

**TOWN OF EAST LYME  
SMITH-HARRIS HOUSE COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, JANUARY 27th, 2016**

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

**Also Present:** Joanie DiMartino, Smith Harris House Curator  
Donna Massung, Friends of Smith Harris President  
Dan Cunningham, Ex-Officio, Board of Selectmen  
Bob Seifel

FILED IN EAST LYME  
CONNECTICUT  
Feb 2, 2016 AT 10:00 AM PM  
Kathleen Sasso  
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Lakowsky called the January 27, 2016 Meeting of the Smith-Harris House Commission to order at 7:02 PM.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Lakowsky noted that as everyone had not received the November 2015 minutes that they would address them at their February meeting.

**3. Reports**

↓ **Public Delegations**

Donna Massung, President of the Friends reported that the food that they had donated from the Belsnickle event to Care & Share had been greatly appreciated and that they had received a thank you from Care & Share for the food and monetary donation.

Bob Seifel said that he was attending this evening as he is now retired and interested in joining the Commission. He is interested in history, primarily in the time period from the Mayflower to now.

↓ **Ex-Officio Report**

Dan Cunningham, Ex-Officio said that this is his first meeting and that he looks forward to working with them.

↓ **Curator's Report**

Ms. DiMartino thoroughly reviewed her report. She noted that it is a synopsis of what was accomplished during the last year. (Attached to Minutes)

↓ **Agenda Additions**

Mr. Lakowsky said that he did not have anything to add.

↓ **Chairman's Report**

Mr. Lakowsky reported that he had met with the First Selectman and the Finance Director on their proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year and that they would be discussing that further later on in the agenda.

↓ **Financial Report**

▪ **Status Update**

Mr. MacDonald reported that they had expended 52% of their budget to date.

- **Spreadsheet Info**

Ms. Odgers presented information on the electric bills and how they are sometimes paid two months at a time and that this was why it might be difficult for them to track. She provided them with some tracking that she had done and said that they should be on target.

Discussion followed on how to conserve electricity as the House has electric heat. Closing the individual room doors was suggested as well as using draft dodgers, a lower temperature for the hot water in the kitchen and bathrooms and having a heating survey done.

Mr. Lakowsky noted that they have changed over to LED's which conserve energy and have a long life.

Ms. Odgers also explained that the Finance Office is set up for Purchase Orders to be submitted in advance and that while they try to do this – it sometimes is not feasible. She said that she would like to have one for all of the dues and fees to be paid from one PO.

- **Presentation of Bills**

There were none.

- **Barn Rentals**

Ms. Prokop said that they did not have anything.

- **Barn Rental Rates**

Mr. Lakowsky said that the rates have always been \$100 for 4 hours. He noted that the money collected goes to the General Fund Revenue Account. He asked for discussion on raising the rental rates as he feels that they are too low especially when considering that someone had to be at the House during that time. He suggested raising the rate.

Ms. Prokop noted that the Knights of Columbus and other organizations charge more for their rentals. After further discussion the consensus was to charge \$200 rental for 4 hours and \$50 for each hour thereafter.

**\*\*MOTION (1)**

Ms. Prokop moved to increase the barn rental fee to \$200 for 4 hours and \$50 for each additional hour.

Ms. Sasso seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

- **2016-2017 Budget**

Mr. Lakowsky recalled that the proposed budget is over what was requested by the First Selectman and that they had received a memo regarding it. He said that the Director/Curator, Utilities and Program lines had been increased however every other line item was decreased. He called for discussion.

Ms. DiMartino suggested charging \$5/person for the tours of the House.

Ms. Sasso suggested that they build on the number of people coming for the tours before they charge for them.

Ms. DiMartino said that most places charge and that people are used to having to pay for a tour.

Ms. Sasso said that she would rather see them charge for the programs and keep the tours free.

Mr. Lakowsky said that they could potentially charge for the school program (enactors that they hire) and have half of that paid for. He noted that they used to have around 75 students and now it is nearly 200. They could also perhaps market this program to other schools in the area.

After further discussion, Mr., Lakowsky said that he would prepare a narrative that he would send to the First Selectman outlining their discussion.

✚ **Collections Committee**

Ms. Odgers said that they were still sorting the items that had been donated to them by Olive Weiss on December 10, 2015.

↓ **Correspondence**

Mr. Lakowsky said that he did not have anything at this time.

**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 may be able to enlist the services of an Eagle Scout for this project.
- **Lighting - temp lighting-** Mr. Lakowsky said that the light, installation and labor will be for free. This represents about \$1000 worth of electrical supplies and work that they did not have to pay for.

↓ **Museum Development**

▪ **STepCT Report**

Reported previously – see attached Curator's report.

**5. NEW Business**

↓ **Election of Officers**

Mr. Lakowsky said that Mr. Cunningham would Chair this portion of the meeting.

▪ **Chairman**

Mr. Cunningham called for nominations for the position of Chairman of the Smith Harris House Commission for 2016.

**\*\*MOTION (2)**

Ms. Prokop nominated Mr. Lakowsky for the position of Chairman of the Smith Harris House Commission for 2016.

Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.

Mr. Cunningham asked if there were any other nominations –  
Hearing none – He called for a vote on the nomination of Mr. Lakowsky -

**Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

• **Vice-Chairman**

Mr. Cunningham called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Smith Harris House Commission for 2016.

**\*\*MOTION (3)**

Ms. Prokop nominated Ms. Sasso for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Smith Harris House Commission for 2016.

Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.

Mr. Cunningham asked if there were any other nominations –  
Hearing none – He called for a vote on the nomination of Ms. Sasso -

**Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

• **Financial Officer**

Mr. Cunningham called for nominations for the position of Financial Officer of the Smith Harris House Commission for 2016.

**\*\*MOTION (4)**

Mr. Lakowsky nominated Mr. MacDonald for the position of Financial Officer of the Smith Harris House Commission for 2016.

Ms. Sasso seconded the motion.

Mr. Cunningham asked if there were any other nominations –  
Hearing none – He called for a vote on the nomination of Mr. MacDonald -  
**Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

• **Corresponding Secretary**

Mr. Cunningham called for nominations for the position of Corresponding Secretary of the Smith Harris House Commission for 2016.

**\*\*MOTION (5)**

Mr. Lakowsky nominated Ms. Prokop for the position of Corresponding Secretary of the Smith Harris House Commission for 2016.  
Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.

Mr. Cunningham asked if there were any other nominations –  
Hearing none – He called for a vote on the nomination of Ms. Prokop -  
**Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

Mr. Cunningham congratulated all of the Officers and returned the Chairing of the meeting over to Mr. Lakowsky.

✚ **Property Maintenance**

- **Fallen Trees** – Mr. Lakowsky said that he has contacted anyone who wants any of the fallen trees in the woods to come and take 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 they found that this was not the ice house. Mr. MacDonald said that he had it on good authority that this was built as a space for people to sit and put on their ice skates for skating. There was nothing there before the skating area.

✚ **Upcoming events:**

- **Report from Planning Joint Committee** – See Curator's report – this is addressed there.

**6. Adjournment**

Mr. Lakowsky called for a motion to adjourn.

**\*\*MOTION (6)**

Ms. Prokop moved to adjourn the January 27, 2016 meeting of the Smith Harris House Commission at 8:50 PM.

Ms. Odgers seconded the motion.  
**Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,  
Recording Secretary, Pro-Tem

**Director's Report  
Smith-Harris House  
January, 2016**

**Upcoming Meetings:**

- STEPS-CT sub-committee meeting, Tuesday, February 2, 2:30-4:30 pm, East Lyme HIGH SCHOOL Library, all welcome.
- Historic House Trail Brochure meeting, Tuesday, February 9, 10 am, Charter Oak Center, all welcome.
- Friends of Smith-Harris House, Tuesday, February 9, 2 pm, East Lyme PUBLIC Library, all welcome.
- "Novel History" planning meeting with Tara Borden, Asst. Director, Tuesday, February 9, 3:30 pm, East Lyme Public Library.
- Historic Properties Commission, Tuesday, February 16, 7 pm, all welcome.
- Smith-Harris House Commission, Wednesday, February 24, 7 pm, all welcome.
- Additional meetings scheduled throughout month TBD.

**Programs, etc.**

**2015 wrap-up:**

Visitor totals for 2015: **808**

How those numbers break down:

Novel History: **48**

High School Anthropology Class (spr/fall): **37**

Civil War: Home & War middle school: **294**

Open-House Museum Day: **76**

Afternoon Honey Tea: **20**

Motorcycle Show: **120**

Explore History!: **42**

Spirit Voices: **15**

Slightly-Creepy Folktales: **52**

Holiday Open-House: **45**

Belsnickel (incl. assistance for PBS): **23** (403 views on YouTube as of 1/26/16)

Other:

Book Club (12/9): **13**

→ Summer Tours (Jun-Aug): **23**

Friday: **7**

Saturday: **6**

Sunday: **10**

*Needs promotional  
materials - will help*

Monies: \$101.00 donated to Friends of Smith-Harris House from tours (at 23 people this comes to \$4.30 per person). No info for dates: 6/6, 6/7, 6/14, 6/27, 7/17, 7/19, 8/15. No info currently on Barn Rental numbers.

*Attachment submitted SH 1/27/16*

### 2016 programming calendar

- April 12th, 5:30 pm, audience survey with town professionals.
- May 7th, 9 am to 1 pm. Friends of Smith-Harris House Annual Plant Sale.
- May, middle school field trips, TBD.
- June 6th, CT League of History Organizations (CLHO) Annual Conference, Meriden, CT. Theme is "Collections."
- June 11th, 10 am to 3 pm, Museum Open-House Day, CT Dept. of Tourism.
- July 2nd, audience survey with general public at Lobsterfest; times TBD.
- July 3rd, Open-House 40th Anniversary Celebration, times TBD.
- August 14th, Antique & Classic Motorcycle Show, times TBD.
- August--November, "Novel History" collaboration with East Lyme Public Library, monthly, dates & times TBD.
- September 11th, Afternoon Tea, topic & time TBD.
- October 10th, "Explore History!" 12 pm to 4 pm.
- October 22nd, "Spirit Voices," time TBD.
- October 26th, "Slightly-Creepy Folktales" with "Trick or Trunk," 6-8 pm.
- November 9th--11th, New England Museum Association (NEMA) Annual Conference, Mystic, CT. Theme is "Social Action and Museums."
- December 3rd, Friends of Smith-Harris House Annual Wreath Sale, 9 am to 12 noon.
- December 3rd & 4th, Holiday Open-House, 3--9 am to noon; 4--11 am to 4 pm.
- December 10th, "Afternoon with the Belsnickel," 2 pm.

Other programs throughout 2016 TBD.

\*\*Also--David Rau, director of education at Florence Griswold Museum and professor of museum studies at UCONN is interested in having his class visit the House for an open-hearth cooking program and discussion on how we evolved our interpretative format from re-enactors to first person interpretation of former Smith-Harris House residents. This will take place at the end of April.

### STEPS-CT

- We have obtained Bronze in our Audience segment--Congratulations!
- The Conflict of Interest policy needs to be reviewed and signed.
- By-laws have been re-submitted; please schedule a vote for next month.
- We will be applying for a capacity-building grant (due May 1) to re-brand/redesign a logo, create brochures, letterhead, rack cards, etc. for promotion.
- To finish up our audience segment, we will be leading two rounds of surveys:
  - The first one, scheduled for Tuesday, April 12, 5:30 pm, will be for town professionals, and we will extend invitations for a one-hour session offering light appetizers;
  - The second survey will be with members of the general public, and we will staff a table at the annual Lobsterfest on Saturday, July 2nd.
- To finish up Management, we will need to develop:
  - a Disaster Plan, more info on what that will entail coming over the next few months.

- a key audit; need to change the alarm code and develop a policy for key-holders and have them sign keys in/out. (while not mandatory, a security audit at a later date is recommended).
- also not mandatory but recommended, an energy audit of the House.
- the Friends will need to develop an fundraising plan: annual drive, planned giving, etc.
- a facility rental agreement for outside organization use of the House.

### **NEMA update**

The 2016 annual conference is in Mystic; I & Kathleen Patterson attended a meeting held at the Mystic Museum of Art (formerly the Mystic Arts Center); they have requested local museums offer proposals for 1/2-day off-site workshops, etc. NEMA handles registration, busing, and light refreshments. I plan to submit a proposal; the deadline is February 15th; more information forthcoming.

### **Collections**

- Textiles Angels Project with conservator Susan J. Jerome scheduled to take place on Monday, March 9th & Wednesday, March 11th from 9 am to 4 pm, with hour lunch. Maggi & Donna are locating potential caterers. Project will be heavily publicized & documented.
- Donna & I will be working over this next month to purchase all supplies (grant funds have been allocated) to prepare for project; I'll also be in touch with Ms. Jerome to finalize arrangements.

### **Meetings Attended**

- 1/8--quarterly joint meeting for programming & planning with Commission & Friends.
- 1/8--East Lyme Preservation Potluck.
- 1/12--Friends of Smith-Harris House meeting.
- 1/12--meeting with Tara Borden to plan this year's "Novel History."
- 1/12--Historic House Trails brochure meeting.
- 1/19--STEPS sub-committee meeting.
- 1/19--Historic Properties Commission meeting.
- 1/25--NEMA Annual Conference planning meeting.
- 1/27--meeting with Mindy Morris for potential programs & summer work.
- 1/27--Commission meeting.

Submitted by:

Joanie DiMartino, Executive Director

January 27, 2016