

Smith-Harris House Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2018

Present: Robert Seifel, Chairman
Richard MacDonald
Maggi Prokop
Robert Patterson
Gary Lakowsky

Absent: Cheri Meier

Also Present: Daniel Cunningham, Ex officio, Board of Selectmen
Donna Massung, Friends of the Smith-Harris President
Joanie DiMartino, Smith-Harris House Director
Kathleen Sasso

FILED
June 29 20 18 AT 11:50 AM/PM
Karen Gulm
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Seifel called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Seifel asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the May 23, 2018 Minutes.

The following correction was noted: The second paragraph under item C. 1 to be revised as follows: "Mr. Massung informed the Commission there will be a radio interview on June 6 discussing donating bikes for kids."

MOTION (1): Mr. Lakowsky moved to accept the May 23, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes, as amended. Seconded by Ms. Prokop. Mr. Lakowsky abstained from voting. (4-0-1) Motion carried.

III. REPORTS

A. Public Delegations.

There was no discussion.

B. Ex officio Report.

Mr. Cunningham reported the Selectmen have approved the name change for the house.

He stated some volunteer firefighters are able to receive a tax abatement. Mr. Patterson asked if a veteran and volunteer firefighter can receive each tax abatement. Mr. Cunningham stated he did not know.

C. Directors Report. See attached report.

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

E. Chairman's Report. Mr. Seifel reported he met with Finance Director Anna Johnson and she agreed to send the Facilities Rental Agreement to the insurance carrier.

F. Financial Report.

1. Status Update. Mr. MacDonald reported as of June 25 we have \$1,798.45 remaining in the Smith-Harris House budget. We have spent 83% of our budget.

Mr. Patterson asked are there any funds remaining for internet service to the house.

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

3. Barn Rental. Ms. Prokop will contact Kevin Seery regarding a date for a fundraiser.

4. Budget Planning Committee

a. Review Budget and Planned Expenses. Mr. Lakowsky expressed concern over a minus \$200 in the utilities budget and a zero balance for telephone charges. To date the June telephone bill has not been paid. He suggested increasing the telephone and electricity amounts in next year's budget. He suggested developing a plan for the budget at the September Meeting of the Budget Review Committee.

G. Collections Committee. Ms. Patterson stated if anyone is approached about donating items to the house, refer them to her.

H. Correspondence. No new correspondence was received.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance. Mr. Patterson reported he and Ron Bence walked the property. Trees marked with a ribbon need to be removed. An individual has been contacted to look at the chimney.

1. Garden Fence and Maintenance. Mr. Patterson will meet with the Eagle Scout tomorrow.

2. Front Walkway. Mr. Lakowsky felt it was necessary to determine what is needed for the new porch before the front walkway can be done. While work on the porch is being done, it may be necessary to only use the front entrance to the house.

B. Museum Development.

1. The Strategic Planning Committee. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet on June 10 at 2 p.m. to discuss bidding for our branding fee.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Property Maintenance.

1. Porch Repairs. Mr. Lakowsky gave Ron Bence the original contract. Mr. Bence will obtain a quote from the company the Town uses.

2. Strategic Fiscal Planning. Ms. DiMartino felt the Commission needed to have had a strategic plan to apply for the 1772 Foundation grant, (which we accomplished). The State Historic Preservation Office grant can serve as a match. We also need a maintenance plan to apply for the 1772 Foundation grant. Bob Patterson, Landscape Committee Chair, agreed to begin work on it in the near future.

3. Technology-Internet. There was no further discussion on this matter.

B. Upcoming Events.

1. Bike & BBQ 2018. Mr. Lakowsky spoke to Mark Christensen and was informed the date has been set. The barn will be used for the bike giveaways. They are inviting 25 families and will present 25 youngsters with bikes. Mr. MacDonald felt it was important to have some of our members present.

2. Walk of Horror. Ms. Prokop had nothing new to report on the Walk of Horror.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (2): Ms. Prokop moved to adjourn the June 27, 2018 Smith-Harris House Commission Meeting at 7:40 p.m. (5-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary

Director's Report—June, 2018

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

Strategic Plan

- Name change and new tag line have been voted on by Board of Selectmen. Much of the past month has been work related to this goal: connecting with CTHumanities, our consultant, responding to the press, etc.
- I'm writing the final report for our CTHumanities grant by the end of this week.
- PR work to be scheduled ASAP.
- Our museum will have another representative on the Historic Properties Commission.
- I will be working with the Friends Board of Directors over the next month on the grant to fund rebranding efforts,

Programs

- "Novel History" ended on May 21st with the book *A Star for Mrs. Blake*, by April Smith, and who successfully Skyped in and conversed for a half-hour with 15 attendees.
- Open-House Museum Day on Saturday, June 9th was a success; we had about 30 people visit the House and grounds. Each person/family received a cookbook donated by the Friends.
- The Spooky Southcoast ghost-hunting fundraiser was a success; we had about 15 investigative hunters and six Trustees/staff/volunteers. It was a fun evening, and attendees were very interested in the history of the house, and respectful of our boundaries and the space.
- We have two docents for Fridays and Saturdays this summer. We need to find coverage for Sundays. Docent training took place at the end of May, along with straightening/cleaning the House for the summer.
- We are co-sponsoring, along with the library and the senior center, a reading of the *Declaration of Independence* and Other Voices at the Senior Center on Tuesday, July 3rd at 3:30 pm in the Senior Center. Please arrive at 3 pm if you want to read.

Professional Development

- CT League of History Organizations (CLHO) panel session was a success; I presented, along with 3 other panelists, to a packed room of museum professionals interested in the ongoing debate on "Dark Stewardship: When Ghosts Become Part of the Collection." The conference was attended by 3 members of the Friends Board of Directors.

Other

- Continued work on policies, Barbara Odgers papers, StEPS work as necessary.
- Collections Chair Kathleen Patterson has curated a temporary conceptual exhibit on laundry from the mid-1800s through the mid-1900s. It will be on display for our visitors throughout the summer, and will be on display at the East Lyme Public Library in December.
- Assisting with purchasing necessary office and collections supplies for continued inventory.
- Due to my taking more hours at another museum, I will need to consolidate my hours to Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8 am to 4:30 pm (half-hour for lunch). I will also switch to a work email address: directorsmithharris@gmail.com until further notice.

Meetings Attended

- CLHO annual meeting, 6/4
- meeting with Historic Properties Commission, 6/11
- phone meetings as necessary over the past month: consultant, Commission members, Friends Board of Directors, CTHumanities, panelists for CLHO conference, etc.
- PR meeting, 6/27
- Smith-Harris House Commission, 6/27

Upcoming Meetings

- Friends of Smith-Harris House annual meeting, 7/10, 3 pm
- STEPS Sub-Committee meeting, TBD
- Other meetings TBD

Submitted by: Joanie DiMartino, Executive Director

June 21, 2018