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February 2024

February Update on the Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH):

A New Site Plan for the Neill Log House

Tony Indovina, FONLH President and SHHS Board Member

Mission Statement for the Friends of the Neill Log House (FONLH Inc.)

Adopted February 2022



"We secure funds to restore and maintain the Neill Log House, foster knowledge of its historic significance, and work with interested parties to ensure the continued educational use of the structure and its site for future generations."

Individual support for the FONLH restoration effort will always be needed. To make online donations by credit card or PayPal, go to the SHUC website, shuc.org, and click on the "Projects" link in the black menu bar at the top of the page. A pull-down menu will appear. Select "Friends of the Neill Log House." Alternatively, checks can be sent to SHUC (put FONLH in the memo line) at the following address: SHUC, 5604 Solway Street, Pittsburgh, PA, 15217.



Winter is typically a period of dormancy for many projects like ours, but this is not the case with Friends of Neill Log House. Much is going on, even after all exterior restoration of the Neill Log House was completed on schedule and before winter weather set in. The attached photo shows our little house resting peacefully in the first snowfall here.



All of our site planning now is in preparation for the anticipated opening this summer for programming. Major remaining work on the log house itself is the electrical contract, for which we are in the queue for a City permit. This will include installation of wall light sconces like those that once would have held candles. At the same time, we are scheduling major work on the grounds inside the cyclone fence. Over the coming weeks, City Forestry will remove most of the trees inside the enclosure in anticipation of new ones to be planted this spring as part of a total landscaping plan. At the same time, we have approved a contract for grading work to address general runoff issues and the trenching around the log house necessitated by foundation-stone restoration.

The overall effect is as envisioned in the artistic rendering to the right, masterfully created and donated to us by Landscape Architect Frank Dawson of J. Frank Studios. As shown in the drawing, a new 8-foot wrought-iron-style black aluminum fence has been approved for installation around an expanded site, presenting visitors with an unimpeded view of the log house no longer sitting behind the current 8-foot cyclone fence. A change in the lease agreement with the City is first required, which all parties support. Our friends at First-Tee, the leaseholder for land outside the current cyclone fence, agree that the additional land sought has not been or ever will be important to golfing in the park.



We have requested that the City initiate this change in our current lease to include these new boundaries for approval by the City law department. Within this expanded site, the City will continue to assume responsibility for the steps leading up to the log house on what is legally classified as a park trail. And while FONLH is engaged in all the aforementioned work over the winter, the City has approved and will be undertaking reconstruction of these steps.

Aside from removing trees and work on the stairs being undertaken by the City, everything else planned for the site this winter is budgeted for, thanks to the continuing efforts of our dedicated board members, who continue to support the outstanding work of our funding committee. If you take a close look at the site rendering, you will note one last enhancement to the site for which grant money is anticipated in the near future. This will be the re-installation of the period garden that existed on the site during the historic restoration by Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation in the 1970s. More on this last major site enhancement and all our plans will be presented as our work progresses.