

**Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on December 2, 2003)**  
**October 26, 2003**  
**Location: Florence Nightingale Health Center**

The following directors were present and constituted the quorum: Julie Chan, Thomas Cunningham, Irving Gerber, Melissa Gibilaro, Gerald P. Halpern, David Herszenhorn, Alicia Hughes, Renata Kobetts Miller, Gia Malka, Neil Manis, Taniedra McFadden, George Moutakis, Maurice Paprin, Charles Sigety, Craig Slutzkin.

Guests: Sharon Chin (Class of 2003), Winnie Hallex (THHS Parent Coordinator), Howard Kwait (THHS Assistant Principal), Ted Peck (THF!), Shirley Stergiou (THHS Parent-Teachers Association), Veronica Velasik (Class of 1997)

- I. David Herszenhorn called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM and requested that all Board members and guests introduce themselves for the benefits of the many guests.
- II. Gerald Halpern introduced a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the September 21, 2003 Board of Directors meeting and approve with two corrections of spelling. Mr. Herszenhorn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- III. Executive Committee Report. Mr. Herszenhorn reported the following:
  - a. Several Board members, including Mr. Herszenhorn, met with Thomas Cunningham at the high school to express concern that the school had lost some of its Humanities focus. The meeting was positive and both Messrs. Herszenhorn and Cunningham will continue the dialogue.
  - b. Several Board members attended a luncheon in which Joel Klein, NYC Schools Chancellor, spoke about several issues facing high schools today, including fundraising. The PTA and school administration attended the luncheon along with the Alumni Association.
- IV. School Report. Mr. Cunningham reported the following:
  - a. Founders' Day. Founders' Day was held on Friday, October 24. Jin Pak '90 was the keynote speaker.
    - i. Mr. Cunningham described it as a combination of solemn vs. cheerleading.
    - ii. The Alumni Association provided folders with the Alumni Association name and website, as well as the Ephibec Oath, printed on them to the freshman and incoming sophomores. Included was a welcoming letter from Mr. Herszenhorn.
    - iii. Craig Slutzkin noted that he participated in the classroom discussion part of the program and noted that he felt there was a lack of knowledge of the school's history amongst the students, and attributed that partially to the relative inexperience of the senior administration at the high school. He suggested that Mr. Cunningham and the Executive Committee discuss how this can be addressed.
    - iv. A discussion later ensued about the purpose of Founders' Day and whether cheerleading/pep rallying should be part of the program. Mr. Cunningham wasn't sure when the program starting to be less solemn, but it was his understanding that the program was modified because it became too solemn at one point. Mr. Cunningham agreed to revisit the program for future years.
  - b. Admissions Process. Mr. Cunningham described the changes in the admissions process for incoming students as best he could.
    - i. The selection process is based on a ranking system, in which each student gets 12 choices and the highest single rank match would be awarded.
    - ii. Charles Sigety recommended additional communications with Chancellor Klein. The co-PTA Presidents have been in contact with his office, and have been referred. He also recommended that John Lee, former Queens High School Superintendent and now a leader in the Admissions office, be used as a resource.

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- c. Wall of Fame. Mr. Cunningham reported that the Wall of Fame is progressing nicely. The expectation is to have a dedication ceremony, led by former Assistant Principal Sheila Orner, in early to mid- December.
    - i. The Wall is expected to hold 48 plaques, with the entire population of plaques being rotated.
    - ii. Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Slutzkin will coordinate to see if all Hall of Fame inductees currently have plaques.
  - d. High School Fair and Open House. This week is the first school open house at Townsend Harris. The open house will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, and alumni are asked to help lead tours. Over 6,000 are expected.
    - i. The former format of having one city-wide fair was ended after 9/11. Now the fairs are borough-wide, and only schools from the individual boroughs may attend their respective borough's fairs.
    - ii. Mr. Herszenhorn recommended that a questionnaire be used to gauge issues/questions/trends of the prospective students. Mr. Cunningham and Howard Kwait, the school's Assistant Principal of Organization, noted that this may be a good idea, but probably better for next year given that the open house is in two days.
    - iii. The intention is to eventually have a virtual-school tour posted to the school's website, [www.thaa.qc.edu](http://www.thaa.qc.edu).
  - e. College Recruiting. The process is underway. The school is now using the ECOS system, which allows students to go on-line to see certain college admissions criteria and trends on a college-specific basis.
  - f. School Drama Program. This year's school play is the "Seven Ages of Shakespeare" and will be held in late April.
  - g. Queens College Relationship.
    - i. Mr. Cunningham, along with Joe Dubowski from the PTA and Marvin Leiner, QC liaison, met with James Muyskens, President of Queens College, to discuss the high school's use of Queens College's facilities.
    - ii. Efforts to appoint a QC liaison upon Dr. Leiner's retirement are on-going.
- V. Treasurer's Report. Craig Slutzkin presented the report of the treasurer from September 1, 2003 through September 30, 2003. He presented an overview of the financial performance and cash position of the Association. Maurice Paprin introduced a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as given; Gia Malka seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- VI. Events Committee. Julie Chan reported the following:
- a. The fall mixer will be held on November 20 at the Library Room at Hotel 41.
  - b. Ms. Chan and Ms. Malka are attempting to have an event every other month. Some thoughts on events included wine tasting, a family based event, and a baseball game.
  - c. Neil Manis suggested having something relating to the fencing team, such as a "Townsend Harris Invitational" which would include fencing alumni from city high schools.
- VII. Finance and Gifts Distribution Committees. Mr. Slutzkin noted the following:
- a. Finance Committee – The finance committee had a conference call in August and agreed unanimously on the following recommendations to the Board:
    - i. Dues should remain at the current \$15/\$5 structure for the 2003 and 2004 dues cycles.
    - ii. Based on the relative time commitments and responsibilities of each Board member and to adhere to the policy per the by-laws of no Board members receiving compensation for their services as Board members, the Executive Director honorarium

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should be discontinued. This would, therefore, mean no Board members would be receiving stipends.

1. Irving Gerber, Executive Director, had been notified of this recommendation last week by mail.
2. Mr. Gerber, responding to the recommendation, noted his objection. He felt that the stipend should continue based on (1) the work he had done setting up the organization in the late 1970's and early 1980's, (2) his continuing efforts in the organization, (3) the fact that the Association paid Charles Puglisi when he was Executive Secretary and (4) the work he currently does for the newsletter.
3. Mr. Slutzkin, responding to Mr. Gerber's response, noted that the Finance Committee had considered all of these items; however, noted that (1) Mr. Puglisi performed a significant amount of administrative services to the Board and had to quit his paid, after-school job to perform them, and the type and quantity of work was different, (2) no Board member receives compensation for his/her services as a Board member, (3) publications work for THAM done by Ted Peck was performed gratis and (4) Eileen Gunn now does the bulk of the work for the newsletter, and that was a separate issue decided by the entire Board a long time ago.

iii. On behalf of the Finance Committee, Mr. Slutzkin introduced a motion:

*RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Townsend Harris Alumni Association, based on the recommendation of its Finance Committee, discontinue the Executive Director Honorarium on a prospective basis.*

Motion was seconded by Mr. Herszenhorn. Motion was approved by a vote of 14-1 (PRO: Chan, Cunningham, Gibilaro, Halpern, Herszenhorn, Hughes, Kobetts Miller, Malka, Manis, McFadden, Moutakis, Paprin, Sigety, Slutzkin; CON: Gerber).

iv. On behalf of the Finance Committee, Mr. Slutzkin introduced a motion:

*RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Townsend Harris Alumni Association, based on the recommendation of its Finance Committee, not change the existing dues structure for the 2004 dues cycle.*

Motion was seconded by Gerald Halpern. Motion was approved by a vote of 14-1 (PRO: Chan, Cunningham, Gibilaro, Halpern, Herszenhorn, Hughes, Kobetts Miller, Malka, Manis, McFadden, Moutakis, Paprin, Sigety, Slutzkin; CON: Gerber).

VIII. *Townsend Harris Forever!* Report. Mr. Peck reported that there have been a number of developments in the THF! drive.

- a. A PTA/Alumni Association/High School Committee on Development is being formed.
- b. He has been successful in obtaining funds for the Hebrew class and was also exploring funds for the Japanese classes taught at the high school.
- c. He stressed the need for budgets to be developed, as various organizations that he will be requesting funds from will need to review the budgets of both the High School and the Alumni Association.
- d. He would like to do a year-end mailing to targeted individuals reminding them that tax-deductible contributions for the 2003 tax year can still be made. Mr. Slutzkin asked whether having several letters soliciting funds within recent months could turn potential donors off, and Mr. Peck said that he did not think so. Mr. Herszenhorn suggested that specific classes adopt specific endowments (i.e. Class of 1934 be encouraged to contribute to the Library Fund). Mr. Peck agreed with the idea.

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- e. Mr. Herszenhorn discussed the Sigety Family Foundation pledge and potential uses for it, including the need for additional funds for the yearbook. One other potential use would be to fund the school's Humanities Department efforts in creating a soft-covered textbook.
- f. Mr. Halpern introduced the following motion:

*RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Townsend Harris Alumni Association, authorize sufficient expenditures to be made to do a fundraising mailing to targeted individuals in connection with the THF! campaign.*

Motion was seconded by Mr. Herszenhorn and was passed unanimously.

IX. PTA Report. Ms. Stergiou reported the following:

- a. The PTA is actively engaged with the school's plans to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the school.
- b. Elizabeth Schnee, co-President, is actively involved in the efforts to better understand the new admissions process, as discussed earlier.
- c. The Phone-A-Thon is currently underway. Parents are asked for \$150 per family. The average amount raised per year is approximately \$35,000.
- d. The Parent Coordinator is Winnie Hallex. Ms. Hallex was present and discussed her role in the high school.
  - i. She is the parent of a current-senior at the high school, so she knows the mission of the school well.
  - ii. She strives to make the school an increasingly welcome presence to the parents.
  - iii. She acts as a liaison between the parents and the school.
  - iv. She proposed that the alumni be used at some point in the future as resources to the parents of the current high school students and potentially lead professional development workshops.

X. Upcoming Events/New Business. The following items were discussed:

- a. Veronica Velasik and George Moutakis are coordinating the 1997 reunion, which will be held in early December at Connelly's.
- b. The PTA Dinner for alumni and students to mingle will be held on Saturday, March 20, 2004.
- c. Mr. Slutzkin reminded the Board members to fill out and return a survey as to preferred times and meeting places. He will report the results at the next meeting.
- d. Alicia Hughes requested more structure for the Board meetings, including written reports and time limits. The Board briefly discussed what can be done, and previous attempts. Mr. Herszenhorn agreed to attempt to put more structure on the Board, as needed and required.

There being no other business, the Board adjourned at 12:30 P.M. Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 2 at 7:00 PM at the high school building.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig L. Slutzkin  
Secretary of the Board of Directors