

Smith-Harris House Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 28, 2014

Present: Gary Lakowsky
Richard MacDonald
Kathleen Sasso
Maggi Prokop
Darlene DeLaura

FILED IN EAST LYME
CONNECTICUT
May 30 2014 AT 11:15 AM/PM
Kathleen Sasso
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 May 28, 2014 to order at 7:10 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Mr. Lakowsky asked for additions, corrections or deletions to the April 23, 2014 Smith-Harris House Commission Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: Ms. Prokop moved to approve the April 23, 2014 Smith-Harris House Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Darlene DeLaura. Ms. DeLaura abstained from voting. (4-0-1)
Motion carried.

III. REPORTS

A. Public Delegations. Gene Medley reported we did not get the Home Depot Grant. Mr. Lakowsky agreed to request funding from the town for paint and paint supplies.

Mr. Lakowsky asked the Curator to order lunch for the Middle School Program on June 3 and 4.

Ms. Medley felt the Friends' Board is in need of more volunteers.

The four hour Plant Sale did well.

The Annual Meeting of the Friends will be held on June 7 at 10 a.m. Coffee and cake will be served. Ms. Medley will step down as President of the Friends. Mr. Lakowsky thanked her for her years of service as President.

On June 9 she will present the Book Award at the High School.

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 and planning programs for the house.

Mr. Lakowsky reported he has secured slate for the walkway. He will work with the Parks and Recreation and Public Works departments on having it installed some time after the June events.

He has requested Dave Putnam, Director of Parks and Recreation, to have branches removed from the grounds. As time permits, he agreed to have a crew take care of them.

Mr. Lakowsky discussed various signs with Mr. Wilson of Signcraft.

The house will open on June 14. Mr. Lakowsky asked Commission members when they would be available for one shift on a Saturday or Sunday at the house. Cindy DeHahn will be available on Fridays, and he will request that she fill in the weekend dates when no Commission member is available.

F. Financial Report.

1. Status Update. Mr. MacDonald reported we have expended \$9,494.24 and have a remaining balance of \$5,878.47.

2. Presentation of Bills. Stacey Ventura submitted an invoice for her work over a two year period on the Smith-Harris website in the amount of \$321.44.

MOTION: Ms. Prokop moved to pay Stacey Ventura's invoice for her two years work on the Smith-Harris website in the amount of \$321.44. Seconded by Darlene DeLaura. (5-0) Unanimous

3. Barn Rental. Ms. Prokop reported there will be a party in the barn this Saturday, and she will be at the house.

Ms. Prokop reported a woman who had a Bridal Shower at the house left covers for 28 metal chairs.

She was contacted by an individual who expressed interest in filming the house.

G. Collections Committee. Ms. DiMartino showed Commission members a dress that Georgia Lee Littlefield is willing to donate to the house. Since the dress was a reproduction and was not during the appropriate time period, it was felt that the dress should be returned to Ms. Littlefield.

MOTION: Mr. MacDonald moved to return the dress to Ms. Littlefield. Seconded by Ms. Prokop. (5-0) Unanimous.

H. Correspondence. There was no correspondence received.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance.

1. Garden Fence and Maintenance. Mr. Littlefield spoke to Linda Griffiths and she felt the community garden should be considered for next year.

Mr. Putnam requested a list of dates for lawn maintenance.

It was felt that Mr. MacDonald did a good job of trimming around the grape vines. Mr. Lakowsky cleaned the grounds. He suggested requesting that a boy scout build an arbor.

2. Tree Limbs. Mr. Putnam has agreed to have a crew take care of the tree limbs as time permits.

3. Front Walkway. Mr. Lakowsky reported Tom Malley of Waterford donated slate to the house.

MOTION: Ms. Sasso moved to accept the donated slate from Tom Malley of Waterford. Seconded by Mr. MacDonald. (5-0) Unanimous.

B. Museum Development.

1. Educational Programs.

a. Middle School Program June 3 and 4. Ms. DiMartino reported 90 students will come to the house on each day from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Rick Spencer will play Civil War music, Jennifer Emerson will give a cooking demonstration, Carol Marelli will talk about the Rufus Porter style mural in house, Hank Savin will discuss the Abolitionist Struggles in Connecticut, Leslie Evans will discuss war medicine and Gary Lakowsky will discuss 1845-1870 inventions that are still being used today. Ms. Prokop will be available to take pictures.

Mr. Lakowsky plans to be at the house on June 2 at noon. Ms. DiMartino will be at the house at 1 p.m. Chairs need to be set up, the dining room prepared for the cooking demonstration and tents need to be set up. Mr. MacDonald and Ms. Prokop agreed to help. Ms. Sasso agreed to help on June 4 in the afternoon.

b. June 14 Open House. Ms. DiMartino showed a flyer she would like to have brought home with the youngsters to encourage them to return with their families on June 14.

Mr. Lakowsky plans to be in period dress on June 14.

Ms. DiMartino stated Jennifer Emerson may need assistance with cleaning up. The Friends will be overseeing the refreshments tent. Passports will be stamped at each of the three houses. An individual can win a gift basket. A brochure has been created. Ms. Prokop and Mr. Lakowsky will be available to give tours. There will be period games on the lawn.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance.

1. Barn Painting (grant?) Unfortunately we did not receive the grant.
2. Barn Roof. The barn roof is on the Town's replacement plan.
3. Community Garden. The Community Garden will be considered next year.

B. Museum Development.

1. Educational Program Middle School. Mr. Lakowsky will ask Wil Reed to give a report on his excavation.

Mr. Lakowsky has contacted Sally Rafanello who portrays the widow of Abe Lincoln. He will contact her to determine the dates she will be available. Ms. DiMartino suggested also showing a movie on Lincoln.

2. Textile Closet. Bids for the textile closet have been received.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Prokop moved to adjourn the May 28, 2014
Smith-Harris House Regular Meeting at 8:30 p.m.
Seconded by Ms. Sasso. (5-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary

Curator's Report--May

submitted to the Smith-Harris Commission

"This is the best place to be--ever!" My son, Dante DiMartino-Hart, on his time participating with the high school students at the archaeological dig at the midden over the past few weeks. As the Smith-Harris House plays host to the 8th-grade classes from the East Lyme Middle School, families and individuals at the CT Open-House Day, and begin our tour season next month, I hope many more people come to agree with this sentiment, that the Smith-Harris House is indeed a great place to discover history!

East Lyme Middle School Program

- After meeting with Richelle Johnson in the beginning of May, I've worked over the past month to develop a two-day program for 180 students; 90 on each day, Tuesday, June 3rd, and Wednesday, June 4th, from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm. The program includes the following topics:
 - "Civil War Music" performance with Rick Spencer
Spencer is an experienced performer, in both national and international venues, solo, and with the sea music group, 'Forebitter.'
 - "Garden to Hearth: Cooking Demo" with Jennifer Emerson
Emerson is a historian and author; she developed her culinary skills at the Buckingham-Hall House at Mystic Seaport.
 - "Murals & Home Interiors" with Carol Marelli
Marelli is a former Commission Chair of the Smith-Harris House; she is an artist who designed and painted the murals in the Smith-Harris House front hall in the Rufus Porter style.
 - "Abolitionist Struggles in CT" with Hank Savin
Savin is a professional storyteller and an interpreter at Mystic Seaport, where he has had occasion to share the story of the "Amistad" with visitors.
 - "Home & Front: Civil War Medicine" with Leslie Evans
Evans is the director of the Avery-Copp Museum and will portray a distant cousin of the Thomas Averys visiting the family. She is a noted museum professional and an expert in the use of herbs for culinary and medicinal purposes.
 - "Still Around: Invented Then, Used Now" with Gary Lakowsky
Lakowsky is the current Commission Chair of the Smith-Harris House; his work as an electrician and interest in history has allowed him to study the roots of many everyday objects we use daily that were invented while the Smith-Harris House was being built.
- The Friends of Smith-Harris House Board has graciously agreed to provide lunch for the presenters.
- I've developed a small flyer for the students to encourage them to return with their families on CT Open-House Day.
- Overseen all organizational aspects of program, from teacher communication to arrangements needed for presenters.

- Plan to be on-site on Monday, June 2nd to prepare dining room for cooking demonstration and any last minute preparations.
- Commission members Gary Lakowsky and Dick MacDonald will be on-site. Others? Friends Board members?

CT Open-House Day

- Just a reminder: Saturday, June 14, 10 am to 3 pm
- Completed all publicity for event, with exception of scroll, which I will be able to do next week. I used our publicity list, plus added more "Patch" locations.
- Worked with Cathy Wilson and Liz Kutcha to develop bus route. Driver has been located and confirmed; still finishing final route times.
- Please see attached form regarding tasks and plans for the day.

Volunteers

- I haven't received completed forms; I hope Commission and Friends members are continuing to fill them out.
- I'd like to begin contacting those on Friends membership list who want to become more involved. Also, creating a volunteer form to keep on file.

Collections

- Contacted Susan Jerome regarding reproduction Civil War dress under consideration. Have response (essentially, the Smith-Harris House doesn't have room for reproductions and needs to save space for authentic historic textiles). A decision needs to be made.
- Made arrangements through Town Hall finance dept. and Gaylord to purchase curatorial gloves.
- Received last completed inventory from Barbara McGrath (thank you!); have spoken with Avery-Copp House museum asst. Kathy Leuze about an informal training session regarding Past Perfect software, so we can prepare for formal inventory.
- Textiles closet--where are we on this? I haven't heard anything further from Friends Board.

Archaeology Dig

- Wil Reed, the anthropology teacher at East Lyme High School led 18 students and a few volunteers during a dig at the midden. It was successful, many bottles, porcelain pieces, glass, and metal items were unearthed, as well as what may be the possible foundations of the original homestead on the property. The class is now in the lab to process the artifacts.

Miscellaneous

- We will have the opportunity to hang photos of our choosing in Town Hall sometime within the next year. Liz Kutcha is working on this effort, and will be in touch. We will want to start considering how to represent the Smith-Harris House.

Meetings Attended

- Meeting with Richelle Johnson, Maggi Prokop, and Gary Lakowsky to develop middle school program, 5/5
- Meeting with Jennifer Emerson to develop hearth-cooking program, 5/8
- Meeting with Liz Kutcha regarding bus route for CT Open-House Day, 5/15
- Meeting with Barbara McGrath to go over previous inventories & history of site, 5/20
- Meeting with Hank Savin regarding middle school presentation, 5/24
- Commission Meeting, 5/28

Professional Development

- NEMA webinar "Grant Writing" 5/28
- **(CT League of History Organizations is meeting in Mystic, Mon. 6/2; does anyone want to represent the Smith-Harris House?)

Upcoming Initiatives

- Continue developing new Tour Manual.
- Volunteer forms and development.
- Working on grant proposals, including contacting CT Humanities Council and Sally Whipple, executive director of the CT Old State House, for consulting re: grant to develop long-range plan.
- Plan to meet with Gary and Cindy regarding summer tour schedule.

Submitted by:

Joanie DiMartino, curator
May 28, 2014

CC: Commission Members and Friends Board