



DEMHIST General Assembly 2006

Wednesday, Oct. 11, 2006, 6.30 p.m., Fine Arts Museum, Valletta, Malta

Minutes

Present:

Daniela Ball, Chair

Eloy Koldeweij

Hetty Berens

Maria de Jesus Monge

Julius Bryant

Elsa Rodrigues

Marcio Doctors

Ulla Strømberg

Cecilia Fernandez de Pallini

Véronique van Caloen

Stephen Hartog

Vesna Vrabec

Grete Holmboe

Jeanne Watson

Daniela Karasová

Gabriela Williamson

Peter Keller, Secretary Treasurer

Linda Young

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomes the DEMHIST members to the General Assembly 2006 in Valletta.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the General Assembly in Lisbon 2005 had already been sent out by e-mail.

The General Assembly approves the minutes.

3. Report of the Chair

The Report of the Chair had already been sent out by e-mail. The General Assembly approves the final version, it will be attached to these minutes.

4. Report of the Secretary Treasurer

The Secretary Treasurer has opened a new account in Austria. It had to be a personal account of the Secretary Treasurer, under the name of Peter Keller, because DEMHIST isn't an association according to Austrian law and there aren't two members of DEMHIST in Salzburg to sign all transactions. The account of the former Secretary/Treasurer was a personal account of Hugh Maguire, too. The problem is common to all international committees and has not yet been solved by ICOM.

The account is:

PSK Österreichische Postsparkasse AG

Bank Code: 60000

Account n° 81244957

IBAN: AT 366000000081244957

BIC: OPSKATWW

The accounting with September 30th, 2006, is:

Income

Transfer H. Maguire, Jan. 25, 2006	9.846,59
Subsidy ICOM, May 03, 2006	1.216,45
Sales of Proceedings	136,00
Interests	5,54
Sum	11.204,58

Expenses

Web Hosting	- 4,79
Taxes	- 1,38
Poster AFRICOM, postal fees	- 178,10
Sum	-184,27

Result 11.020,31

The General Assembly approves the report and the accounting.

5. Projects

5.1 Categorization Project

For the Categorization Project, Rosanna Pavoni has assembled about 200 filled in forms. DEMHIST should continue the project, but Rosanna Pavoni should agree and deliver a pilot analysis of 50 forms or of one question of all forms, in a certain time, giving at her disposal a certain amount of money. A database is too much work seen that there are only 200 forms, the analysis should be done manually. DEMHIST should reflect about the aims of the project, the forms not asking for the period in which the house was built, the people who lived in it etc.

Working group: Hetty Berens, Julius Bryant

5.2. Definition DEMHIST

There are different definitions and descriptions of DEMHIST and its aims on the ICOM website, in the statutes etc. Based on a suggestion by Jeanne Watson, a description is proposed that should be used for the flyer (cf. 5.5.):

“DEMHIST serves as an international forum focusing upon the conservation and management of historic house museums. These range from castles to cottages, from all periods. Goals include the development of a classification system, standards for conservation, restoration and security as well as helping develop communications with other professionals and visitors.

Ways to improve community relations while increasing visibility and tourism are also DEMHIST concerns. Interpretation of house museums includes historic, architectural, cultural, artistic and social information. Founded in 1999, DEMHIST holds conferences and maintains a website to help provide a professional platform for sharing ideas and solutions. DEMHIST advises ICOM and its members as a source of international expertise on historic house museums.”

The Spanish and Portuguese Board members ask to cancel the adjective “historic” because “historic house” in their languages has a negative connotation. It is suggested that the Spanish and Portuguese translations should use the term “casas museo” only.

5.3. Website

The former web address of DEMHIST:

demhist.org

was free of charges, hosted by an Italian provider, administered by an Italian student. Neither the provider nor the administrator ever answered e-mails by the Secretary/Treasurer. So when the hosting contract ended in May 2006, the address was captured by a provider specialized in web address blackmail. Colleagues in Paris told us that this happened to other committees, too.

The best solution of this problem would be a web hosting by ICOM for the International Committees. The question was discussed by the Advisory Committee meetings in Paris in 2005 and 2006. The international committees demanded web hosting by ICOM, but ICOM has refused pretending problems of space and of hacking. ICOM offers only second level domain web addresses to the international committees.

Therefore the Secretary/Treasurer has rented web space of an Austrian provider, at € 4,79/month. The new address will be the address offered by ICOM:

<http://demhist.icom.museum>

5.4. Proceedings

Jeanne Watson wrote abstracts of all the lectures hold at the conferences in Lenzburg 2003, Berlin 2004 and Lisbon 2005. The Board gives her its sincere thanks.

Beatriz Quevedo is preparing a Spanish translation of these abstracts. Caroline Philippe from Malta offers to prepare a French translation. The abstracts will be published on the website, with one image per abstract and one image per venue. Linda Young will write the abstracts of 2006.

5.5. DEMHIST Flyer

A flyer will help to find new members. A Swiss designer will provide the lay-out, he gave the most valuable offer. The Chair will apply for a grant of € 3.000,00.

The text should include the new description of DEMHIST (cf. 5.2.). It will be printed in seven languages (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Russian, Chinese) and in different countries, the designer delivering eps-files. It will be illustrated by five images, "from castle to cottage".

Working group: Daniela Ball, Maria de Jesus Monge, Peter Keller, Jeanne Watson

5.6. ICOM Series DEMHIST issue

ICOM regularly edits issues about international committees in its "Series". It is distributed to all members for free. An issue about DEMHIST would be the best platform to present DEMHIST to ICOM members

A publication is envisaged for 2008. The working group will ask Rosanna Pavoni, Giovanni Pino and Magaly Cabral for manuscripts. Subjects could be the history of DEMHIST and the challenge of the translation of the term "historic house".

Working group: Jeanne Watson, Linda Young

6. Strategy 2007-2010

ICOM has fixed a strategy for 2007-2010. It aims to "generate and disseminate knowledge", be "proactive" and "inclusive".

6.1. Friends of DEMHIST

In Lisbon and in Malta many participants aren't ICOM members, the meetings are important to present DEMHIST to them. ICOM leaves it to the committees to accept friends and ask a special fee.

For the time being, the Board prefers not to establish this category because its administration would be too much work. The fee that non-members pay for the meetings should be higher because they don't pay the membership fee.

6.2. Annual Meetings 2007-2009

6.2.1. 2007

The ICOM General Assembly and the DEMHIST meeting 2007 will be in Vienna. The title and the date of the General Assembly are:

"Museum and Universal Heritage. Universal Heritage / Individual Responsibility – Individual Heritage / Universal Responsibility"

August 19th-24th, 2007

The title and the date of the DEMHIST meeting had already been sent out by e-mail:

"A Kingdom for a House. Historic House Museums as Local, Regional and Universal Heritage"

August 20th-22th, 2007

Lectures will treat Schönbrunn, Schloss Forchtenstein and Kremsmünster Abbey, excursions will go to Mozarthaus and Liechtenstein Palace in Vienna, to Laxenburg, Schloss Hof and Klosterneuburg Abbey. ICOM offers excursions to the Austrian regions on August 22nd and 25th-26th.

ICOM Austria gives no subsidies to the international committees, therefore the Secretary Treasurer will ask for special fee for the DEMHIST meeting.

6.5.2. 2008

Cecilia Fernandez de Pallini offers to organize the meeting 2008 in Bogota/Columbia. The title will be:

“Historic House Museums as a Bridge between Individual and Community”,

the date: in September. Spanish and English translations will be necessary.

The General Assembly accepts the offer, but raises questions about the date in September and about security in Columbia.

6.5.3. 2009

Grete Holmboe offers to organize the meeting 2009 in Stavanger/Norway, under the headline:

“Historic Houses as Documents of Social Life and Traditional Skills”.

The meeting will take place in summer, it will deal with expertise from architects and social life of inhabitants. DEMHIST will invite ICOMOS, Peter Keller will ask the Secretary.

The General Assembly accepts the offer.

7. Budget 2007

The Budget is presented by the Secretary Treasurer and approved by the General Assembly:

Assets

11.020,31

Income

Subsidy SPSPG

3.000,00

Subsidy ICOM	1.000,00
Grant ICOM	3.000,00
Sales of Proceedings	100,00
Interests	5,00
Sum Income	7.105,00

Expenses

Categorization Project	-1.000,00
Flyer	-6.037,00
Translation	-1.000,00
Web Hosting	-57,48
Web Administration	-250,00
Taxes	-2,00
Sum Expenses	-8.346,48

Result **9.778,83**

8. Miscellaneous

8.1. Resolution on Historic Houses in Porto

The mayor of Porto wants to close down the house museums of the city and place their collections in a central museum and storage. Maria de Jesus Monge asks DEMHIST to send a letter to Porto. The suggested text is:

“The International Council of Museums’ committee for Historic House Museums DEMHIST is concerned to learn of proposals to close house museums in Porto and to denude them of their collections.

The relevance of house museums requires more than the mere preservation of a collection. The house museum also captures the spirit of an era and its way of life. The separation of a collection from its original environment – the ambience in which it existed – leads to a schizophrenic vision of history, unintelligible to future generations.

The composite entity of objects in their historic surroundings enhances historical meanings and understandings. To separate the contents from the container risks misinterpreting the sense of history.

A house museum has the large social function of contributing to knowledge of history, which enables citizens to achieve an integrated vision of humanity and its cultural environment. This contributes to a strong community and a healthy economy.

In our experience, house museums provide significant community benefits both in their educational use and in contributing to a local sense of heritage. They also support local economies providing employment for service industries (restaurants, taxis, hotels etc.). From our members we believe that sustainable tourism requires a wide range of cultural attractions, not simply international museums. Our members have deployed various strategies to minimize running costs (joint management, reduced opening hours, volunteers, escorted tours) and maximizing income (private dinners, fashion photography, receptions, concerts and recitals).

We are sure that the international standing of Porto as a cultural centre will be kept up through the maintenance of its house museums."

The General Assembly finds the text too strong, especially the phrase "schizophrenic vision" and suggests a reediting, taking into consideration the form of communication in a Latin culture and the role of the house museums in Porto.

Dr. Peter Keller

October 30th, 2006