

Smith-Harris House Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2017

Present: Robert Seifel
Richard MacDonald
Maggi Prokop
Cheri Meier
Gary Lakowsky

Also Present: Joanie DiMartino, Smith-Harris House Director
Donna Massung, President of the Friends of Smith-Harris
Chuck Massung
Robert and Kathleen Patterson
Robert and Molly Rossi
Pierre Bumgarner

FILED

NOV 20 2017 AT 11:15 AM/PM
Kathleen Rossi, ATC
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

I. CALL ORDER.

Chairman Seifel called the Smith-Harris House Commission November 15, 2017 Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL MINUTES.

Mr. Seifel asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the October 18, 2017 Smith-Harris House Commission Meeting Minutes.

The following corrections were noted: "Meiers" should be corrected to "Meier" throughout. On page 2 the fifth motion the word "renter" should be changed to "reader".

MOTION (1): Mr. MacDonald moved to approve the October 18, 2017 Smith-Harris House Minutes, as amended. Seconded by Ms. Meier. Mr. Lakowsky abstained from voting. (4-0-1) Unanimous

III. REPORTS.

A. Public Delegations. Ms. Rossi reported she, her husband and Mr. Bumgarner were in the Walk of Horror and had a great time. Over 1200 were in attendance. The three to five year old children were dressed in costume. They would like to return next year and do it in conjunction with Trick or Trunk. Ms. Prokop suggested that they speak to Parks and Recreation about joining with Trick or Trunk. Mr. Lakowsky felt they did a good job.

Ms. Massung reported she has signed a contract with Heidi's Vermont Trees and is waiting for their insurance certificate.

She stated the house will be decorated on Wednesday November 29 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lunch will be provided. The Wreath Sale will be held on December 2 from 9 a.m. to noon. The Open House will be held on December 9. Mr. Lakowsky agreed to be at the house during the Open House.

Robert Patterson reported the Landscape Committee met and listed objectives for the coming year. The house will be assessed.

Mr. Patterson signed permission for the Eagle Scout to work in the garden.

The Commission has been informed that a P. O. is necessary prior to purchasing items. Messrs. Seifel and Massung agreed to speak with Brooke Stevens about this new procedure.

B. Ex-officio Report. Mr. Cunningham was unable to be present, because he was attending a Board of Selectmen Meeting tonight.

C. Director's Report. See attached report.

D. Agenda Additions. There were no additions to the Agenda.

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

F. Financial Report.

1. Status Update. Mr. MacDonald reported we have a balance of \$10,998.23 and \$12,516,41 including encumbrances.

2. Presentation of Bills. Ms. DiMartino requested reimbursement and submitted a bill in the amount \$15 for supplies for Spirit Voices.

MOTION (2): Mr. Lakowsky moved to approve reimbursement to Ms. DiMartino in the amount of \$15 for supplies for Spirit Voices. Seconded by Mr. MacDonald. (5-0) Unanimous.

3. Barn Rental. Ms. Prokop reported the barn has been rented for a wedding to be held on September 15, 2018.

Another couple would like to use the barn for their wedding. Once their plans are finalized they will give her the date.

4. Budget Planning Committee.

a. Review Budget and Planned Expenses. The Budget Planning Committee is waiting for information. Mr. Lakowsky reported we have many needs for the house. A building assessment will be done.

Ms. DiMartino reported she received a call from the Fire Marshal who would like to inspect the house on November 27 at 10 a.m.

G. Collections Committee. Ms. Patterson reported we have received several items which will be discussed at the next Commission meeting.

Ms. DiMartino reported we are considering applying for a CAP Grant for the proper way to store items. They are experts and will give recommendations on how to properly store them.

H. Correspondence. No new correspondence was received.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance.

1. Garden Fence and Maintenance. Messrs Seifel and Patterson met to discuss landscaping. Some items that need attention are the wall of the corn crib; a dead ash tree; a decision on the lilac bushes; a tree near the barn needs to be removed; the lane needs to be cleaned up; the wall on the school side needs to be rebuilt; the goose run behind the Senior Center and Library needs to be cleaned out; a hole in front of the back porch is sinking in and needs to be taken care of; we need to determine whether or not there is a need for insulation in the cellar; three pieces of slate need to be replaced; the back porch needs a temporary fix prior to events, and there is a need for doors in the downstairs bathroom. Ms. Patterson felt there is an odor that needs to be looked into. Once the assessment is done the Commission will obtain pricing on needed work.

B. Museum Development.

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

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance.

1. Porch Repairs. There was no further discussion on the porch repairs.

B. Museum Development.

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

C. Upcoming Events.

The Wreath Sale will be held on December 2 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Ms. DiMartino will send a list of historical recipes to Commission members to be used for the Open House on December 9.

VI ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (3): Mr. Lakowsky moved to adjourn the Smith-Harris House November 15, 2017 Regular Meeting at 8:00 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Prokop. (5-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary

Director's Report—November, 2017

Smith-Harris House Commission & Friends of Smith-Harris House, Inc.

Strategic Plan

- Thank you everyone on the Commission & Friends Board of Directors for your time, perspective, and dedication during this amazing process! I hope you found the retreats as inspiring and exciting as I did—we have begun a great new journey for the museum, and we are become a rising tide, for our own site and through what we can offer the heritage and preservation community of East Lyme, as well! I'm looking forward to reading the final document!
- Thank you also to the members of the Samuel Smith House, the East Lyme Historical Society, Town Historian Liz Kuchta, members of the Historic Properties Commission, and First Selectman, Mark Nickerson, for taking time out of their busy schedules to meet with us throughout this process and share their ideas, suggestions, perspectives, and concerns—our collaborative work and sharing of resources and networking will be stronger for it, and I look forward to developing innovative ways we can work together to improve visitor experiences as we continue this necessary and important work!

Website/Technology

- No current updates; Kathleen is working on our social media imprint through Facebook.
- Website work will begin shortly, and will be a primary focus over the winter months.

Programs

- The “Novel History” collaborative program with the East Lyme Public Library is all set; please check your program planning meeting notes for dates. The theme for 2018 is “WWI in Literature.” Books have been selected, and we are in the process of seeking guest speakers, and, with the CTHumanities funding restored, may consider applying for a QuickGrant.
- Preparations for the Holiday programs (wreath sale & open-house) events will be similar to last year; the “Belsnickel” will appear during the Holiday Open-House this year.
- Jeff Belanger has contacted me about another “Belsnickel” feature on PBS, this time for a program entitled, “Creepy Christmas,” that they are producing.
- “Spirit Voices” 2017 was another great success! We had 83 people in attendance, raised funds for the Friends of Smith-Harris House, and donated two large tubs full of food to the East Lyme Care & Share, Inc. Potential tweaking of the program for next time is included in the program planning meeting notes. Special thanks to the Florence Griswold Museum for the loan of the 19th-century hearse and Advance Power Equipment for donating their service.
- Further programming details are in the planning notes submitted to Commission & Friends Board previously; 2018 is still a transitional year, as we embrace the changes from the Strategic Plan and continue with STEPS work.

CLHO Fundraiser Auction Update

- The CLHO (Connecticut League of History Organizations), auction is going strong! We have a first bid, so there will be a barn rental from this donation.
- Please peruse the CLHO on-line auction; they have many services and unique experiences that can be bid on for personal or professional development use.

STEPS Sub-Committee

- We are developing a series of committee descriptions, including oversight and commitment. The plan is for new Commission & Friends Board and volunteers to be able to easily discover ways to participate, and also for a greater understanding of the key responsibilities of each committee. A flow chart have been suggested to demonstrate how the committees can work together and support each other to ease management of the museum.
- We hope to have our new board manuals for Commission & Friends Board completed by the end of January.
- New policies will be coming soon, too: site usage contracts, food policy, Trustee job descriptions, etc.

Collections

- The Collections Committee has several items for recommendation.
- At present the Committee has placed a moratorium on collections (with the exception of any artifact or document directly related to the Avery, Smith, or Harris families) until we accomplish more with the inventory/preservation, and also until we have a clearer scope of what we want to collect in relation to the new upcoming strategic plan.
- We are looking at applying for at CAP (collections assessment program) grant to assist us with re-envisioning storage for our collection.

Landscape

- We will be writing a letter to the 1772 Foundation to request permission to apply for a grant to have the porch repaired.

Professional Development

- 11/9/17—Finance Report workshop through the Non-Profit Resource Center, New London.

Upcoming Meetings

- 11/28—STEPS sub-committee meeting, 2:30 pm, EL HS library.
- 12/12—Friends of Smith-Harris House, 2 pm. ELPL History Room.
- Other meetings TBD.

Meetings Attended

- 11/3—Joint program-planning meeting.
- 11/6—Landscape Committee meeting.
- 11/10—phone meeting with consultant for retreat prep.
- 11/11—BOARD RETREAT for Strategic Planning.
- 11/13—STEPS sub-committee meeting.
- 11/14—Friends of Smith-Harris House.
- 11/15—Smith-Harris House Commission meeting.

Submitted by:

Joanie DiMartino, Director

November 15, 2017