

Smith-Harris House Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 23, 2017

Present: Robert Seifel
Richard MacDonald
Maggi Prokop
Gary Lakowsky

FILED

aug 29 2017 AT 1:50 AM (PM)

Absent: Cheri Meiers

[Signature]
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Also Present: Joanie DiMartino, Smith-Harris House Director
Donna Massung, President of the Friends of Smith-Harris
Kathleen Patterson, Collection Chairlady
Robert Patterson

I. CALL ORDER.

Chairman Seifel called the Smith-Harris House Commission August 23, 2017 Meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. APPROVAL MINUTES.

Mr. Seifel asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the July 26, 2017 Smith-Harris House Commission Meeting Minutes.

The following corrections were noted: On page 3, item B. 1, the sentence should be deleted. On page 4, item 2, the last sentence should be revised as follows: "Ms. DiMartino recommended that the historical kitchen have a display honoring Barbara and Fred Odgers."

MOTION(1): Mr. Lakowsky moved to approve the July 26, 2017 Smith-Harris House Minutes, as amended. Seconded by Ms. Prokop. (4-0) Unanimous

III. REPORTS.

A. Public Delegations. Ms. Massung distributed flyers for the Teddy Bear Tea to be held on September 10 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Mr. Patterson reported there continues to be unleashed dogs on the Smith-Harris property. Ms. DiMartino had her personal property damaged. Ms. Prokop stated her husband notified a gentleman that there is a leash law. Dog owners are also not cleaning up after their dogs. It was felt the state has several regulations on this matter and that another sign is needed for the property.

Ms. Patterson felt more signs are needed to designate parking areas. She felt handicapped parking needs to be addressed.

Mr. Patterson felt weedwacking is needed, and he agreed to take care of it.

B. Ex-officio Report. Mr. Cunningham was unable to be present, and there was no report.

C. Director's Report. See attached report.

D. Agenda Additions. The Commission was asked if they had any additions to the Agenda and there were none.

E. Chairman's Report. Mr. Seifel felt much was accomplished at the August 14 meeting, and that there is much more to do.

F. Financial Report.

1. Status Update. Mr. MacDonald reported we have used 21% of our budget. Our balance is \$12,830.64. We have spent 67% of our telephone bill and 17% for museum programs.

Ms. DiMartino reported Constant Contact renewal has been paid.

2. Presentation of Bills. There were no bills presented.

3. Barn Rental. Ms. Prokop reported the Walk of Horror event is scheduled to use the barn on October 27 and 28. She asked for a volunteer to be at the house on October 27. Mr. Lakowsky agreed to be at the house on that date.

4. Budget Planning Committee.

a. Review Budget and Planned Expenses. Mr. Lakowsky suggested that three members of the Commission meet in October to discuss the 2017-2018 budget.

G. Collections Committee. (See the Director's Report).

H. Correspondence. There was no new correspondence.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance. Mr. MacDonald observed that the grapes have been picked.

Ms. Prokop reported she received a telephone call about the condition of the cherry tree near the barn. Mr. Lakowsky agreed to look at it.

1. Garden Fence and Maintenance. Mr. Patterson reported to date he has not been contacted by the Eagle Scout.

2. Front Walkway. Mr. Lakowsky reported one piece of slate cracked. He will try to find another piece of slate.

B. Museum Development.

1. STepCT Report. (See Director's Report).

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance.

1. Porch Repairs. Mr. Lakowsky agreed to obtain an estimate for the porch.

B. Museum Development. There was nothing new on museum development.

C. Upcoming Events.

1. Bike and BBQ 2017. The Bike and BBQ is scheduled for October 1. Portapotties will be on the grounds. The Lions will meet next Wednesday. The Lions have agreed to donate \$1500. The Senior Center kitchen has been secured. The Lions will also grill.

Ms. DiMartino asked what will take place on the property? She was informed in the morning there will be coffee in the barn. There will be vendors on the grounds. Registration, start and finish will be at the house. The ride will begin at 6 a.m. It is our responsibility to keep the house open. Parking will be at the Community Center and the two schools. Ms. Patterson asked if there will be a certificate for those who participated? Mr. Lakowsky did not know if there would be.

Ms. DiMartino reported she received an email from Mark Christiansen. Mr. Christiansen informed her Mr. Labrie would like the three historical houses in Town to put together a joint program that he is willing to promote.

VI ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (2): **Mr. Lakowsky moved to adjourn the Smith-Harris House August 23, 2017 Regular Meeting at 8:25 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Prokop. (4-0) Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary

Director's Report—August, 2017 Smith-Harris House Commission

Strategic Plan

- Dates have been set for our first Board Retreat:
 - Monday, August 14, 10 am to 4 pm (our longest day; lunch will be provided)
 - **Sunday, September 24, 10 am to 1 pm (Note date change)**
 - Saturday, October 14, 11:30 am to 2:30 pm
 - Saturday, November 11, 10 am to 1 pm

Please make every effort to attend; our grant match is based on Trustee time spent on the project.

- As per our consultant's request, a moratorium has been placed on new Board members for the Friends and new Commission members until we finish the strategic plan process; this is temporary, until mid-November, and it doesn't prevent interested people from volunteering their time with us, just not formally joining the Trustees until after the final process. [Note: when I refer to both "Friends" and "Commission" together, I will use the term "Trustees," for ease of use.]
- The first strategic plan session was amazing—the responses I received from everyone was that it was enjoyable, thought-provoking, and energizing! Thanks to Kathy, our consultant, for putting together such a dynamic program, thanks to the Friends who purchased supplies and set up the room beforehand, and thank you to all who attended for contributing your thoughts! Kathy feels we're heading in a great direction for the museum!

Odgers Memorial

- The family needs port-a-potties, as they are expecting over 40 people.
- Commission & Friends will meet on-site Friday in the morning to set Barn up.
- There will be a display of photos of both Barbara & Fred Odgers from both our collection (Institutional Archives) and the family.
- The family has requested Barbara's pie recipes be made that day for desserts; the recipes are available. Other reception food etc. has not yet been established.
- There will be a table of books that were Barbara's; the family would like for each person so moved to take one book as a memento of Barbara's love of learning and education.
- The family will be presented with a certificate by the Commission & Friends, stating that a space on-site will be named after Fred & Barbara Odgers.

Legend Trips

- Working on potential dates for spring/early summer 2018 for the Legend Trips ghostly fundraiser with Jeff & Tim.
- The Smith-Harris House will be featured in the 2018 Legend Trips calendar; a photographer (Frank Grace) was at the House on Friday (8/6) to take photos.
 - The 2017 calendar can be perused as a sample.
 - All photos taken by Frank Grace will be donated by him to be used as the museum sees fit, with proper credit his only request. This is a great opportunity for us to use them as we go

forward with re-branding. [Note: I've forwarded the email with the link to his photos of the House; they are amazing!]

- We can sell the calendar on-site; I suggest primarily at the *Spirit Voices* program, as that will be an audience interested in the paranormal. Jeff has offered to us a wholesale price of \$10. He said he sells them retail for \$17; the Friends can set their own price. [Note: the only concern here is shipping, as Jeff said the calendars are heavy. The Friends have offered to meet them in Falls River, MA to pick them up, for an opportunity to tour the Lizzie Borden House, as a "field trip."]

Website/Technology

- I have been in communication with Stacey; she is interested in stepping down as webmaster.
- She informed me that the time for domain renewal is next month; Kathleen Sasso & I, in agreement with our consultant, plan to create a new website through wordpress, which will allow for much more accessibility of site maintenance, and ultimately save money.
- The alarm and the phone have been repaired; I spoke to the electrician while he was on-site; the House had been struck by lightning and the system needed to be reset.

House Tours/Research

- Lisa Marcinkowski-June, a Ph.D. candidate at UConn, was on-site the weekend of the 19th-20th to monitor tours to track how adults learn in historic house environments for her dissertation; she is interested in what artifacts appeal to visitors, what they ask about, stories about themselves they share with the guides, and will obtain their permission first to include any information from their tours into her dissertation paper.
- Kathleen Sasso & I have begun researching more into the Avery, Smith, & Harris families of the House. We hope this will add to our understanding of new interpretation for the House, and also maybe garner enough information for a short book.

Collections

- The Odgers family has located 7-8 boxes of Smith-Harris House papers in Barbara's home that they will turn over to the Commission; this is a significant start to our Institutional Archives.
- Kathleen Patterson, Collections Chair, & I have met to peruse the papers; we will be working with Mindy Morris to properly house them.

Programs

- A flyer has been created for the Teddy Bear Tea on Sunday, September 10th. Time: 1-3 pm, Cost: \$25 per adult/child pair, \$10 each additional child. Ages: 4-8.
- Main publicity has gone out, including an ad with Post Road Review, later this week and next week (some news outlets don't want the information too early).
- The program needs to be capped this at **24 people**, since that is capacity for the two rooms we use in the House. This will fill up quickly, as we will be signing up at least two people at once. Please let me know ASAP if I should keep a waiting list for a second date of Sunday, September 17th.

- A wine-tasting fundraiser has been added to our autumn calendar; it will have a Thanksgiving theme, featuring nibbles inspired by the upcoming holiday, along with cheeses, charcuterie, and crudite. Baskets will be raffled off, and we'll showcase entries from Frank Harris' diary about how Thanksgiving was spent on Brookside Farm. This event will be Friday, November 10th, at the VFW.

STEPS

- The STEPS sub-committee has been meeting to continue creating and revising policies.
- The Conflict of Interest policy is being revised to clarify that family members of Trustees should not be hired or financially compensated. This policy should be reviewed and signed on a yearly basis.
- A food policy is being developed as well, this will be for caterers, people having a program at the House, in-house program use, and will contain a formal alcohol policy.

Professional Development

- Develop a Discussion-Based Interpretive Program—AASLH, 8/23/17

Meetings Attended

- meeting with Kathleen Sasso & Donna Massung to discuss technology & research possibilities, 7/28/17
- phone meeting with strategic plan consultant, 8/3/17
- STEPS Sub-Committee meeting, 8/4/17
- phone meeting with strategic plan consultant, 8/10/17
- Joint Commission & Friends planning meeting, 8/11/17
- Board Retreat for Strategic Plan, 8/14/17
- Collections meeting with Kathleen Patterson, 8/18/17
- meeting to discuss tea & wine tasting with Maggi Prokop & Kay Davis, 8/18/17
- Smith-Harris House Commission meeting, 8/23/17

Please Note: I will be on vacation from Sunday, August 27th through Labor Day, September 5th.

Submitted by:

Joanie DiMartino, Director

August 23, 2017