

Smith-Harris House Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 26, 2017

FILED

Present: Robert Seifel
Richard MacDonald
Maggi Prokop
Gary Lakowsky

Aug 2 20 *17* AT *12:30* AM/PM
[Signature]
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Absent: Cheri Meiers

Also Present: Joanie DiMartino, Smith-Harris House Director
Donna Massung, President of the Friends of Smith-Harris
Chuck Massung
Dan Cunningham, Ex officio of the Board of Selectmen
Kathleen Patterson, Collection Chairlady
Robert Patterson
Lisa Marcinkowski June

I. CALL ORDER.

Chairman Seifel called the Smith-Harris House Commission July 26, 2017 Meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. APPROVAL MINUTES.

Mr. Seifel asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the May 24, 2017 Smith-Harris House Commission Meeting Minutes.

MOTION(1): Mr. Lakowsky moved to approve the May 24, 2017 Smith-Harris House Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Mr. MacDonald. Mr. MacDonald abstained from voting. (3-0-1) Motion carried.

III. REPORTS.

A. Public Delegations. Lisa Marcinkowski June who is working on her Dissertation Research Study gave an overview of her dissertation project. (See attached report)

Ms. Prokop informed her the house had two very knowledgeable gentlemen visit the house on Saturday who stated they plan to return for Spirit Voices.

Mr. MacDonald suggested that she also contact the Thomas Lee House who have many adult visitors?

The Commission had a moment of prayer for Barbara Odgers.

B. Ex-officio Report. Mr. Cunningham reported the Pennsylvania Avenue project is moving along nicely. A ground analysis is being done. Once the analysis has been completed the property will have to be remediated. The Town has received a Brownfield Grant for the remediation. Then a park will be made of the property.

The Board of Selectmen voted to extend the gas line to heat the pool which will be a cost savings to the Town.

C. Director's Report. See attached report.

D. Agenda Additions. The Commission was asked if they had any additions to the Agenda.

MOTION (2): Mr. Lakowsky moved to add to this evening's Agenda, under New Business, Museum Development, B. 1. Lisa Marcinkowski June's Proposal and 2. Discussion on How to Honor Barbara Odgers. Seconded by Mr. MacDonald. (4-0) Unanimous.

E. Chairman's Report. Mr. Seifel had nothing new to report.

F. Financial Report.

1. Status Update. Mr. MacDonald reported he was unable to obtain a status report, because he just returned from vacation. He informed the Commission we need to encumber money at Rings End and True Value.

2. Presentation of Bills. Mr. Patterson submitted a bill for doors for shelving units in the bathroom in the amount of \$199.94.

MOTION (3): Ms. Prokop moved to reimburse Robert Patterson \$199.94 for two doors for shelving units in the bathroom. Seconded by Mr. Lakowsky. (4-0) Unanimous.

3. Barn Rental. Ms. Prokop reported she has received some inquiries for rental of the barn, but they feel the price is too high.

4. Budget Planning Committee.

a. Review Budget and Planned Expenses. The budget was approved but may need to be changed if the state funding to the Town is reduced.

G. Collections Committee.

Ms. DiMartino reported we have received several donations. The Collections Committee has been meeting regularly. Some storage boxes have been purchased. Kay Davis has been organizing the modern kitchen and closet areas. Barbara Odgers' children were contacted regarding receiving her papers from her many years on the Smith-Harris House Commission.

Ms. Patterson reported on items the Collections Committee recommends the Commission to consider accepting: A round table with an inlay decorative center, two pewter candle sticks, a glass lamp with crystals. The Collections Committee is looking for items that are focused more on a modest presentation of the house. We received a collection of milk glass, a diamond patterned lamp, an umbrella stand, a cotton coverlet, a pink and blue quilt, a painting of the house, numerous books pertaining to games played at the time span of the house, a watering can, a collection of older white clothing, papers from Betty Morrison, including a box of maps, photos and old documents.

MOTION (4): Mr. Lakowsky moved to accept the above items in our collections and that a note of thanks be sent to the donors. Seconded by Ms. Prokop. (4-0) Unanimous.

H. Correspondence. There was no new correspondence.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance.

1. Garden Fence and Maintenance. Mr. Patterson reported he received an email from the boy scout notifying him he will work on the garden after August 19th.

2. Front Walkway. Mr. Lakowsky reported the front walkway has been completed.

B. Museum Development.

1. STepCT Report. Ms. DiMartino has submitted the grant proposal.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance. Mr. Patterson reported we are having continuing problems with dog droppings. Ms. Prokop suggested a sign. Mr. Patterson asked if we should bring plastic bags to the house? Mr. Lakowsky will contact Parks & Recreation about this matter.

Mr. Lakowsky will discuss potholes in the driveway with the Director of Public Works.

1. Porch Repairs. The Commission is waiting for estimates on repairs to the porch. Mr. Lakowsky suggested that the Friends have a fundraiser. Mr. Patterson suggested contacting Grasso Tech.

B. Museum Development.

1. Discussion of Lisa Marcinkowski June's Dissertation Research Study. (See attached)

MOTION (5): Mr. Lakowsky moved to allow Lisa Marcinkowski June to interview adults visiting the Smith-Harris House. Seconded by Ms. Prokop (4-0) Unanimous.

2. Honoring Barbara Odgers at the House. Mr. Lakowsky felt the Commission should honor Barbara Odgers and her husband Fred Odgers. Ms. Odgers volunteered at the house for many years, and her husband did restoration work at the house. He felt we should offer a Memorial Service at the house. Ms. DiMartino stated Ms. Sasso recommended that the historical kitchen have a display honoring Barbara and Fred Odgers.

MOTION (6): Mr. Lakowsky moved that the Historical Kitchen become a display place honoring Barbara and Fred Odgers. Seconded by Ms. Prokop. (4-0) Unanimous.

C. Upcoming Events.

1. Bike and BBQ 2017. The Bike and BBQ is scheduled for October 1, 2017. Portapotties and a tent will be on the grounds. The Lions will donate the food. A band will provide music. The house will be open for tours.

2. Ms. DiMartino reported on September 10 a Teddy Bear Tea will be held at the house. The cost is \$25 for an adult and child from 4-8 years old. There will be a charge of \$10 for each additional child.

VI ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (7): Mr. Lakowsky moved to adjourn the Smith-Harris House July 26, 2017 Regular Meeting at 8:45 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Prokop. (4-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary

Director's Report
Smith-Harris House, June-July, 2017

STEPS-CT Grant: Strategic Planning

- We had a very successful first meeting with our consultant (Kathy Craughwell-Varda); we met for 2 hours at the House to discuss process, plans, and what the Friends & Commission would like to get from the strategic planning process. Also, we visited and tour the other two East Lyme historic houses so that Kathy could get an understanding of where the Smith-Harris House fits in the interpretive story of East Lyme's history. Special thanks to Town Historian Liz Kuchta of ELHS and Bob Ramsey of the Samuel Smith House for leading house tours.
- We are in the process of setting up the upcoming dates for the joint Board Retreats; Kathy has been on vacation, and so suggested dates will be coming soon.
- The Friends have received the first payment from CTHumanities and are in the process of purchasing supplies for the upcoming retreat & Survey Monkey.
- I will be working with Kathy & the sub-committee to develop packets for the Board retreat.
- Several members of the Friends & Commission, along with myself, attended the "Plan the Work, Work the Plan: Strategic Planning Success for Museum Leaders" at the Hill-Stead Museum in June, in preparation for undergoing our own strategic planning process.
- Maggi Prokop has agreed to access email to assist with the strategic plan process and move the museum forward—thank you, Maggi!

STEPS-CT

- STEPS-CT sub-committee is still meeting; we are still in the process of developing new board manuals, but it's coming along quite well.
- Key Policy—this was confirmed by the Commission last year; we need to put this policy in place. Bob Siefel is working on assigning keys and collecting signatures.
- Attached is a list of Job Descriptions for both the Commission & Friends, as per STEPS. If you are an officer, please review your task list for approval; this will be placed in the Board manual for both organizations.
- It was suggested we create a "board member" recruitment posting, committee chair job descriptions, and food policies next.
- the sub-committee recommends we look into creating a "youth position," to have either a high school or college representative on the Commission and/or Friends Board.
- The Groton Public Library is hosting its annual "Local History Fair" on Saturday, September 30th. It is recommended that the Smith-Harris House attend the Fair with two goals in mind: increasing our board, and surveying the general public/museum audiences on aspects of our strategic plan, as per CTHumanities.

Programs

- We need to people to give tours, especially on Sundays. Mindy returns August 5th.
- Please see attached events list for autumn programs; we have a full plate!
- Kay Davis participated in Celebrate East Lyme! by sharing a table with the East Lyme Historical Society; she said over 50 people visited the table.

- Open-House Museum Day was a successful afternoon; close to 30 people attended throughout the afternoon. Special thanks to Maggi Prokop & Gary Lakowsky for their performances as Elizabeth Henderson & Thomas Avery, respectively.

Collections

- Collections Chair Kathleen Patterson has a list of current donations recommended by the Collections Committee for acceptance; Committee has been meeting regularly, as donations have been offered.
- Gaylord Archival products have arrived; inventory is continuing.
- Kay Davis has been organizing the modern kitchen & closet areas.
- Barbara Odgers' heirs have been contacted regarding receiving her papers from her many years on the Smith-Harris House Commission.
- An email was sent to Nick Fulton at Fulton-Theroux Funeral Services, Ruth Shapleigh-Brown of the CT Gravestone Network, and the Old Stone Church Burial Association, to continue to move forward with the EAH stone repair.

Professional Development

- CLHO Annual Conference, 6/5.
- NEMA Strategic Plan Workshop, 6/6.

Meetings Attended

- June 2nd, budget meeting & joint planning meeting.
- June 7th, STEPS sub-committee meeting.
- June 23rd, STEPS sub-committee meeting.
- July 7th, Collections Committee meeting.
- July 11th, STEPS sub-committee meeting.
- July 11th, Friends of Smith-Harris House meeting.
- July 25th, STEPS sub-committee meeting.
- July 26th, Smith-Harris House Commission meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

- July 28th, meeting with Kathleen Sasso re: research, technology, increased youth participation.
- TBD meeting with Cheri Meier re: tours and orientation
- August 4th, next STEPS-sub-committee meeting, 12 pm at the House.
- August 8th, Friends of Smith-Harris House, 2 pm East Lyme Public Library.
- August 23rd, Smith-Harris House Commission meeting, 7 pm senior center, Day room.
- August, TBD—first Board Retreat with Strategic Planning consultant.

Submitted by:

Joanie DiMartino, Director

July 26, 2017

**Smith-Harris House
Autumn/Holiday Programs**

A Teddy Bear Tea

Sunday, September 10

1 pm to 3 pm

\$25 per adult/child pair, \$10 each additional child

Bring your favorite Teddy Bear to tea! Enjoy afternoon tea with little sandwiches and sweets, make a teddy bear-related craft, and learn how the Teddy Bear has become one of our most treasured toys! For children ages 4 to 8 years, and adults must accompany children; no drop-offs allowed. Space is limited, please be sure to register early. For more information contact director Joanie DiMartino at 860-739-0761 or director@smithharris.org.

East Lyme Bike & BBQ

Sunday, October 1

Day-long, Free to visit Smith-Harris House

Cost for Bike Ride Participation

The Smith-Harris House is the host site for the 2nd Annual East Lyme Bike & BBQ Preservation Bike Ride! Proceeds from the Bike & BBQ help preserve our open spaces and historic places! Details of activities coming soon! For more information, visit the East Lyme Bike & BBQ website at <http://eltownhall.com/news-and-events/annual-events/east-lyme-bike-bbq/>.

Explore History!

Monday, October 9th

11 am to 2 pm, Free

Looking for something fun to do on Columbus Day? Join the Smith-Harris House as we host family-friendly activities that explore history! Try your hand at history-inspired crafts, and test your skill at "squash bowling," "graces," "hoop roll," and other historic games played by children two centuries ago! Take a tour to discover what life in an East Lyme farmhouse was like in the 1800s! For more information contact director Joanie DiMartino at 860-739-0761 or director@smithharris.org.

Spirit Voices: Victorian Mourning & Spiritualism

Smith-Harris House & the Old Stone Church Burial Ground

Saturday, October 21st

Details coming soon—check our website!

Discover Victorian-Era rituals of death and dying at the Smith-Harris House! From 19th-century funeral traditions such as "widow's weeds" and "safety coffins," to the rise of the séance, learn how those who died were remembered and honored by loved ones. View the parlor decorated for

a wake, see an actual 19th-century horse-drawn hearse, and have your tea leaves read, if you dare to peer into the future! Then, take a tour of the Old Burial Ground and encounter former residents of the Smith-Harris House, as they share vignettes of their former lives! Sponsored in part by Fulton-Theroux Funeral Services. For more information, contact director Joanie DiMartino at 860-739-0761 or director@smithharris.org.

Slightly-Creepy Folk Tales @ Trick or Trunk

Wednesday, October 25th

6-8 pm, Free

Come for the treats, stay for the tales--as part of the Town of East Lyme's "Trick or Trunk" Halloween program! The first floor of the Smith-Harris House will be lit by candlelight, while several slightly-creepy--not scary!--local and regional folktales are shared. Perfect for families with young children! The "Trick or Trunk" program, which occurs annually on the grounds of the Smith-Harris House, is a safe Halloween Trick-or-Treat alternative event sponsored by the East Lyme Youth Services Department of Parks & Recreation. For more information contact director Joanie DiMartino at director@smithharris.org.

Walk of Horror

Friday, October 27th &

Saturday, October 28th

6 pm to 9 pm

Sponsored by the East Lyme Police Cadets and Friends, the Walk of Horror will be featured at the Smith-Harris House! Come prepared to be scared—this walk is not for young children or the faint-of-heart! Admission is your choice to benefit local East Lyme community organizations: a non-perishable food item for East Lyme Care & Share; a pet supply donation for WRFD/EL Animal Control; or a cash donation to the Friends of Smith-Harris House. For more information, contact the East Lyme Police Cadets at 860-451-9797.

Friends of Smith-Harris House Wreath & Greens Sale

Saturday, December 2nd

9 am to 12 noon

Deck your halls with an assortment of wreaths, swags, centerpieces, and arrangements in live and permanent greens at our annual wreath & greens sale! All proceeds benefit the Friends of Smith-Harris House, a non-profit, 501c3 organization, for preservation and public programming. For more information call Donna Massung, President of the Friends of Smith-Harris House, at 860-691-1872 or email at dmmsew@sbcglobal.net.

Annual Open-House & Afternoon with the Belsnickel

Sunday, December 9th

11 am to 4 pm (Belsnickel visits at 2 pm)

Admission is a non-perishable food item to benefit East Lyme Care & Share, Inc.

Escape the frenzy of holiday preparations and join the Smith-Harris House for an afternoon of family-friendly festivities! Children of all ages are welcome to make an old-fashioned tree ornament, join musician Judy MacDonald around a cozy fire to sing carols, and meet our kindly Belsnickel! A "Belsnickel," or "St. Nicholas in fur," was a German folk tradition that preceded the modern Santa Claus, and our Belsnickel will share a winter's tale and hand out a treat to each of our young visitors! Afterwards, enjoy a sip of cocoa and gingersnaps. Our adult visitors can enjoy the House decorated for the Holiday Season, sample refreshments based on historic recipes, and interact with members of the 1860s Avery family as they welcome visitors to their home for the holidays! For more information, call (860) 739-0761 or email Joanie DiMartino at director@smithharris.org. Our Belsnickel was featured last year on the PBS program, New England Legends, with Emmy-nominated host Jeff Belanger! To view the segment click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfFXzkUV2ok>.

illuminating the Process of Learning in History Museums Through the Perspective of Adult Visitors

Dissertation Research Study

Lisa Marcinkowski June

Research Objective:

To capture evidence of learning in history museums in the words of adult visitors. This study focuses on the beginning of learning rather than long term learning. I presume that adult visitors are most likely to add to the store of knowledge they already possess (constructivism).

Research Questions:

RQ1. What are adults learning in experiential history museums?

RQ2. What learning processes do adults engage in during visits to experiential history museums?

Research Sites: History museums that offer guided tours

Current list of participating museums

- Avery Copp House Museum, Groton, CT
- Connecticut's Old State House, Hartford, CT
- Lockwood-Mathews Mansion, Norwalk, CT
- Mark Twain House & Museum, Hartford, CT
- Stanley-Whitman House, Farmington, CT

Participants: Adults over 18 with no accompanying children

- Participation is voluntary
- Those who choose to participate will review and sign a consent form (5 minutes)

Research Protocol:

- Pre-tour Survey (5 minutes)
- Observation of Research Participant During Tour (Length of Tour)
- Post-Tour Interview (20-25 minutes)
 - Interview will be recorded (nothing else will be recorded)

Researcher requirements:

- A brief sentence that covers the topic of the tour for the pre-tour survey
- The opportunity to invite museum visitors to participate in my research
- A quiet place in which to conduct the post-tour interview