

**TOWN OF EAST LYME
SMITH-HARRIS HOUSE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, FEBRUARY 24th, 2016**

Present: Gary Lakowsky, Chairman, Richard MacDonald, Maggi Prokop, Barbara Odgers,
Kathleen Sasso, Bob Seifel

Also Present: Joanie DiMartino, Smith Harris House Curator
Donna Massung, Friends of Smith Harris President

FILED IN EAST LYME
CONNECTICUT
Mar 1 2016 AT 10:00 AM PM
Valen Gallo, Jr.
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

1. Call to Order

Chairman Lakowsky called the February 24, 2016 Meeting of the Smith-Harris House Commission to order at 7:05 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Lakowsky called for any additions, deletions or changes to the November 18, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes.

****MOTION (1)**

Mr. MacDonald moved to approve the November 25, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Commission as presented.

Ms. Sasso seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 - 1. Motion passed.

Abstained: Mr. Seifel

Mr. Lakowsky called for any additions, deletions or changes to the January 27, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Ms. Odgers asked that on Page 4 under Pond Structure that the line: 'There was nothing there before the skating area' be changed to read: They will try to find out if there was any structure there before the skating area.

****MOTION (2)**

Ms. Prokop moved to approve the January 27, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Commission as amended.

Ms. Sasso seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 - 1. Motion passed.

Abstained: Mr. Seifel

3. Reports

↓ Public Delegations

Liz Wood, Executive Director of the Stonington Historical Society was invited to speak to them regarding fundraising and the types of events that she has been involved with over the years that have been successful. She mentioned the following fundraisers: A Dance Gala; Live auction with 10 or fewer items where they would capture people during the dinner/dessert time; Silent auction with items donated from businesses in the community; On-line auction with bidding; Annual Appeal presented in a unique way being very brief with words; Deck the walls event at Christmas with wreath sales (wreaths decorated by key people in the community in businesses that decorate them professionally and sell them; and a Historic House Tour (every three years) with some 8 to 9 homes on it for one day only.

The Historic House Tour would have informational sheets about each house and tickets sold in advance would be discounted from those sold the day of the event.

Ms. Wood said that she could not stress how important volunteers are to them and to the success of the programs that they do.

The Commissioners thanked her for coming to speak with them and for providing so many ideas.

Donna Massung, President of the Friends reported that the Angel Project is March 7th and 9th.

↓ **Ex-Officio Report**

Mr. Lakowsky said that he had received a call from Mr. Cunningham saying that he was in another meeting and if it let out in time for him to come over to this one that he would.

↓ **Curator's Report**

Ms. DiMartino thoroughly reviewed her report. (Attached to Minutes)

↓ **Agenda Additions**

Mr. Lakowsky said that he would like to add: Legends – Discussion under Museum Development as Item #2.

****MOTION (3)**

Ms. Sasso moved to add: Legends – Discussion under Museum Development as Item #2.

Mr. Seifel seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

↓ **Chairman's Report**

Mr. Lakowsky reported that he turned down the water heater in the House to the efficiency setting and found that the timer was not working. He said that he will put in a new timer set to run for only two (2) hours per day. He also provided an updated budget that he had been provided with and said that he would go over a narrative that he was working on with anyone who wished to do so. He passed around a sign-up sheet for members to have their own pass code to enter the House. Lastly, he reported that he had received a resignation letter from Darlene DeLaura which leaves a vacancy on their Commission. He asked that if they know of anyone who is interested in filling it to please let him know.

↓ **Financial Report**

▪ **Status Update**

Mr. MacDonald reported that the budget balance is \$9,356.90 including encumbrances. It was noted that they are moving into the season where they will be spending this money.

Ms. Odgers updated them on the electric bill and cost saving measures noting that they are at around \$900 less than last year – a lot due to help from the type of mild winter weather we have had.

▪ **Purchase Order Requirements**

Ms. Odgers provided detailed information on the process that she had obtained from Ms. Johnson regarding purchase orders.

Mr. Lakowsky explained that they all vote on any expenditure of money from the budget and said that he would review the process with Ms. Johnson.

▪ **Presentation of Bills**

There were none.

▪ **Barn Rentals**

Ms. Prokop said that she has had some inquiries and that some were surprised by the rise in the rental fee. They said that they would get back to her.
It was noted that the fee is in line with other rental places.

↓ **Collections Committee**

Ms. Odgers provided a list of items and said that the committee had voted on the nine items on the list.

Mr. Lakowsky suggested that they all go look at the items in the House in person and then they can take up a vote on this at their next meeting.

↓ **Correspondence**

Mr. Lakowsky asked Ms. Prokop to send a letter to Ms. DeLaura thanking her for her service to this Commission and the Town.

4. OLD Business

↓ **Property Maintenance**

- **Garden Fence and Maintenance** – Mr. Lakowsky said that this would be done in the spring.
- **Front Walkway** – Mr. Lakowsky said that they will enlist the services of an Eagle Scout for this project.

↓ **Museum Development**

- **STepCT Report** – See Curator's Report (attached)
- **New Bylaws Vote**

Mr. Lakowsky called for a motion on the By-Laws as they had the current version.

****MOTION (4)**

Ms. Prokop moved to accept the Smith Harris House Commission By-Laws as presented.

Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

▪ **Upcoming Meetings**

Reported previously – see attached Curator's report.

5. NEW Business

↓ **Property Maintenance**

- **Fallen Trees** – Mr. Lakowsky said that some of the fallen trees have been taken. There are still more available for anyone who wants them.

- **Split Rail Fence** – Mr. Lakowsky said that there is money coming from the Town for this and that it would be done in the spring. It will be placed around the old farm equipment in the back.

↓ **Museum Development**

- **Pond Structure** – Mr. Lakowsky said that the skating structure was built by an organization on top of the structure that was there before. The suggestion was made that a State approved archaeologist be present with the students for any dig that might be done there.

Ms. DiMartino noted the Steps program and that this would be seen as potentially unacceptable to disturb a virgin site. She said that she would speak with Will regarding the program and the potential to use other sites rather than to disturb this virgin one. She noted that there are other sites that can be used.

- **Legends/Discussion** – It was discussed that this would be best done during the April or May time frame. A potential issue is that they would be required to be at the House for a very length period of time into the wee hours. Mr. Lakowsky asked how many would be able to commit to it noting that they would need five people.

Ms. DiMartino said that they do not have to pay for anything here – just donate their time – everything with regard to set-up, etc. is all taken care of.

Mr. Lakowsky, Mr. MacDonald and Ms. Prokop volunteered to commit to this program and stay at the House during this event.

Ms. Massung said that she would check with the Friends for volunteers and thought that she would get two people who would volunteer to complete the five needed.

****MOTION (5)**

Ms. Prokop moved that they would proceed with the Legends Program at the House.

Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

↓ Upcoming events:

- **Report from Joint Planning Committee** – There was nothing further to report.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Lakowsky called for a motion to adjourn.

****MOTION (6)**

Ms. Prokop moved to adjourn the February 24, 2016 meeting of the Smith Harris House Commission at 8:45 PM.

Mr. Macdonald seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,
Recording Secretary, Pro-Tem

Director's Report
Smith-Harris House, February, 2016

Upcoming Meetings

- Accessibility (ADA) meeting with CT Human Services specialist Elanah Sherman, Friday, March 4th, time TBD. In the process of extending an invitation to the Boards of the East Lyme Historical Society & Samuel Smith House to also attend. (Samuel Smith House confirmed)
- murder mystery feasibility meeting, Friday, March 4th, 5:30 pm, Maggi's House, all welcome.
- Friends of Smith-Harris House, Tuesday, March 8th, 2 pm, East Lyme Public Library, all welcome.
- Historic House Trails brochure meeting, Thursday, March 10th, 10 am, Charter Oak Center, all welcome.
- Smith-Harris House Commission, Wednesday, March 23, 7 pm, all welcome.
- Additional meetings scheduled throughout month TBD.

Programs

- Mindy Morris has been working on a murder mystery event; our next meeting will look at the feasibility of this program for us this year (considering September). Next meeting see above.
- We've been contacted by Jeff Belanger (our PBS connection) about hosting a nighttime ghost program as a fundraiser for the museum. It's based on a program Legend Trips (www.legendtrips.com) already has in place that they're run as many museums. Key components of the program are:
 - Cost to participants; \$99, of which \$25 goes to Friends. Limiting the number to 25 people means we'll raise \$500. The business and program is billed as a preservation fundraiser for the historic site, both on their website and ours.
 - Out of the \$99 Legend Trips covers dinner for participants (usually pizza and salad), snacks throughout the night, a lecture, and the loan of ghost-hunting equipment.
 - The time would be from 6:30 pm to 1 am. No one stays overnight. It takes about 45 minutes to pack up after visitors leave. They would like us to consider April or May, but any other time other than October or November would be fine. We'd prefer having the barn accessible, for food, etc. Friday or Saturday nights work best.
 - After dinner and lecture, the group of 25 would be split into 5 groups of 5, to visit these locations: attic, 2nd floor, 1st floor, cellar, barn/outdoors. Each group would be accompanied by Commission/Friends/Staff and would have use of Legend Trips equipment. Legend Trips staff spends time with the different groups and after some time they switch locations so that each group has spent some time ghost hunting in each space.
- I'm working with the East Lyme Middle School teachers so we can confirm dates and I can begin lining up speakers for the 8th-grade field trip. TBD
- We've confirmed a collaborative program with Avery-Copp House and conservator Susan J. Jerome for Saturday, June 18th. We'll provide location and A-C will provide refreshments. We'll jointly share publicity. This program is supported by the grant we received from Chelsea Groton Bank; we'll be holding two preservation workshops for the general public this year thanks to their generosity.

Legends

Attachment SH Submitted 2/24/16

- Evaluating Humanities Workshop will be Monday, February 29th from 9 am to 12:30. Let me know if anyone wants to attend. It's a good opportunity to understand the whys, whats, and hows for evaluating programs.

NEMA update

- I have submitted a NEMA off-site workshop proposal for the Smith-Harris House, in collaboration with the Old Stone Church Burial Ground, cemetery preservationist Ruth Shapleigh-Brown, and local business Fulton & Theroux Funeral Home to offer: "Undread the Dead: Taking the Fear out of Cemetery Preservation." Please see attached proposal sheet. We'll find out in April if our proposal is accepted.

STEPS-CT

- We have developed a records retention policy (does not need to be signed, but everyone needs to be familiar with it) for both on-site and off-site storage. This will be added to our Trustee manual for Commission & Friends Board.
- Gary is working on having the key code reset; I've located a few key distribution policies for the sub-committee to review and approve.
- Elanah Sherman, from the CT Human Services office, will visit our site on Friday, March 4th; time will be approx. 1 pm to 5 pm. Samuel Smith House will be participating as well. An invitation has been extended to East Lyme Historical Society. I hope to hear back from them soon. This helps us meet our Audience segment requirement.
- I've begun work on a capacity building grant through CTHumanities for our rebranding and logo. Rita Rivera, from Love and Pop Designs, also, Mystic Country, will be our graphics designer.

Collections

- We're on-target with the Angel's Project March 9th & 11th. I'll be in touch shortly to confirm dates with folks and publicize event.
- Several of us are meeting this Friday (2/26) at the House to set up 2nd floor and prepare closet for Project.
- I'll be contacting Liz Shapiro (CLHO) about our grant and participation in this project for potential presentation, as per our grant requirement; much publicity will need to be completed.

Meetings Attended

- 2/2--STEPS sub-committee meeting.
- 2/9--Historic House Trails Brochure meeting.
- 2/9--lace conservation workshop program meeting.
- 2/12--NEMA proposal meeting with Old Stone Church Burial Ground Committee.
- 2/12--murder mystery meeting.
- 2/24--Commission meeting.

Submitted by: Joanie DiMartino, Executive Director, February 24, 2016

The Smith-Harris House Commission

By-Laws

Article I. Mission

The purpose of the Smith-Harris House Commission is to maintain the Smith-Harris House. The House serves as an historic house museum that engages the community in the history of domestic and agricultural life through the education and preservation of the Avery, Smith, and Harris family stories.

Article II. Duties of the Smith-Harris Commission

Section 1. The Commission shall be charged with the control, development, management, restoration and repair of the Smith-Harris House historic land site.

Section 2. The Commission is authorized to enter into agreements for the use of the property, and to set reasonable fees for its use.

Section 3. The Commission shall present an annual budget and submit an annual report to the Board of Finance when requested.

Article III. Meetings

Section 1. Excepting unforeseen circumstances, regular meetings of the Smith-Harris House Commission shall be held the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Section 2. Special meetings of the Commission may be held at the call of the Chair or by written request of any Commission member with twenty-four hour prior posted notice.

Section 3. A quorum shall consist of four members. A smaller number than a quorum may adjourn a regular meeting to a time and place which they deem advisable. Four concurring votes shall be required for the transaction of business.

Section 4. All requests, applications, petitions and reports from other agencies or the public intended for consideration shall be addressed to the Commission and delivered or mailed to the Chair of the Smith-Harris House Commission.

Article IV. Officers

Section 1. The elected officers shall be a Chair, Vice-Chair, Corresponding Secretary and Financial Officer.

Section 2. The officers shall be elected annually at the regular January meeting by nominations from the floor with consent of the nominee. Elections shall be directed by the ex-officio officer or a designee and be determined by majority vote.

Section 3. The Chair shall be the spokesperson for the Commission. The Chair shall preside at all meetings, appoint committees, prepare an agenda of all meetings, and prepare an annual budget in consultation with the Commission or other such persons as necessary.

Section 4. The Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair in the event of the absence of the Chair, resignation, or the inability to perform his or her duties.

Section 5. The Corresponding Secretary shall take care of all the correspondence of the Commission.

Attachment (Approved)
SH

2/24/16

Section 6. The Financial Officer shall give a financial report at each meeting and keep a record of all purchase orders and receipts, all purchase orders to the finance office, and shall receive receipts for all purchase orders approved by the Commission.

Article V. Amendments

These rules may be amended or any rule suspended at a regular or special meeting of the Commission, after one week prior notification.