

**Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting
December 7, 2023 7pm via Zoom**

Board members present at the meeting: David B, Dave T, Drew, Ron, Steve and Vinney (Vinney had to leave the meeting after the Treasurers Report.)

Board members absent from the meeting: Scot

Guests present at the meeting: Bob, Mike, Tim, Will

Mainstream and Plus Program Representative (Vinney submitted a report)

Vinney discussed his report which is attached to these minutes. Vinney noted that the Plus class on Tuesday nights has changed to a Plus workshop as the one student who was in the Plus class was injured and will not be able to rejoin the class. The website will be updated to reflect this change.

Secretary (Steve)

A **motion to approve the minutes** as submitted from the October 26th Independence Squares Board meeting was made by Dave T and seconded by Ron. **Passed unanimously.**

Treasurer (Ron submitted a report.)

Ron's report is attached to these minutes. No one at the meeting had significant questions or comments about the report.

David B will update the website to reflect the prepay periods outlined in the report.

Ron will continue to renew our membership in MeetUp.

Steve made a **motion** that we **accept the request to become members from Mark and Cheryl F.** Vinney seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

We again discussed the proposed update to the **Treasurer and Finance Committee Procedures** document. There was a continued discomfort amongst some in attendance that we would allow only one signature on a check since this is in contradiction to the bylaws. David B made a **motion** that **signatures as specified in section 8.3 of the bylaws shall be considered to include physical signatures and electronic confirmations including but not limited to email. The treasurer will keep a record of all such electronic confirmations.** Vinney seconded the motion. **Passed unanimously.**

Steve made a **motion** that we **accept the updated Treasurer and Finance Committee Procedures document as submitted.** David B seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

Fly-In Committee Report (Ron)

Ron advised the board that Ron, Mary Kay, Bob and Vinney will be meeting on December 8 with representatives of the new owners of the Sheraton Hotel in Langhorne to discuss the Fly-In Committee's concerns about the contracts for Fly-In 2024 and 2025. Those representatives have assured Ron that the contracts are being honored but the Committee chairs feel it is important to meet with the representative face to face.

The 2026 dates for the Fly-In are set for March 13-15, 2026.

Publicity Committee

David B commented on his work towards keeping the website up to date and getting flyers made for upcoming dances.

We reviewed our procedures as outlined on our website for notifying dancers when there is a cancellation due to weather on a Tuesday night.

Mike brought up a concern about the current version of the flyer for the Wheel Around NJ dance on January 27 cohosted with Times Squares. Dave B agreed to address his concern and the flyer will be updated with the agreed upon change. We will not throw away the copies that have already been printed but the new version will appear on our website and on our social media postings.

Will mentioned an upcoming webinar that may be of interest to our Publicity Chair.

Steve mentioned his work on Facebook with our Independence Squares group. He has changed the settings so that the first time someone would like to make a post to the group that post must be approved by an administrator. There are currently three administrators. They are Ted M, George R and Steve.

Recruitment Committee (Steve submitted a report.)

Steve discussed some of the items in his report which is included in these minutes. He drew board members attention to a possible recruitment event on Penn's campus in April. He urged board members to read the full report at their leisure.

Mike agreed to start work on scheduling open houses on Tuesday nights in July, August and September like we had earlier this year.

Health and Safety Procedures (Linda submitted a report)

Linda was not at the meeting but the board dealt with two items that the report brings up. The report is included in these minutes.

The report details the ongoing preparations for the CPR/AED training scheduled for February 10, 2024 from 5:15 to 7:30 pm in the Red Cross room at the Lutheran Church.

The HASP Committee asked the board to weigh in on two matters related to that training. After some discussion Steve made a **motion** that **Independence Squares will not allow anyone to participate in the upcoming CPR/AED training organized by the HASP Committee unless they have some kind of affiliation with the club**. Ron seconded the motion. The motion **passed** with 4 board members voting for it, none against it and one abstention. (By this point Vinney had left the meeting.)

Steve also made this **motion**. **The board recommends that the fee for the upcoming CPR/AED training offered by Independence Squares be nonrefundable but the registration may be transferred to another qualifying Independence Squares member**. Dave T seconded the motion and it **passed unanimously**.

Caller Liaison Committee (Mike and Linda submitted a report)

Mike discussed the report. It is included with these minutes.

The board discussed the recent Glitter Ball. Betsy did an outstanding job. We mentioned the possibility of going back to 3 and a half hours for Glitter Ball 2025 but we put off making a final decision.

Ron agreed to be the point person from Independence Squares for the Wheel Around NJ dance on January 27. He will make sure everything that needs to get to Chatham does indeed get there. The joint dance agreement is now signed by leaders of both clubs and it was shared with the board. The board decided that the Wheel Around NJ dance will be full Mainstream and that Mainstream class members will not be invited. Many participants stated that the February dance would be more likely to be suitable for Mainstream class level dancing.

Independence Squares is moving forward with its plans for Summer Splash 2024. We are negotiating with DC Lambda Squares and Chesapeake Squares who have both been invited to cohost the dance. We will use the same venue as last year.

Mike plans to exhibit archival material about Independence Squares at our 35th Anniversary Dance on June 1. We have rented Merz Hall for that display. Dave T. mentioned that Josh Y. has archival material and arrangements were put in motion to collect those items from Josh. Ron mentioned that Josh also has a collection of Independence Squares tee shirts that he would like to find a home for.

Advanced and Challenge Program Representative (Dave T)

No report.

New Business

After we discussed the Caller Liaison Committee proposal Steve made a **motion** that Independence Squares accepts the Caller Liaison Committee proposal that **we do not hire a substitute if only one of our callers is absent on a Tuesday night during our 2023-2024 term**. Dave T seconded and the motion **passed unanimously**. When we only have one caller our two classes will be taught and the two workshops will not be held.

Drew appointed Dave B and Tim to be members of a restored Bylaws Committee.

Steve mentioned that it was not too soon to appoint a Nominating Committee.

Tim and Drew both agreed to attend an IAGSDC delegates meeting at noon on January 20.

Old Business

We revisited our procedure for regulating who has access to our Google Drive containing the board minutes which are not redacted. We decided to leave things as they are. Everyone who access to the link to the drive can access the drive.

Meeting Adjourned at approximately 8:50pm

Independence Squares Treasurer's Report

December 7, 2023

Financial Reports

Financial reports for the month ending November 30, 2023 were uploaded to the club's Google Drive on 12/4/23 and made available to the club officers. Attached to this report are the following documents:

- November 2023 P&L statement
- November 2023 balance sheet
- Year-to-date P&L summary

Insurance Premiums

The USDA insurance premiums have been made to the USDA for new club members that have joined in 2023 and for all club members for 2024. The total cost was \$356.50. Additionally, a list of our new class members was provided to the USDA. Those new members are covered free of charge through our expected graduation date of May 21, 2024.

Prepay Program

The board needs to set the next prepay periods. The caller's contracts run until May 21, for a total of 21 remaining class nights. I propose setting the next prepay period as January 2 through March 12 (a total of 11 classes) and the following prepay period as March 19 through graduation on May 21 (a total of 10 classes). Once approved, this will need to be promoted on the website and at the class of December. An email should also be sent to the club, probably between the Christmas and New Year holidays.

An analysis of the financial impact of our prepay program has revealed that during the prepay period that ended on October 31, 2023, the club received the benefit of at least 31 nights that were paid for in advance where the payor failed to show up at class. This makes it clear that the prepay program has been a financial benefit to the club's bottom line.

MeetUp

Our semi-annual bill for MeetUp will be due around December 14. The board needs to decide whether to continue using MeetUp or not. The last bill was \$104.88.

Contracts

Contracts are needed for the following:

- Anniversary Dance, caller and venue
- Joint dance with Times Squares, caller
- Summer Splash 2024, caller and venue

- Glitter Ball 2024, caller and venue

Membership Requests

Mark and Cheryl Franks have asked to become members of Independence Squares and are willing to pay the required dues. The board needs to discuss this.

Glitter Ball Financials

An official accounting of our financials for the 2023 Glitter Ball will be included in next month's report. However, a preliminary accounting shows the following:

Income

Door admissions (59 attendees): \$585.00

50/50 net proceeds: \$230.00

Expenses (Caller fee, hall rental, custodian fee): \$797.50

Net income: \$17.50

The venue is holding our "damage" deposit of \$150.00 which will be returned to us once they determine that we left the hall in good order. That deposit does not affect the accounting above unless the venue ultimately returns less than our full \$150.00.

Independence Squares December 2023 Board Meeting Report Mainstream/Plus Report

Membership Update:

Mainstream

Our Fall 2023 Mainstream class started out strongly, with a total of 21 students, two of whom are Mainstream graduates. Another two returning students were erroneously classed as Mainstream but are actually Advanced. We've had some drop-offs since September: one member is dealing with a chronic injury and may return next year; one couple dropped off because they felt there was too much time between tips; all others who have not returned provided no reason. As of December 2023, about 12 students have been coming to class consistently.

This year's Mainstream class has been very impressive, not only with their skill levels and enthusiasm, but also with their commitment to help where needed. Nine of them attended this year's Glitter Ball and just about all of them helped with set-up/take-down, bringing supplies, or taking pictures. They have expressed how welcome they feel by our current members and that they enjoy Betsy's teaching. They also appreciate the weekly emails that recap the calls taught at the most recent class.

Plus

Our Fall 2023 Plus class, which started with three members, has turned into a Plus workshop. Two members are taking Plus for a second year, and the lone new Plus student is healing from an injury with no definitive return date. Mark is aware of this and has been very accommodating by workshopping skills that our members have requested.

New Mainstream Members: How Did You Hear about Independence Squares?

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Type</u>
<p>Thank you so much for the nice email and for being so welcoming!! Maren and I found out just through word of mouth from Ariel and Kellie (who, I believe, may have found it by Google searching for LGBTQ- friendly partner dancing? I'm not entirely sure). They told us they were going to this, and we had been wanting to do some sort of partner dancing anyway, so it was perfect!</p> <p>We've been having a great time so far— thanks so much again!</p> <p>See you Tuesday</p>	Friend/word-of-mouth
<p>I googled "Square advancing near me" Independence Squares came up!! I did send an email and Steve responded. I came to the open house in August and took the classes.</p>	Google Search
<p>I missed dancing last week and seeing everyone. I've been under the weather. I learned about this group from Pia Martin. I know she was searching for an inclusive group. I am not sure how she found it.</p>	Friend/word-of-mouth
<p>I have Friends Life Care (FLC) long term insurance. Each year I have a visit from a rep to check in. When she came a couple of weeks before the 1st open class I told her I love to dance as a form of exercise and that I was looking for a place in Center City to go dancing. She said one of her members of FLC belonged to a group that square</p>	Insurance rep/word of mouth

**Independence Squares
December 2023 Board Meeting Report
Mainstream/Plus Report**

danced weekly. She got in touch with that person and found out the details. I don't know who it is.	
I'm having a great time. Everyone is very friendly. Betsy is doing a great job. I found out about Indy Squares from Dave Blatt who passed out cards at a Delco Dudes event in Media. I am also car-pooling with Dave and Elissa which makes it easy to get into Philly on Tuesday nights. Thanks also for the videos. They are a great help.	Pride Event (Delco)
Ariel and I took a one-time waltz lesson on a vacation and loved it, so we decided to look for local lgbt+ friendly dance lessons. Searching online, I found this article: https://why.org/articles/swing-those-partners-gay-square-dancers-gather-in-philadelphia/ Square dancing wasn't really what I had set out to find with my search, but I was intrigued. I liked the idea of finding a community of dancers, not just taking lessons. I was very lucky with the timing - the last open house was happening just a couple nights later. The location and the chance to try it without having to sign up for lessons ahead of time made it easy to take a chance on it, and after that, we were all in! The club does a great job of welcoming in new people, both into the community and into the skill set. It's an incredibly kind, outgoing group, and the lessons are both fun and rewarding. Looking forward to more dancing next week!	News article
From a friend...Leda Sportolari	Friend/Word-of-mouth
You sent out an email asking how we got to IS and I was gonna respond, but didn't, so let me now. As a Health & Physical education major in college, I had to take a square dance unit. Everyone hated it, but my best buddy and I loved it. We just went all in. When I became a teacher I taught the basics to my students to disco music. They acted like they liked it. I decided that I wanted to try and have a Square dance workshop at my school and so I started looking for a group that would meet my needs and a couple of google searches later and I got to Independence Square and then the pandemic and then I retired and that is the story of how Pia got to Independence Squares! Once again, thanks for checking in! Pia	Google search

Summary:

Friend/Word-of-Mouth = 4

Google Search = 2

Pride Event = 1

Newspaper Article = 1

Respectfully submitted,

Vinney Finlay

Mainstream and Plus Rep, Independence Squares

Notes from IS Recruitment Committee

Fall 2023

The committee met on October 11 and again on November 29.

Committee members are Arin, Chris, Coco, George, Steve, Vinney and Will

Look-back at our Recruitment effort for 2023

Many of the students found out about us through Arin's post on the Facebook Group *Queer Exchange Philly*.

We didn't get any new students from Contra Dancing or Pride Events though we did have one attendee come to one of our open houses who saw our demo at Delco Pride.

Current Retention efforts

Vinney will talk about these in his report. In addition Vinney agreed to coordinate availability of coffee and/or tea on Tuesday nights.

Recruitment efforts for 2024

Prioritize Delco Pride and Philly Pride festivals at least. Galaei continues to host events that may provide outreach opportunities for Independence Squares. They sponsored a gay pride event on Outfest weekend that included the Philadelphia Freedom Band and other LGBTQ+ performance groups. They also sponsor Philly Pride. We need to more actively check in with their website.

We recommend that Independence Squares again host open houses on Tuesday nights in July, August and September.

We are looking into putting on an open house/fun dance on Penn's campus in April.

Since doctors are trying to convince their patients to get exercise and stay active, we brainstormed about posting flyers at doctor's offices or getting particular doctors invested in promoting our club to their patients.

Medical facilities that cater to LGBTQ clientele might be particularly effective. The Jefferson Center for Healthy Aging was mentioned.

Survey

Chris presented the results of the survey to the membership of Independence Squares asking them about how they first got involved in square dancing and what kept them coming back.

There were not many surprises.

Respondents were very supportive in their detailed answers especially when asked what ideas they had about recruiting.

Steve thought these comments on the survey were particularly notable.

From John F –

I'd like to think you could get (steal) dancers if not members from other clubs. Caryl and I heard about IS from EdG as he would come to Busy B's now and again. He told us about Glitter Ball. We went. It was great. We kept going to IS dances. One of the main reasons was to get more of what I call ""technical square dance"". Almost all clubs are what I call ""club level square dance"". Within a year after retaking lessons in 2011 we started going to DBD at festivals and a DBD club in CA (and some around here but they are all long drives). In my opinion, IS is the place to go in the Philly area for

""technical"". I go to Busy B's mostly for the round dancing and to help weak dancers get through the tips.

Caryl teaches square dance as part of the Cherry Hill recreation program. Currently she has about 12 student dancers. Over the years, we have had some very good dancers get through plus but, unfortunately, very low yield in terms of regular club dancers. However, this gave me an idea. The recreation program is administered and advertised by the town. Every resident gets a quarterly brochure plus on-line advertising. Some of the advertised programs are run by for-profit entities at their own facilities. Would it be possible for IS lessons to become part of a Philadelphia recreation program if they have such a thing?

From another respondee –

Aim to create a more affirming fun environment during mainstream classes. Often the environment during lessons feels very strict. Dancers are told off for being a few minutes behind schedule (even though callers usually are too) and the calls are taught to a very high level of perfection to the point it can be discouraging to people who are still getting a hang of it. I've never experienced the actual environment at a dance to be as inflexible as it is during mainstream lessons. I think we'll struggle to retain potential new dancers if they don't feel more comfortable and supported during lessons. Dancing is FUN, but our mainstream lessons aren't reflecting that.

HASP Report on CPR / AED training to IS Board Meeting December 2023

Here are the relevant data points for the CPR / AED training. As I am still recovering from COVID, I won't be at the December 2023 board meeting. I have already communicated with Ron, our club treasurer, concerning these details. Please note that are two queries for the board to consider. They are underlined within this report. The first concerns opening the class to people not affiliated with IS; and the second concerns whether the fees paid by individuals should be refundable.

Please let me know if you have any concerns or questions.

Linda

Health and Safety Protocols Committee

1 \$85.00 Room rental at the church

Email from Chris Tue 11/7/2023 12:14 PM:

I have reserved the Red Cross Room on February 10, 2024 from 5:15 PM to 7:30 PM. The rental fee will be \$85. Please just let the treasurer know to add that to the monthly total when he sends the check for February.

2 \$1145.20 to Red Cross to be invoiced after the training

Email from Red Cross: Fri 10/27/2023 2:56 PM

The cost for 12 people to be trained in Adult CPR/AED is \$1145.20**; each additional person would cost \$73.10. This total cost includes our \$268 onsite delivery fee for one training class; any additional training classes would incur \$268 fee per class. The length of the class is 2 hours and 15 minutes.

Once the class is complete, an invoice will be generated for the training with net 30 payment terms

3 ?? Tax to Red Cross to be invoiced after training

Email from Red Cross: Fri 10/27/2023 2:56 PM

Please note that the Red Cross is required by law to collect sales tax in some states and jurisdictions for training and fees. For customers with tax exempt status, please click [here](#) to upload required documentation.

**I checked with Mike Rutkowski and he says we will have to pay this tax in Pennsylvania. I don't know what the tax will be. Should be on the invoice from Red Cross following the training session.

4 Costs for individuals

We agreed on \$25.00 per class participant for members and new dancers within Independence Squares and for Betsy's husband as a courtesy, and \$75.00 for non-members.

First Query for IS Board: I met a friend of Dick Michelin and his husband Bill Steward on the cruise. His name is Pete and he asked if he could be included. I told him I would get back to him and the price for him would be \$75.00. The glitch is that with people changing their schedules, we currently have a list of exactly 12 names on our class list. If we exceed 12 class participants by adding Pete to the roster, Red Cross will increase our costs and send a second trainer. There would be an additional cost of \$73.10 to us, and it would bring in another \$75.00 for the person attending the class. However, another club member asked if he could bring in some people from his work, and I said no since this is an IS-club initiative and not open to the public. Can I get some input as to whether we can include a non-member, non-club affiliated person to the list of class participants?

Here are my answers to the questions Ron posed:

- 1 Details of how much each participant has to pay and how they are to make those payments.

- 1.a See above chart for fees for people who signed up
- 2 Should they pay in advance?
 - 2.a Yes.
- 3 Should they pay at the door?
 - 3.a No: only if they did not pay in advance; we should encourage advance payment from all.
- 4 Ron: I'm leaning a bit toward having people pay in advance, with the understanding that the fee is non-refundable. That way we aren't stuck paying for people who signed up and fail to show up.
Linda: I don't think the fee should be non-refundable if someone can't make the class (what if they get COVID and can't attend) since the club is not absorbing any additional fee if one of the people who signed up and then doesn't attend. We will just recoup less of the costs of providing the training and the fee of \$1145.20 would not change.
 - 4.a The Red Cross fee of \$1145.20 includes up to 12 people to be trained in Adult CPR/AED with an additional fee of \$73.10 for each attendee exceeding 12. Independence Squares is charging a fee to individuals to help recoup the cost of the training.
 - 4.b Red Cross will send an invoice based on number of attendees after the class.

Second Query to the IS Board: Should the fee per participant be refundable if the person cannot attend the class?

Caller Liaison Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – December 2023

The information below is accurate as of Tuesday, December 5, 2023, and may not reflect any updates received after this report's preparation. Please note that all dances are at the Lutheran Church unless otherwise noted.

Opening Discussions/Notes for Board

No additional contracts or promises have been made to any caller regarding the holding of workshops or classes, virtual or live, other than those listed below.

Dances Through April 2026

Callers have been contracted and confirmed for the following dances taking place December 2023 through March 2026.

Saturday, January 27, 2024 – Joint Dance with Times Squares – Mainstream and Plus with Advanced Star Tip – Dan Koft 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Chatham, NJ

April 2024 Fly-In: Callers: Darren Gallina, Betsy Gotta, Bill Harrison April 5-7, 2024

Saturday, June 1, 2024 – IS 35th Anniversary Dance – Betsy Gotta Mainstream through C1 Time TBD

Saturday, August 24, 2024 – Summer Splash All-level dance Mainstream through C1 – Dayle Hodge 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Space TBD – Potential Joint Dance with DC Lambda Squares and Chesapeake Squares

Saturday, December 7, 2024 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Dayle Hodge - Space TBD

April 2025 Fly-in: Callers: Jeremy Butler, Vic Ceder, Don Moger April 4-6, 2025

Saturday, December 6, 2025 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Mark Franks – Space TBD

March 2026 Fly-in: Callers: Sandie Bryant, Ted Lizotte, Chris Phillips March 13-15, 2026

Open Houses and Classes

The Mainstream Class and C1 Workshop with Betsy Gotta began September 19, 2023.

The Plus Class and Advanced Class with Mark Franks began September 19, 2023.

FYI Notes

- 1) Betsy Gotta will not be available on January 9, 2024 and again on March 26, 2024. Mark Franks will not be available on February 27, 2024 and again on April 16, 2024. Attempts are being made to hire substitute callers. When a caller is contracted, the board will be notified. A suggestion was made to the board since the last meeting to consider not hiring a substitute caller when only one of the class callers is out. This would be for this class year only as the schedule lends itself to this suggestion.
- 2) Several dates were suggested to the board for dancing in 2024 and we are still looking for callers for February 24 and March 16.

Independence Squares Joint Dance Agreement

This memorandum outlines the roles and responsibilities between Independence Squares and Times Squares as they pertain to a joint square dance event as outlined below.

I. Event details

- Date(s): January 27, 2024
- Name of event (if applicable): Wheel Around NJ
- Caller(s): Dan Koft
- Caller(s)' fees: \$325.00
- Venue: St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 200 Main St, Chatham, NJ
- Venue fee: \$160.00
- Times: 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
- Program(s): M/P/A

II. Financial arrangements

2.1 The co-sponsoring clubs will share the following costs on an equal basis:

- Hall rental
- Hall security and cleanup, if applicable. This includes any security deposits.
- Caller fee and transportation costs as outlined in the caller(s)' contract(s)
- Advertising. Budget for advertising not to exceed \$100.00, to be shared by co-sponsoring clubs.
- Miscellaneous expenses, including but not limited to 50/50 tickets, refreshments and related items, decorations. Budget for miscellaneous expenses not to exceed \$100.00, to be shared by co-sponsoring clubs.

2.2 The co-sponsoring club(s) shall remit their share of the caller(s)' fees and the hall rental fees, including any security payments/deposits and any cleanup payments/deposits to Independence Squares along with this signed agreement within 30 days of receipt of this agreement. If these costs have not yet been determined, the co-sponsoring club(s) shall remit payment to Independence Squares as soon as these costs have been established.

2.3 All participants who dance at the event must pay the stated admission price. If a dancer is admitted at a reduced price, the club that allowed that dancer to enter must make up the difference. Non-dancing attendees will not be charged an admission fee.

2.4 Independence Squares shall be responsible for the collection and remittance of all funds in association with this joint dance. Independence Squares shall remit an accounting of net income/loss to each co-sponsoring club within 30 days of the conclusion of the event. Any net income (including door admission fees, 50/50 sales, and donations) will be split equally among the co-sponsoring clubs. Independence Squares is responsible for remitting the shared net income to the co-sponsoring club(s) within 30 days of the event. The co-sponsoring club(s) shall share equally in any net loss and shall remit payment for their share of the loss to Independence Squares within 45 days of receipt of such accounting.

III. Insurance

3.1 Insurance for the event shall be provided through Independence Squares.

IV. Event cancellation

4.1 If the event is cancelled for any reason, the co-sponsoring clubs shall share equally in

all expenses.

V. Callers and venues

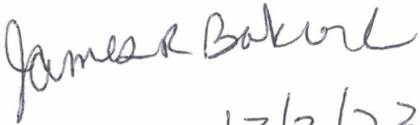
5.1 The caller(s) and venue shall be agreed upon by all co-sponsors and shall be contracted by Independence Squares. All contracts are to be signed by all co-sponsoring clubs and a completed copy of each contract shall be provided by Independence Squares to each club.

Accepted by:

Two handwritten signatures in black ink, one to the left and one to the right, both appearing to be cursive.

Independence Squares Date: 12/5/23

Accepted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James R. Bakard".

Co-sponsor Date: 12/2/23