
TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON

INTEROFFICE ADVISORY MEMORANDUM

TO: MARTY FLYNN, DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, RECREATION SENIOR & VETERAN SER.
FROM: PATRICIA A. KRZYWULAK, PROGRAM COORDINATOR OF SPECIAL EVENTS
SUBJECT: DIVISION OF RECREATION - OFFICE OF HISTORIC HOMES ANNUAL REPORT
DATE: JANUARY 14, 2013
CC: FILE

DIVISION OF RECREATION – OFFICE OF HISTORIC HOMES

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

MISSION: *The Mission of the Division of Recreation, Office of Historic Homes is to promote greater appreciation and understanding of the history and significance of Hamilton Township to residents and the general public. The Historic Homes are focal points where many visitors can enjoy tours as well as gather for special events.*

Future goal: To raise awareness of these homes through published materials, media, tours, programming and special events.

KUSER FARM MANSION:

Since 1979, Hamilton Township open the doors of this elegant Victorian home to the public for free tours by trained Tour Guides. Today, visitors can still enjoy guided tours on the weekends. Kuser Farm Mansion received many visitors from New Jersey and many other states and countries. Visitors from schools, clubs, churches and other organizations, such as the New York Historical Society and the Glassboro Senior Citizen Center was able to benefit from one of Hamilton's well known historic attractions. More than **5,649** guests have visited Kuser Mansion in 2013.

KUSER MANSION WEDDING PHOTOS & CEREMONIES:

Kuser Mansion continues to receive requests from prospective brides to be married in the Mansion or take wedding photos. However, with the expansion of the other two historic homes and a minimal number of tour guides, these requests are not feasible. Currently, if a request is made for photos during the week, all efforts are made to accommodate them. Presently, there is no fee for the use of the Mansion for ceremonies or photos. Donations are accepted.

KUSER FARM PARK GAZEBO:

The Gazebo today is still a popular attraction for brides. At present, there is no fee to utilize the Gazebo. However, to increase revenue for the Township, a fee similar to that charged at Sayen Gardens may be implemented. In addition, the gazebo continues to be used for summer concerts.

KUSER MANSION MOVIE NIGHT:

The Mansion continues to host a movie night monthly with the exception of July, August, November and December. Movies are viewed on the large screen which is located inside the dining room and was once the room of celebrity guests. Chairs are provided by Kuser Mansion, but visitors are welcomed to bring their own. Mostly, Century Fox films are shown due to the connection with the Kuser Family. In November, 2012 a new projector was purchased. The total number of guest who attended Movie Night in 2013 was **168**.

KUSER MANSION SPECIAL PROGRAMS:

Tom Glover, past president of the Hamilton Township Historical Society has had a lifelong interest in local history as well as the Kuser Family. In 2013, Mr. Glover continued to provide guest of the Mansion with special presentations. In 2014, Mr. Glover as well as other performers/presenters will be scheduled throughout the year.

KUSER MANSION TOURS GUIDES:

The tour guides of the Kuser Farm Mansion have been trained in customer service and that is what makes a tour or visit to the mansion excel beyond other historic house tours. Employee's provide individual attention to guests and frequently tailor their tours to them, thus ensuring that their visit is one that will be remembered for a long time to come. Tour Guides work schedule and payroll is done through the Program Coordinator.

WINTER WONDERLAND & HOLIDAY TOURS:

Yearly, the Kuser Mansion plays an immense part in the Winter Wonderland with their every so popular Christmas Tours. This year, the Winter Wonderland took place on December 5th, 6th and 7th. Visitors of all ages were able to enjoy the beauty of the Kuser Mansion. Dragonfly Farms graciously donated their time and talents in assisting us with decorating the trees and fireplace mantel in the Drawing Room. They also donated a large centerpiece for our dining room table. This event commenced with a Tree Lighting Ceremony on the 5th and ended with over **2,490 visitors** visiting the Mansion in just 3 days.

NEW JERSEY VALLEY MODEL RAILROAD CLUB:

The Program Coordinator acts as the liaison between the New Jersey Valley Model Railroad Club and the Township of Hamilton and arranges for them to participate in Township special events. The Club meets on Wednesday evenings from 6-9 p.m. If there is a problem in the basement meeting site, these issues are reported by the Program Coordinator to Public Works via the Q-Alert system.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS & HOLIDAY EVENTS:

The Mansion continues to provide special programs, lectures and holiday events, all free of charge to the public. Kuser Mansion participated in the Fall Harvest, Septemberfest and Winter Wonderland events in 2013.

Enhancements inside the Kuser Mansion continued throughout the 2013 year including; repainting of the Rose Bedroom and the Gold Bedroom. Railings were installed at the front entrance for guest to go up and down the steps with more ease.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- **Increase Awareness of Hamilton's History by:**
 - ✓ Placing more information such as brochures and flyers in local and surrounding areas (In 2013 advertised in Hamilton Post. Free advertisement with the Hamilton Observer, Mercer County Cultural & Heritage Community Newspaper, and the Princeton Packet).
 - ✓ Increase outreach through the internet, press releases and Township Website, Twitter and Facebook Accounts
 - ✓ Support our community based programs
 - ✓ Increase programs for various age groups
 - ✓ **Increase Tour Guides personnel**
 - ✓ Continue with inside refurbishing the Mansion
 - ✓ Explore opportunities for grants to assist with the preservation of the Mansion and the Farm buildings.

SAYEN HOUSE & GARDENS:

The Sayen House, home to more than 1,000 azaleas and nearly 500 rhododendrons became the property of Hamilton Township in 1988. Today it is known as the "Sayen House & Gardens". It is an extremely popular venue for special events, especially weddings. Numerous phone calls and email inquiries come into the office on a daily basis. The house is shown by appointment only.

Currently, there are 2 caterers exclusive to the Sayen House by contract with the Township of Hamilton. The clients must choose from one of the two caterers. Presently, meetings are being held to obtain another caterer through the proper Township bidding process. Each caterer is required to pay the Township a percentage fee based on each event. In 2013 a total of **\$14,863.78** was collected in catering fees.

The Program Coordinator maintains the catering schedule and provides a weekly schedule updating the caterers, Sayen House groundskeeper and the Public Works staff. The Program Coordinator keeps in contact with all the catering managers if any issues should arise and handles any problems that might occur.

The following are statistics from Sayen House & Gardens for House Rentals, Wedding Ceremonies, Photo's and catering fees from January – December 2013:

Month	Total
January	\$2,987.50
February	\$4,496.52
March	\$3,495.00
April	\$6,316.72
May	\$6,168.00
June	\$8,548.00
July	\$7,388.05
August	\$6,809.78
September	\$6,783.27
October	\$5,754.27
November	\$3,245.00
December	\$4,531.66
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>\$66,523.78</i>

CROSSING GUARDS:

Crossing Guards are hired during our special events to assist with the flow of traffic in the parking lot and provide assistance as needed. Schedules for guards are dropped off at the Sayen House each week. All Coordination of guard's schedules and payroll hours are handled by the Program Coordinator. Any issues during the weekend events are handled by the Program Coordinator.

SAYEN HOUSE ITEMS:

- The Sayen House & Garden website continues to be a popular source for clients planning a special event with many inquiries being received on a daily basis. All inquiries are answered via email or telephone by the Program Coordinator.
- Sayen House & Gardens continues to be featured in the popular wedding magazine, “The Knot” as one of the best places to have a wedding.
- The Program Coordinator continues to oversee the care and cleaning of all linens used in Sayen and Grafton Houses. This includes those serviced by the Sanitary Linen Company and those laundered in house by the Program Coordinator.
- The Program Coordinator coordinates the outside cleaning service as well as the Township Public works employees. This includes, scheduling, payroll for the outside services, and any necessary troubleshooting.
- The very popular Annual Azalea Festival brings thousands of visitors to Sayen Gardens. As the house is open to the public that day, the Program Coordinator will have the site decorated for a special event, to generate positive publicity and interest. Brochures and catering packages will also be available.
- In March 2013, a new ice machine was delivered and install. The Program Coordinator sought estimates and coordinated the delivery with the company as well as with the Public Works staff to install item.
- The Program Coordinator purchased a new kitchen ceiling fan to replace the broken one. It was installed by Public Works staff.
- Three new coffee pots were purchased to replace the existing one which kept on breaking down.
- Two high-chairs were purchased for the convenience of the Sayen House guest after Program Coordinator received numerous requests for them.
- New table skirts were ordered for the buffet area in the Sayen House.
- In September of 2013, estimates were sought out by the Program Coordinator to purchase new resin chairs and “sweetheart” tables for the Sayen House. They were delivered November 2013.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- **Increase Awareness and revenues generated by the Sayen House:**
 - ✓ Placing more information in local and surrounding areas
 - ✓ Increase outreach through press releases, Township Website; Update Sayen website
 - ✓ Increase outreach through the Township's Facebook and Twitters accounts
 - ✓ Create customer satisfaction survey
 - ✓ Complete Sayen Garden pamphlet. In doing so, this pamphlet would be more thorough and give a professional appearance when Program Coordinator meets with potential clients.

- **Outside Building Maintenance:**
 - ✓ Install new elevator for the safety of guests (In Capital)
 - ✓ Replace existing Trellis on back porch (In Capital)
 - ✓ Increase lighting around Sayen House (In Capital)

- **Inside Building Maintenance:**
 - ✓ Purchase new dinnerware, silverware, water glasses & soup bowls
 - ✓ Purchase High Chairs (completed)
 - ✓ Purchase new refrigerator
 - ✓ Purchase new stove

GRAFTON HOUSE:

Commencing, June 6, 2012, the Township of Hamilton and two caterers entered into an agreement with the Township of Hamilton to provide catering services at the Grafton House. Currently, only *Porfirio's Rt. 33 Market & Café* elected to continue these services for another year. This home is shown to clients by the Program Coordinator by appointment only. In 2013, 6 events were booked with a total revenue of **\$2,100.00**. Currently, there is an event scheduled for January 18, 2014 and potential clients inquiring about dates in the spring. I have noticed an increase in calls inquiring about the Grafton House.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- **Increase Awareness of the Grafton House:**
 - ✓ Placing more information in local and surrounding areas

- ✓ Increase outreach through press releases, Township Website
- ✓ **Increase outreach through the Township's Facebook and Twitters accounts**
- ✓ **Purchase sign in front of building**

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES-Grafton Continued

- **Inside Building Maintenance:**
 - ✓ Purchase two warming ovens
 - ✓ Install additional above counter cabinets for storage of dishes etc.
 - ✓ Purchase High Chairs
 - ✓ Purchase decorations/ furniture to make house more appealing to clients
 - ✓ **Purchase of custom curtains to allow the house to “show” in a more desirable way for future clients (completed and installed 1/8/14).**

