

**TOWN OF EAST LYME  
SMITH-HARRIS HOUSE COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, SEPTEMBER 27th, 2017**

**Present:** Bob Seifel, Chairman, Gary Lakowsky, Richard MacDonald, Cheri Meiers,  
Maggi Prokop,

**Also Present:** Joanie DiMartino, Smith Harris House Director  
Donna Massung, Friends of Smith Harris President  
Kay Davis, Friends of Smith Harris

**Absent:** Kathleen Sasso

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Seifel called the September 27, 2017 meeting of the Smith-Harris House Commission to order at 7:03 PM.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Seifel called for any additions, deletions or changes to the August 23, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Lakowsky asked that on Page 3 under the Bike and BBQ 2017 event that the sentence with the Lions donation be changed to read: *'The Lions agreed to donate up to \$1500.'*

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

**Mr. Lakowsky moved to approve the August 23, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Commission as amended.**

**Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 5 - 0 - 0. Motion passed.**

**3. Reports**

↓ **Public Delegations**

Donna Massung said that Bob Patterson had provided her with the following information for them: He has contacted the eagle scout about a project; the cherry trees are okay for now; the Town did some weed whacking; they are awaiting the sign regarding the issue with dogs on the property and the ash tree near the path is in bad shape and he suggested that they do no park near it or under it.

Ms. Massung distributed flyers for the upcoming Wine Tasting and Spirit Voices events to be posted throughout the Town by the members. She noted that she had tickets for the Wine Tasting if anyone would like to purchase them.

↓ **Ex-Officio Report**

There was no report.

↓ **Director's Report**

Ms. DiMartino went over her report. See attached.

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

**Mr. Lakowsky moved to accept the Director's Report.**

FILED

OCT 3 2017 AT 10:15 AM/PM  
Kathleen Sasso  
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

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

✚ **Agenda Additions**

Mr. Seifel asked if there were any agenda additions.

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

**Mr. Lakowsky moved to add under Museum Development – CHLO Barn Rental Auction Approval and under Upcoming Events – Coat Collection Approval at Creepy Tales Event.  
Mr. Seifel seconded the motion.  
Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

✚ **Chairman's Report**

Mr. Seifel said that he had done a Schedule of Meetings for 2018 and reviewed them with the Commission. All would commence at 7 PM and be held in the Day Room at the Senior Center.

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

**Mr. Lakowsky moved to approve the Meeting Schedule for 2018 for the Smith Harris House Commission and to have it filed with the Town Clerk.  
Ms. Prokop seconded the motion.  
Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

Mr. Seifel asked the Recording Secretary to type the Schedule and to file it so that he could secure the Day Room for next year with the Senior Center staff. (Copy of filed schedule attached)

Mr. Seifel also noted that he would be meeting with the First Selectman tomorrow regarding the situation with the State not having a budget and what it would mean to all the departments within the Town. It was noted that the First Selectman had said that he was looking for a 5% budget reduction to try to get through this until they knew what the State would finally do as they are now missing their first quarter dollars from the State.

✚ **Financial Report**

▪ **Status Update**

Mr. MacDonald reported that the budget balance is \$13,780.45 and that they are right on track – they have spent one quarter of their budget.

▪ **Presentation of Bills**

Ms. DiMartino said that she had a small bill that she would present at the next meeting.

▪ **Barn Rental**

Ms. Prokop said that she did not have any rentals at this time although she did have a few inquiries. One was for a birthday party however they felt that the \$200 rental fee was rather high.

Mr. Lakowsky suggested that they re-visit their rental fee as they really have not had rentals this year.

Ms. Prokop reported that they should have a jazz band and steel band for Christmas.

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

**Mr. Lakowsky moved that they add to the October Agenda - Christmas Tree Rental.  
Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.  
Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

- **Budget Planning Committee**

- ↓ **Review Budget and Planned Expenses**

Mr. Seifel said that he would let them know at their next meeting how his meeting went.

- ↓ **Collections Committee**

Ms. DiMartino said that they have received an item however they have not had the chance to review it yet.

- ↓ **Correspondence**

Mr. Lakowsky noted that he had received a letter from Mr. Littlefield regarding a piece of ash (cut from a tree that was removed on site) in the barn. The original intent was to 'read' the rings and set it to history to see what type of year it may have been at that time. It is a fascinating study. His thought was to let Mr. Littlefield use one of the pieces of ash at the Lee House for the reading at this one day event and then to return it.

#### **4. OLD Business**

- ↓ **Property Maintenance**

- **Garden Fence and Maintenance** – Mr. Lakowsky said that he was looking to weed whack along the fence soon.

- ↓ **Museum Development**

- **STepCT Report** – Ms. DiMartino had reported on this previously.
- **CHLO Barn Rental Auction Approval**

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

**Mr. Lakowsky moved to approve the CHLO barn rental auction for \$200.**

**Ms. Prokop seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

#### **5. NEW Business**

- ↓ **Property Maintenance**

- **Porch Repairs** – Mr. Lakowsky agreed to get an estimate for the porch.

- ↓ **Upcoming events:**

- **Bike & BBQ 2017** – Mr. Lakowsky reported that everything is all set for this event and that they have had some very good advertising. The House will be open from 11 AM to 3 PM. They are looking to have a very good day. He noted that they have their Trick a Trunk and Folk Tales events coming up.

- **Approval for Coat Collection at Creepy Tales Event**

It had been previously noted that Care & Share would like to collect winter coats at this event. If they do not provide a box for the collection, one will be put out.

#### **\*\*MOTION (7)**

**Mr. Lakowsky moved to accept winter coat collections for Care & Share at the October Creepy tales event.**

**Ms. Prokop seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

Ms. Prokop noted that they would be making baskets to be raffled off at the wine tasting event. They have different themes that they are working on.

**6. Adjournment**

Mr. Seifel called for a motion to adjourn.

**\*\*MOTION (8)**

Mr. Lakowsky moved to adjourn the September 27, 2017 meeting of the Smith Harris House Commission at 8:15 PM.

Ms. Prokop seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,  
Recording Secretary, Pro-Tem

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

**Strategic Plan**

- Please note date/time of our third Board Retreat:
  - Saturday, October 14, 11:30 am to 3:30 pm (11:30 to 12:30 with Town Officials)
  - Saturday, November 11, 10 am to 2 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.]
- Also, our consultant has now asked that we place a moratorium on any changes/additions to the property/landscape, as our new interpretation and scope have not yet been established.
- We created our first survey through Survey Monkey, and the results are beginning to come in; very informative, and I will share at the next meeting.

**Odgers Memorial**

- The Odgers Memorial was a lovely way to remember Barbara; the family was presented with a framed certificate stating our intention to name a portion of the site after Fred & Barbara Odgers, to be determined at a later date due to the Strategic Plan process.

**Legend Trips**

- The calendar is out! Jeff is interested in meeting us sometime in the near future to pick up our copies and show us around the Lizzy Borden House. What days/times work for people?
- Frank Grace has sent me the rest of the photographs.
- We are planning on a 2018 date for another ghost hunt.

**Website/Technology**

- The decision was made last month to shut down current website and revamp new one through WordPress. Through mutual agreement, Stacey Ventura will no longer oversee our website, and will shut our site down from her server this month, as our yearly renewal will be up.
- I have not yet heard back from Stacey regarding domain names or how shutting the current website down will affect the [director@smithharris.org](mailto:director@smithharris.org) email address.

**House Tours/Research**

- Lisa Marcinkowski-June, a Ph.D. candidate at UConn, has requested we schedule a few guided tours during the Bike & BBQ so that she can finalize her research at our site. She has confirmed that she will be on-site Sunday 10/1 to complete her research.
- Wil Reed's class is visiting tomorrow, 7:30 am for a House tour.

**Programs**

- The Teddy Bear Tea was cancelled, due to minimal interest; one of the parents who signed up has offered to help with publicity to reach family markets should we want to hold this program in 2018.

Attachment - submitted SH 9/27/17  
3P80.

- We will be participating in the Groton Public Library Local History Fair on Saturday, September 30th, from noon to 5 pm. Assistance needed to staff table, and plan what we will bring or have on display. Kathleen Sasso, Gary Lakowsky, Joanie DiMartino, & Maggi Prokop will split the afternoon into two shifts. We will have flyers, program/membership handouts, a short survey, and photos.
- Publicity for our October programs have gone out. I've created a flyer for Spirit Voices.
- Explore History! is on-target; we have having a hat-making craft, games on the lawn, squash bowling, a corn-cobber demonstration, an apple press on display, and tours of the House. Let me know if you're interested and available in helping out; 11 am to 2 pm, 10/9.
- Communication has been on-going and fruitful with Anna Johnson in the Town Finance Department regarding borrowing the 19th-century hearse for Spirit Voices; we're on-target and moving forward with the Florence Griswold Museum.
- I've spoken with Verline Eldridge (Medium), and she and another Medium (Lynn ?) are looking forward to participating once again in Spirit Voices. She prefers we use her talents as a fundraiser. The cost will be \$10 for a 10-minute reading. If we offer 10 minutes, than that allows for 18 people in the same amount of time. I will create a reservation sheet, and we will need someone (I believe Donna volunteered) to oversee time management. Also, Pine Grove has offered to publicize Spirit Voices through their channels.
- Trying to get in touch with Nick Fulton regarding completing tomb stone repairs, and listing him again as a sponsor for SV.
- Happily, Mindy's work training was cancelled, so she returns for Spirit Voices as Lula Smith!
- We will be baking Lula Smith's graham bread, and a molasses "funeral cookie" recipe from 1904, along with apple cider.
- Details are moving forward for the Explore History! program; Burt Hobby loaned us a a corn cobber machine and corn for a demonstration, an apple cider press for display, along with our other offerings.
- For Slightly-Creepy tales we have Gary Lakowsky, Valerie Kibler, and Michael Hart. Dante DiMartino-Hart will once again distribute pencils. Please purchase some at the Dollar Store; \$1 for a pack of 12. We have a sign to have out by the porch.
- We were contacted by a volunteer from Care & Share to feature a winter coat drive at the Slightly-Creepy Tales / Trick or Trunk program. I think it's fine for us to participate as the drop-off location that evening.
- I have met with Tara Borden regarding reviving the "Novel History" program. We will feature literature about WWI, in commemoration of the end of the war. February (with snow date), March, April, and May. We have selected four novels, and will add WWI poetry to introduce each session. Discussions will take place at the library and the final one in the Barn.
- Wine Tasting flyer has been created; publicity will go out as usual, and will include an ad in the Post Road Review.

#### **Speaking of Fundraisers...**

- The CLHO (Connecticut League of History Organizations), co-host of STEPS, is requesting items, talks, experiences, opportunities, etc for their on-line auction. I would like to suggest that we offer a Barn Rental for their fundraiser.

- Verline Eldridge, the Medium from Pine Grove, has requested we consider a séance in the parlor during the winter as a fundraiser.

### **STEPS**

- The STEPS sub-committee has taken some time off, and will begin meeting again next month to continue with policies.
- A new aspect of STEPS is that previous site graduates can take a la carte Units, so to increase work on that Unit. I will propose we re-do landscape, since that is the one we do not have certification for yet.

### **Collections**

- Several donors have signed Deed of Gifts; working on establishing times for others to stop by the House.
- We are still in the long-term process of locating donors for items with no provenance in the collection.
- The Town insurance connections are reviewing our forms.
- We were approached with the idea of having items donated to the Historic Properties Commission, and stored at the Smith-Harris House. After speaking to the Friends, members of the Commission, and our Strategic Plan consultant (who is also a STEPS peer mentor), we are all in agreement that this is not in the best interests of our site to store artifacts we do not legally own. I've sent an email to Barbara Johnson Low, Chair of the Historic Properties Commission, explaining that we would not be able to accommodate this request, and why we have concerns. I did also make it clear that we would be happy to accept donations and share with the other historic sites in town, following best museum practices for collections.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

- 10/10—Friends of Smith-Harris House, 2 pm. ELPL History Room.
- 10/14—Strategic Plan Board Retreat, 11:30 am to 3:30 pm.
- 10/18—Smith-Harris House Commission meeting, 7 pm, Senior Center Day Room.
- Other meetings TBD.

### **Meetings Attended**

- 9/12—Friends of Smith-Harris House.
- 9/19—phone meeting with Kathy Craughwell-Varda, consultant.
- 9/20—SECT Cultural Coalition Historic Sites/Historical Societies Roundtable.
- 9/21—"Novel History" meeting with Tara Borden, ELPL.
- 9/21—"Spirit Voices" & fundraiser meeting with Donna Massung.
- 9/24—BOARD RETREAT for Strategic Planning.
- 9/27—Smith-Harris House Commission meeting.

Submitted by:

Joanie DiMartino, Director

September 27, 2017

**Town of East Lyme  
Smith Harris House Commission  
Meeting Schedule  
2018**

Meetings will be held at the East Lyme Senior Center  
Day Room  
On the following listed Wednesdays at **7:00 PM**  
(4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the Month – unless otherwise noted)

**January 24, 2018**

**February 28, 2018**

**March 28, 2018**

**April 25, 2018**

**May 23, 2018**

**June 27, 2018**

**July 25, 2018**

**August 22, 2018**

**September 26, 2018**

**October 17, 2018**  
(Note: Third Wednesday)

**November 28, 2018**

FILED

Oct 2 2017 AT 10:00 AM/PM  
Kim Yulkin, AT  
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

*Approved at the Smith Harris House Commission Meeting of September 27, 2017*

*Attachment SH 2018 Mtg. Schedule*