

Smith-Harris House Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
April 23, 2014

Present: Gary Lakowsky  
Richard MacDonald  
Kathleen Sasso  
Maggi Prokop

FILED IN EAST LYME  
CONNECTICUT  
APR 30 2014 AT 8:05 AM/PM  
*Deslynn Blais*  
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Also Present: Joanie DiMartino, Smith-Harris Curator  
Gene Medley, Friends of the Smith-Harris House

I. CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Lakowsky called the Smith-Harris House Commission Regular Meeting of April 23, 2014 to order at 7:10 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Mr. Lakowsky asked for additions, corrections or deletions of the March 26, 2014 Smith-Harris House Commission Regular Meeting Minutes.

The following correction was noted: The motion to adjourn was made by Darlene DeLaura.

MOTION: Ms. Prokop moved to approve the March 26, 2014 Smith-Harris House Regular Meeting Minutes, as amended. Seconded by Mr. MacDonald. Ms. Sasso abstained from voting. (3-0-1)  
Motion carried.

III. REPORTS

A. Public Delegations. Gene Medley reported we have worked on a Home Depot Grant.

We are all set for the Plant Sale.

At the Friends Meeting, Mr. Schutt stated he would like to have all historical homes open during Celebrate East Lyme.

Four farms will be open to visitors the day after Celebrate East Lyme.

B. Ex-officio Report. Mr. Wilson was not present, and there is no report.

C. Curator's Report. (See attached)

D. Agenda Additions. There were no additions to the Agenda.

E. Chairman's Report.

1. New Member's Interest Report. Ms. Sasso informed the Commission she is interested in working on grants for the house. Mr. MacDonald expressed interest in working on the grounds. Mr. Lakowsky agreed to check on signs for the house.

Cindy DeHaan is available to give tours of the house. She has been paid \$8.50 per hour. Mr. Lakowsky suggested raising her hourly rate to \$8.75.

Mr. Lakowsky asked Commission members to consider volunteering on weekend afternoons in June or July to give tours at the house.

Ms. DiMartino felt it was more appropriate to use the front entrance to the house and asked the Commission to consider it.

Ms. Prokop reported the Callahans have requested the return of their Maypole.

Mr. Lakowsky has been offered some slate.

MOTION: Ms. Prokop moved to accept the offer of slate.  
Seconded by Mr. MacDonald. (4-0) Unanimous

#### F. Financial Report.

1. Status Update. Mr. MacDonald reported presently we have an unexpended balance of \$7,211.73 and we have spent \$6,224.44.

2. Presentation of Bills. Ms. DiMartino submitted a bill for business cards in the amount of \$10.64.

MOTION: Ms. Prokop moved to reimburse Ms. DiMartino  
\$10.64 for business cards. Seconded by Mr. MacDonald.  
(4-0) Unanimous.

3. Barn Rental. Ms. Prokop reported we have a barn rental on May 3, 2014 from noon to 3 p.m. and asked for volunteers to be at the house. Messrs. Lakowsky and MacDonald agreed to be at the house on that day.

G. Collections Committee. There was nothing new to report.

H. Correspondence. There was no correspondence received.

#### IV. OLD BUSINESS

##### A. Property Maintenance.

1. Garden Fence and Maintenance. Mr. Lakowsky agreed to finish painting the garden fence.

Ms. DiMartino reported Platt Arnold recommended having a heritage vegetable garden.

Chuck Holyfield had the driveway leveled. He will have the tree removed. Mr. Lakowsky will meet with Mr. Putnam regarding the removal of tree limbs.

B. Museum Development.

1. Educational Programs. Mr. Lakowsky and Ms. DiMartino will discuss plans for the educational programs.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance.

1. Barn Painting (grant?) We are working on a Home Depot Grant. Mr. Formica will contact the Correctional Facility to request to have the barn painted by inmates.

Ms. Prokop reported the bat house needs to be put back up.

Ms. DiMartino reported the outhouse door has been opening.

2. Barn Roof. The barn roof will be taken care of by the Town.

3. Community Garden. This matter was tabled until Rotary members are able to be give a presentation.

B. Museum Development.

1. Educational Program Middle School. We are waiting to be contacted by the school.

2. Textile Closet. A second estimate for the Textile Closet will be requested.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Prokop moved to adjourn the April 23, 2014  
Smith-Harris House Regular Meeting at 8 p.m.  
Seconded by Mr. MacDonald. (4-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary

## **Curator's Report**

submitted to the Smith-Harris House Commission

April showers have arrived, and along with them are green grasses, flowers blooming, barn rentals, and another semester of young archaeologists to the site! Summer will arrive once again, sooner than we can imagine, and work is occurring to prepare the house for upcoming programs and tours.

### Open-House Day

- Sponsored by the CT Dept. on Tourism, CT Open-House Day occurs this year on Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, from 10 am to 3 pm. The Smith-Harris House is participating with the Thomas Lee House and the Samuel Smith House to offer visitors an opportunity to discover more about what life in East Lyme/Niantic was like several centuries ago.
- I've been slated with overseeing the publicity for this event; I've begun contacting various our promotional venues.
- I've organized our offerings for the day, which will include Jennifer Emerson returning to offer open-hearth cooking demonstrations in the dining room (rug will be removed for this demonstration), games on the lawn (I've asked Arielle DeLaura if she would be interested in overseeing this aspect), tours of the House (presented by Maggi Prokop and other Commission members), and refreshments. I am trying to locate a few reenactors to participate as well; so far no luck, but I plan to keep trying. I've faxed our agreement form to the Dept. of Tourism, so we should be all set there.
- The bus has been approved; we're hoping to offer a bus tour around the route to all three museums; a bus driver is being located by Cathy Wilson of the Senior Center.
- I think this might be a good opportunity to go down our list\of perspective volunteers from membership renewals and find out if anyone wants to participate and learn more about the site.

### Archaeology Class

- Willard Reed, the high school anthropology teacher who now oversees the archaeology program has begun the spring semester. He put grass seed down by the outhouse where the previous dig was located. This semester's dig will be at the midden.
- 15 students from his class of 18 visited the museum on Thursday, April 10 at 7:30 am and were treated to an in-depth tour of the house and families who lived here. Special thanks to Maggi Prokop for generously donating her time and expertise with the group!
- I plan to participate for a couple days during the dig, to learn a little more about the site.

### Professional Development

- NEH webinar on "NEH grant opportunities for Small to Mid-sized Museums" 4/23

### Collections

- Waiting to receive proposal from 2<sup>nd</sup> carpenter to forward on to Friends Board.

- Had donation of Civil War-era reproduction military-style dress; I do not want to request a vote yet, as I'm checking with a few textile curators to discover whether or not Union women would wear grey.
- House is organized, straightened and cleaned, and ready for summer tours.

#### Tour Revision

- I am revising and updating our tour manual, as the current one is out of date.
- Would like to discuss flow pattern, and the possibility of a walkway to the front door.
- Can we begin a conversation of requesting a "suggested donation" of \$5 per adult, \$2 children 8 and up; under 8 free. All proceeds go to the Friends organization toward preservation and public programming.

#### School Program

- Have sent an email to Richelle Johnson to set up a meeting. Waiting for a reply.

#### Meetings Attended

- Meeting with Carpenter Terry ? and Maggi Prokop, 4/4
- East Lyme Open-House Day meeting 4/7
- Commission meeting 4/23

#### Upcoming Initiatives

- Continue with Open-House Day, archeology, & school programs.
- Re-write House Tour Manual.
- Continue with two grant proposals.

Submitted by:

Joanie DiMartino, curator  
April 23, 2014

CC: Commission Members & Friends Board