sara Aburumi**

Sarah met with Sara Aburumi after our Annual Meeting about her interest in joining the Board. Sara and her family are longtime Greene Street neighbors and as she has finished her master's degree and is now working in the public health field, she is interested in giving back to her neighborhood. Sarah moved that Sara Aburumi become a member of the Historic Wooster Square Association Board. Bonnie seconded the motion. Discussion included how involved Sara and her brothers have been in the neighborhood. Sara Aburumi was unanimously elected to the Board.

#### **Next Meeting – August 24, 2022**

It was agreed to hold our next meeting on 8.24.22 at 6pm on Sarah Greenblatt's deck, weather-permitting. It is hoped that we'll have heard from the state regarding our fiscal self-assessment and timing for the ARPA grant.

Keith shared that when he saw Peter Thompson recently, Peter mentioned how well the new Park's crew is doing in taking care of the park. It was agreed to send a note to complement them. Cheryl suggested she could email Sean (whom she's worked with during the Cherry Blossom Festival); Cordalie mentioned Bill Carone is the head of the Parks Department. (As of 8.16 Bill Carone announced he is leaving as head of the Parks Department, therefore we need determine the right person to contact with our complements).

**Adjourned at 6:45pm**

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Sarah B. Greenblatt*, Secretary

# Historic Wooster Square Association

## Updated Financial Policies

Adopted by the Board 8.9.22

### General:

1. Treasurer's Reports will be provided to all members attending Board meetings of the Association and to the public upon request. The report will include all spending and income since the last report. It will also include all bank statements received covering the time period since the last report. The bank statements will include check images for the statement period.
2. Financial statements for Programs administered by the Association (e.g., specific purpose grants and awards, Cherry Blossom Festival, etc.) should be attached to the treasurer reports. Individual details of revenue and expenditures broken down by spending category will be included.
3. Expenditures for the association will be of one of three types
  - Micro Purchases: any purchase under \$3000. They can be made without bids. To prevent disputes the purchaser should be verbally pre-authorized by the Association Treasurer.
  - Small Purchases: any purchase between \$3000 and \$250,000. Prior to authorization, there must be bids submitted from three or more vendors. Documentation will be required for each bid and reasons for the accepted bid must be documented. Authorization will be given only with agreement of both the President and Treasurer of the Association.
  - Non-competitive Purchases: any purchase when there is only one possible supplier – e.g., City of New Haven. Non-competitive bids must be authorized by the Executive Committee (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) of the Association.
4. All payments made by the Association will require full documentation of the item/service being bought. The documentation must include a description of the services or goods being purchased, including the dates and locations of the goods/services and performance schedules if applicable. Payments will not be made without proper documentation.
5. On payment, all purchase documentation will be marked as paid. The payment check number will also be added. Documents are kept for nine years.
6. Payment checks will never be made out to "cash" or "bearer"

7. A receipt for any cash donated to the Association must be made with a duplicate held by the Association for documentation. The receipt should include the purpose of the cash if applicable.
8. The Association is prohibited from issuing credit cards to any of its members or officials
9. The President, or another board member chosen by the board, will review all financial records at least annually, including but not limited to checkbooks, bank statements, invoices and receipts.
10. Association revenue will be deposited within a week of being received.
11. The Association only makes payments via check
12. Voided checks will be kept for documentation purposes
13. Association checks will be kept in a box with a combination lock
14. Any audit of the association finances will be reviewed by the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Association
15. All financial records of the Association will be held for a period of at least nine years
16. Bank statements will be received and reconciled on a monthly basis regardless of whether there is a Board meeting during the month.
17. Small Purchase bids will not
  - Have unreasonable requirements to qualify to do business
  - require unnecessary experience
  - require excessive bonding
  - include name-brand-only requirements
  - include the use of statutory- or administrative-based geographical preferences except where federal rules permit or encourage
11. Small Purchase bids will
  - exclude from competition individuals and firms that developed the specifications, requirements or statements of work to be offered
12. For Small Purchase procurements and Non-bid contracts

- Procurement records must fully detail the history of each procurement, at minimum the rationale for the method of procurement, selection of contract type, contractor selections and rejections and the basis for accepting the price

13. All procurements must attempt to obtain the most economical purchase

## **Program Accounting**

Programs run by the Association (e.g., Special purpose grants/awards, Cherry Blossom Festival, etc.,) will have additional financial requirements as follows:

1. A detailed budget (broken by spending category) for the program must be produced prior to starting the project. The budget for the program must be approved and authorized by the Executive Committee (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) of the Association.
2. During the period that the program is being run, there will be (at minimum) monthly meetings that will review revenues, expenditures, and operational progress of the program. Expenditures must be compared with the budget amounts for each category of spending in the program. Progress toward the fulfillment of any program obligations must be documented. A report should be produced as a result of the meeting and included in the next Treasurer's report to the association
3. Procurement records must fully detail the history of each procurement, at minimum the rationale for the method of procurement, selection of contract type
4. Budget categories cannot be exceeded. Nor can spending amounts be moved between categories without the authorization of the Executive Committee (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) of the Association.
5. Any existing obligations of the program from the source of revenue must be clearly specified within the budget document
6. Payments made for a program will use the memo line on the check to identify the program and cost category of the payment.
7. A detailed expected timeline for the program should be included in the proposed budget for the program if applicable.

8. Reports received from any program sub-contractors will be discussed during the monthly meetings. The subcontractor will be required to provide quarterly reports at a minimum and a final report.
9. Bonding will be required for any procurement over \$250,000.
10. HWSA will assure minority businesses, women's business enterprises and labor surplus area firms are used, when possible.

**Historic Wooster Square Association  
Treasurer's Report  
May 26 2022 to July 31 2022  
Approved by the Board 8.24.22**

	Period	YTD
Form 990-EZ for 2021 filed on 5/31/2022		
Starting Balance On Hand	\$ 12,578.28	\$20,544.72
Income		
Membership Dues	\$ 121.04	817.37
Cherry Blossom Festival	\$ 9,640.00	12,965.00
Donation	\$ 0	85.00
Total Income	\$ 9761.04	\$13,867.37
Expense		
Christmas Concert	\$ 0	\$ 0
Membership Mailing	\$ 0	\$ 364.59
Meeting supplies	\$ 0	\$ 0
Cherry Blossom Festival	\$ 104.90	\$11,661.53
HWSA/Smart Bank Scholarship	\$ 0	\$ 0
Ads	\$ 0	\$ 0
PO Box	\$ 0	\$ 0
Memoriums	\$ 0	\$ 0
Pumpkin Decorating event	\$ 0	\$ 0
Preservation Trust Membership	\$ 0	\$ 0
Bank Checks	\$ 0	\$ 0
Website	\$ 0	\$ 151.55
Tree Lighting	\$ 0	\$ 0
State Registration	\$ 0	\$ 0
IRS fees 501(c)(4) reinstatement	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00
Total Expense	\$ 704.90	\$ 12,777.67
Balance on Hand 7/31/2022	\$ 21,634.42	\$ 21,634.42
Committed to Legal	\$ 1,000.00	
Committed to Cherry Blossom Festival	\$ 10,000.00	
Uncommitted	\$ 10,634.42	