

Smith-Harris House Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2015

Present: Gary Lakowsky
Richard MacDonald
Maggi Prokop
Barbara Odgers
Kathleen Sasso

FILED IN EAST LYME
CONNECTICUT
Nov 23, 2015 AT 11:50 AM/PM
[Signature]
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Also Present: Donna Massung, Friends of Smith-Harris President
Joanie DiMartino, Executive Director

I. CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Lakowsky called the Smith-Harris House Commission Meeting of November 18, 2015 to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Mr. Lakowsky asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the October 29, 2015 Meeting Minutes.

The following correction was noted: On page 3, the fifth paragraph, first sentence to be revised as follows: "Mr. Avery suggested having the history of the Avery Family placed in a frame under glass and hung at the entrance of the house." After the following sentence insert: "Ms. Odgers asked if he would consider naming the house the Avery and Smith Harris House? In answer to this question Mr. Avery stated No".

MOTION: Ms. Prokop moved to approve the October 29, 2015 Smith-Harris House Commission Minutes, as amended. Seconded by Mr. MacDonald.
(5-0) Unanimous.

III. REPORTS

A. Public Delegations. Ms. Massung reported the Friends will have its Wreath Sale on December 5 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Montville High School Choral Group will sing at noon in the barn. There will be an Open House from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Admission is a non-perishable food item to go to Care and Share. Ms. Prokop will be performing.

On December 17 at 6 p.m. we will have an evening with Belsnickel.

B. Ex-officio Report. Mr. Lakowsky informed the Commission we will have a new ex-officio assigned to this Commission.

C. Curator's Report. (See attached)

D. Agenda Additions. There were no agenda additions.

E. Chairman's Report. Mr. Lakowsky reported he was informed that the Samuel Smith House may be ready for spinning wheels in the spring.

He spoke to Sally Rafanello who will work on a program at springtime. She is looking for ideas.

Mr. Lakowsky informed the Commission our budget is due on December 11. January 11 at 10:30 a.m. he will meet with the Board of Finance and First Selectmen to review our 2016/17 budget.

Ms. DiMartino will work from home during the months of January and February to keep the house heating bills lower.

F. Financial Report.

1. Status Update. Mr. MacDonald reported \$9,171.31 remains as of November 16, 2015 in the Smith-Harris House budget.

2. Presentation of Bills. Ms. Prokop submitted a bill for \$21.26 for the boxwood shrub in memory of Cindy DeHahn.

Ms. Odgers submitted a bill in the amount of \$40.18 for an electric burner and set of drip pans for the upstairs stove.

We will need to pay the NEMA annual dues in the amount of \$90.

MOTION: Mr. MacDonald moved to reimburse Ms. Prokop in the amount of \$21.26 for the boxwood shrub in memory of Cindy DeHahn; Ms. Odgers in the amount of \$40.18 for an electric burner and set of drip pans for the upstairs stove and to pay NEMA dues in the amount of \$90. Seconded by Ms. Sasso. (4-0) Unanimous.

3. Barn Rental. Ms. Prokop reported the barn is closed for the season.

4. 2016-17 Budget. Ms. DiMartino suggested a line item for dues and publicity.

The Commission felt Ms. DiMartino's rate of salary and number of hours should be increased. She has obtained grants, developed additional educational programs, increased communication with members and the community, and developed a good relationship with the Friends, Commission and other historical houses.

MOTION: Ms. Prokop moved to approve the Smith-Harris House Commission 2016-17 Budget in the amount of \$25,240. Seconded by Ms. Sasso. (4-0) Unanimous.

G. Collections Committee (See attached report)

H. Correspondence. Ms. Prokop will write a thank you note to Messrs. Putnam and Bence.

Ms. DiMartino suggested that a note be sent to Cindy DeHahn's sister letting her know that we have planted a boxwood shrub in memory of Cindy DeHahn.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance.

1. Garden Fence and Maintenance. This will be taken care of at springtime.
2. Front Walkway. The front walkway will be done at springtime.
3. Lighting. Mr. Lakowsky received two estimates on the lighting. He plans to seek another estimate.

B. Museum Development.

1. SStepCT Report. See Director's Report.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance.

1. Barn Roof. The barn roof has been started.
2. Split rail fence. Mr. Lakowsky will take care of the split rail in spring.
3. Eagle Scout. Kyle Ryan will begin building a trellis for a grape arbor on December 3. The troop will work on the area behind the corn crib. They have asked that bottled water be supplied. A purchase order has been secured at Rings End for the materials needed for this project.

B. Museum Development. Ms. DiMartino reported we have received a fully-supported Regional Angels Project grant from the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works.

C. Upcoming Events.

1. November Events. There was no discussion of November events.
2. December Events. December 5 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. the Wreath Sale will be held in the barn. A donation of a non-perishable food item for Care and Share is requested. Mr. MacDonald reported the Wreath Sale was advertised in the Post Road Review on November 7, 2015.

On December 17 at 6 p.m. we will have an evening with Belsnickel.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Prokop moved to adjourn the Smith-Harris House
November 18, 2015 Regular Meeting at 8:20 p.m.
Seconded by Ms. Sasso. (5-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary

Director's Report--November, 2015

Submitted to the Smith-Harris House Commission

Upcoming Meetings

- Historic House Trail Brochure meeting, Tuesday, November 24th, 10 am, Charter Oak Conference Room, Waterford.
- House decorating for the Holiday season, Thursday, November 19th, 11 am.
- StEPS Open-House at Colchester Historical Society, November 30th, 1-4:30 pm.
- Friends of Smith-Harris House, Tuesday, December 8th, 2 pm, East Lyme Public Library.
- Additional meetings scheduled throughout the month TBD.

GRANTS

- We have received a fully-supported Regional Angels Project grant from the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works to clean, document, and store our textiles collection under the direction of Susan J. Jerome, textiles conservator.
 - This event is scheduled to take place March 7 & 9, 2016.

STEPS-CT

The current STEPS-CT Sub-Committee: Donna Massung, Kathleen Patterson, Kathleen Sasso, Maggi Prokop, and director Joanie DiMartino will begin meeting again in November to continue with STEPS-CT work.

- We will need to pay for our second year of AASLH & CLHO memberships at the end of this year, as part of our STEPS-CT obligation (and NEMA).
 - The NEMA renewal form has been submitted to Dick MacDonald, Treasurer, for Commission approval.
- **The Friends of Smith-Harris House have paid for the first 3 sessions of STEPS-CT; the Commission will need to pay for the final 3 sessions (one will be in this fiscal year [Collections--March, 2016], and two will be in the next fiscal year [Historic Landscapes--July, 2016 & Interpretation--November, 2016], so we have time to plan the budget. The cost is \$100 each session.
- The Commission needs to approve the updated by-laws.
- The next StEPS workshop will focus on creating a Disaster Plan for the site.

Collections

- Report submitted by Collections Committee co-chair, Barbara Odgers.
- On Friday, November 13th the funeral displays were removed and the House thoroughly cleaned per museum standards (as always before major public programs) by director Joanie DiMartino, Commission Member Maggi Prokop, and Friends President Donna Massung, with the assistance of Friends Treasurer Chuck Massung in preparation for Holiday events.
- The House Holiday decorating is almost finished; it should be completed on Thursday (11/19).

Programs/Education

- “Slightly-Creepy Tales/Trick or Trunk” was once again a success, with over 50 people (families with young children) enjoying the tales and the House by candlelight.
 - I would suggest a sign next year to invite people into the House; some were unsure it was open, and what we were offering; a sign would be helpful to clarify that we’re part of the event.
- Open-House on Saturday, December 5th from 9 am to 1 pm. We’ll need people to staff the rooms and historic-inspired treats to offer. Please contact me with what you’d like to make.
- An Evening with the Belsnickel will take place on the 17th, 6 pm. Gary Lakowsky will act as Belsnickel, and locate a winter story to share; Donna has selected a lovely Holiday ornament craft (pine cones with ribbons; the children will make one for our tree and one to bring home or give as a gift), and Judy MacDonald will perform and lead our visitors in a carol-sing once again; we’re pretty much all set, and fliers have been made and distributed.
- I’ve been contacted by Tara Borden, asst. director of EL Public Library to plan the next year’s “Novel History” series. We’re considering an agricultural/horticultural theme.
- It’s that time of year when we need to begin considering program options for January through March/April 2016. I’m open to suggestions, especially any ideas on how to recognize and celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Smith-Harris House.
 - I’ll be sending out an email sometime next week to have a meeting to discuss Jan-Apr programs. Will we be able to meet sometime in early December?

Meetings Attended

- 11/2- CLHO Director’s Roundtable meeting.
- 11/10- Friends of Smith-Harris, Inc. meeting.
- 11/18- meeting to decorate House for Spirit Voices; final meeting & organizing.

Submitted by:

Joanie DiMartino, executive director

November 18, 2015

NOVEMBER 2015 COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

There was no meeting held in November.

Saturday Nov 14 – Recent Donation Inquiries – Olive Weiss, from Salem, is offering a Quilting Frame, about 25 years old, and some historic clothing. She is willing to put the frame on her car and drive it to the museum. Perhaps it would be more prudent for us to go to her so if it is not anything we could use she would not have driven it down here and back home again. Instead I can drive there in my truck and pick it up if it is something we can use (and store) in the barn. I would need someone or two that are knowledgeable about Quilting Frames to make the decision. Olive has previously donated a crazy quilt and a vintage red velvet blouse worn as part of a wedding outfit.

Sunday Nov 15 – Attic - The floor space covered by carpet directly opposite the head of the stairs has been cleared and swept. A single row of chairs are lined up and now hold small boxes of Holiday decorations. Larger tubs have been placed in front of the chairs. Small grape vine wreathes and a basket are on taller chairs behind and near the file cabinet, boxes of ribbons are by the chimney.

When Holiday decorations are taken down all items may be returned to the chairs for outside labeling and secure storage.

The attic needs another extension cord to use with the shop vac. The present extension cord connector does not have the third hole to accommodate the ground(?) post that the shop vac has.

The blown insulation along the end of the attic floor boards is very loose and dirty, especially across the front of the house. Blanket insulation (rolled) is much neater and can be just as effective. It also may not be as appealing to critters as the loose insulation. Rings End has what we need and perhaps True Value, I haven't had time to check or get prices but this shouldn't be a big expense. No hurry, I can put it in myself but first I need to evict the mice and bugs.

Storage for the Friends excess sales items is needed. These would be non-food items; cook books, mugs, post cards etc. The Friends should have easy access to their inventory. At this time the attic is not the place, it is a little remote and an extra set of stairs for someone who needs an item immediately. Would the Commission or Director consider using one of the two secure closets on the second floor for storage; the small closet in the Children's room or the shelved closet built against the chimney in the Textile room.

For lack of another place to put this I have purchased the small burner and a set of four drip pans for the electric stove. They will be installed before the December 5 Wreath sale.

Chinese Proverb (slightly adjusted for modern times) – "Man who say it cannot be done should not interrupt woman doing it."

Sincerely, Barbara