

Smith-Harris House Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2017

Present: Robert Seifel
Richard MacDonald
Maggi Prokop
Cheri Meiers

Absent: Gary Lakowsky

Also Present: Joanie DiMartino, Smith-Harris House Director
Donna Massung, President of the Friends of Smith-Harris

FILED
OCT 30 2017 AT 8:35 AM/PM
KUNN YALOW, CLERK
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

I. CALL ORDER.

Chairman Seifel called the Smith-Harris House Commission October 18, 2017 Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL MINUTES.

Mr. Seifel asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the September 27, 2017 Smith-Harris House Commission Meeting Minutes.

MOTION (1): Mr. MacDonald moved to approve the September 27, 2017 Smith-Harris House Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Meiers. (4-0) Unanimous

III. REPORTS.

A. Public Delegations. Ms. Massung asked that unsold tickets for the November 10 Wine Tasting be returned on Saturday.

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. Mr. Seifel asked for the following revisions to this evening's Agenda: item 4 b. Approval of Christmas Tree Property, item 4. c. Budget Cuts and item V. B. 1. SStepCT Report.

MOTION (2): Ms. Prokop moved to approve the revised agenda . Seconded by Ms. Meiers. (4-0) Unanimous.

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

F. Financial Report.

1. Status Update. Mr. MacDonald reported we have used 30% of our budget. Our balance is \$13,398.15, which includes some remaining encumbrances. There is \$11,499.38 encumbered as of today.

2. Presentation of Bills. Ms. DiMartino requested reimbursement and submitted a bill in the amount of \$6.38 for supplies for the History Fair and a bill for Slightly Creepy Tales in the amount of \$5.32. She also requested reimbursement to Kathleen Sasso in the amount of \$99 for a new website for the Smith-Harris House.

MOTION (3): Mr. MacDonald moved to approve reimbursement to Ms. DiMartino for supplies for the History Fair and Slightly Creepy Tales in the amount of \$11.70. Seconded by Ms. Prokop. (4-0) Unanimous.

MOTION (4): Mr. MacDonald moved to approve reimbursement to Kathleen Sasso for the website for the Smith-Harris House in the amount of \$99. Seconded by Ms. Prokop. (4-0) Unanimous.

3. Barn Rental. Ms. Prokop reported she will show the barn to an individual considering renting it for a wedding in September 2018.

It was felt that the Commission should revisit its present rental charges.

4. Budget Planning Committee.

a. Review Budget and Planned Expenses. The cost for Spirit Voices is \$50 and will be taken out of Museum Programs. Personnel Services will remain at the its regular rate. The Tea Leaf renter will cost \$50.

MOTION (5): Ms. Prokop moved to cover the cost of the Tea Leaf renter in the amount of \$50. Seconded by Ms. Meirs. (4-0) Unanimous.

b. Approval of Christmas Tree Property.

MOTION (6): Mr. MacDonald moved to allow Heidi's Vermont Trees to use the Smith-Harris Property for its Christmas Tree Sale. Seconded by Ms. Meirs. (4-0) Unanimous.

c. Budget Cuts.

MOTION (7): Ms. Prokop moved to approve the following budget cuts to the Smith-Harris House Budget: \$200 to Building Maintenance, \$500 to Museum Programs, \$100 to Preservation, Collections Care and \$10 to Miscellaneous Supplies for a total cut in the amount of \$810. Seconded by Mr. MacDonald. (4-0) Unanimous.

G. Collections Committee.

b. Permanent Loan Policy to Other Historical Houses. Ms. DiMartino reported we agreed it is in the best interest of the museums to loan items to other historical houses but that each house keep its own collection.

H. Correspondence. There was no new correspondence.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance.

1. Garden Fence and Maintenance. The garden fence and maintenance is expected to be taken care of in the spring.

B. Museum Development.

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

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance.

1. Porch Repairs. The porch will be taken care of when funds are available.

B. Museum Development.

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

C. Upcoming Events.

Ms. Massung invited Commission members to help with decorations for Spirits Voices tomorrow at 2 p.m.

VI ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (8): Mr. MacDonald moved to adjourn the Smith-Harris

**House October 18, 2017 Regular Meeting at 7:50 p.m.
Seconded by Ms. Prokop. (4-0) Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary

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

Strategic Plan

- Our final session with Kathy Craughwell-Varda, consultant, is upon us!
 - Saturday, November 11, 10 am to 2 pm
 - We will invite Town Officials/Board of Selectmen and the First Selectman to join us for the first hour of our discussion.

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

- We are also putting a moratorium on collections/donations, so that we can determine what our scope is, and create a policy for what we want to collect.

Legend Trips

- The calendar is out! Jeff is giving a talk in Wallingford, CT tomorrow, 10/19. If someone could pick up the calendars then, we will save shipping money and have them to sell by Saturday for our program.
- We are planning on a 2018 date for another ghost hunt.

Website/Technology

- We have shut-down our old website, and Kathleen Sasso and I have started the process for a new one. This will be my main focus over the next few weeks after Spirit Voices had ended.

House Tours/Research

- Lisa Marcinkowski-June, a Ph.D. candidate at UConn, was thrilled with the response she received at the Bike & BBQ event regarding interviews on our tours.
- All went well for Wil Reed's class tour; special thanks to Maggi Prokop for joining me at 7:30 am to share our House with his students.

Programs

- We participated in the Groton Public Library Local History Fair on Saturday, September 30th, from noon to 5 pm. It was a lovely afternoon, and we received responses to our survey and may have a few new volunteers as well. We had flyers, program/membership handouts, a short survey, and photos.
- Explore History! was a lot of fun, even though the weather refused to cooperate; we quickly switched to activities that could occur indoors due to the rain. Audience was small, but we received press coverage from *The Day* that afternoon. We once again had more adults in attendance than families/children, so we may want to revisit our approach to this program for next year.
- Spirit Voices information has gone out to all Trustees. We are decorating tomorrow, 3 pm, please join us if you are available, so that we can get it done quickly.
- I've spoken with Verline Eldridge (Medium), and she and another Medium, Lynne Gaffin, are looking forward to participating once again in Spirit Voices. The cost will be \$10 for a 10-minute reading. We will be able to accommodate 36 people for readings, total. Calls are already coming in for reservations! I have created a reservation sheet, Also, Pine Grove has publicized Spirit Voices through their channels.

- For Slightly-Creepy tales we have Gary Lakowsky, Valerie Kibler, and Michael Hart. Dante DiMartino-Hart will once again distribute pencils. Tales to be distributed very soon; let me know if any storytellers have a preferred story to share.
- I confirmed with the volunteer from Care & Share to feature a winter coat drive at the Slightly-Creepy Tales / Trick or Trunk program. C&S will be providing the bin, and I suggested the location of in front of the porch, where it is out of walking paths, but still visible in the light.
- Plans are moving forward with the “Novel History” collaborative program with the library.
- Wine Tasting flyer has been revised; publicity has gone out as usual, and includes an ad in the Post Road Review. Donna will report further on details of this fundraiser.
- We will plan for the Holiday programs (wreath sale & open-house) next week; events will be similar to last year.
- I will be scheduling a joint meeting to plan our 2018 program schedule; bring your ideas, keeping in mind all we’ve learned from STEPS and our consultant.

Speaking of Fundraisers...

- The CLHO (Connecticut League of History Organizations), is thrilled to have the Barn rental as an auction item. It is listed. Please peruse their site; anyone can bid on items and experiences, and there are some great offers.
- Verline Eldridge, the Medium from Pine Grove, has requested we consider a séance in the parlor during the winter as a fundraiser—I’d like to discuss this at our 2018 program planning.

STEPS

- We have decided a program committee and a barn rental committee are necessary for our organization to function well; we are developing policies and creating chair descriptions.
- Conflict of Interest policy will need to be signed again in January by all staff & Trustees (this is a policy that has to be signed every year).

Collections

- Currently waiting for our Collections Chair to return from vacation to offer recommendations.

Upcoming Meetings

- 11/11—Final Strategic Planning Board Retreat, 10 am to 2 pm, Chendalli Room, ELPL.
- 11/13—STEPS sub-committee meeting, 2:30 pm, EL HS library.
- 11/14—Friends of Smith-Harris House, 2 pm. ELPL History Room.
- 10/15—Smith-Harris House Commission meeting, 7 pm, Senior Center Day Room.
- Other meetings TBD.

Meetings Attended

- 10/10—Friends of Smith-Harris House.
- 10/14—BOARD RETREAT for Strategic Planning.
- 10/16—technology meeting with Kathleen Sasso.
- 10/17—orientation meeting with Cheri Meier.
- 10/18—Smith-Harris House Commission meeting.

Submitted by:

Joanie DiMartino, Director

October 18, 2017