

**TOWN OF EAST LYME  
SMITH-HARRIS HOUSE COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, FEBRUARY 25th, 2015**

Present: Gary Lakowsky, Chairman, Richard MacDonald, Maggi Prokop,  
Kathleen Sasso

Also Present: Joanie DiMartino, Smith Harris House Curator  
Donna Massung, Friends of Smith Harris President

FILED IN EAST LYME  
CONNECTICUT

March 3 20 15 AT 11:45 AM/PM  
*Brooke D. Hamilton*  
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Lakowsky called the February 25, 2015 Meeting of the Smith-Harris House Commission to order at 7:04 PM.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Lakowsky called for any additions, deletions or changes to the January 28, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes.

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

**Ms. Prokop moved to approve the January 28, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Commission as presented.**

**Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 4 – 0 - 0. Motion passed.**

**3. Reports**

↳ **Public Delegations:**

Donna Massung, President of the Friends reported that due to the snow that they had not held their meeting. They are planning on the Flower Show sometime in May.

↳ **Ex-Officio Report**

Mr. Wilson was not present and there was no report.

↳ **Curator's Report**

Ms. DiMartino thoroughly reviewed her report. (Attached to Minutes)

↳ **Agenda Additions**

Mr. Lakowsky asked if there were any additions to the agenda.

Ms. Sasso asked that they add the 'Internet update' to the agenda as she had an update.

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

**Ms. Prokop moved to add item B. 2. under New Business – Internet Update to the agenda.**

**Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 4 – 0 - 0. Motion passed.**

▪ **Chairman's Report**

Mr. Lakowsky reported that he left a message with Mr. Ball of Parks & Rec regarding having the inmates work on the gardens and the slate. He said that two more pieces of slate would cost around

\$300 and that they could take that from the landscape line. He also reported that the installation of a flood light and the wiring would cost around \$600 and that he was in the process of obtaining an estimate. If they have the money, that could come from the maintenance line item.

He said that they would be moving the farm equipment behind the barn and having the tree stump removed. Also, Ms. Prokop was able to get the name for the shades in the house and they would check to see if it is cheaper to have them repaired or to replace them. This also would be paid from the maintenance line item.

He lastly reported that he is scheduled to appear before the Board of Finance for his budget review at the March 30, 2015 budget meeting. He invited any/all of them to attend.

- **Financial Report**

- **Status Update**

Mr. MacDonald reported that including encumbrances that they have around \$4100 left and recapped the line item approximate balances to the Commissioners. It was noted that the budget seems to be on target.

- **Presentation of Bills**

Mr. Lakowsky asked if there were any bills.

Ms. Prokop presented a receipt for sending a corset back in the amount of \$5.75.

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

**Ms. Sasso moved to reimburse Maggi Prokop \$5.75 for sending a corset back.**

**Mr. MacDonald seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 4 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

Mr. MacDonald asked that they approve payment of \$15 for the Fall River dues.

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

**Ms. Prokop moved to authorize Mr. MacDonald to pay the \$15 for the Fall River dues.**

**Ms. Sasso seconded the motion.**

**Vote: 4 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.**

- **Barn Rentals**

Ms. Prokop reported that she has been getting a lot of calls regarding information on rentals.

Ms. Massung asked that they schedule the Friends Plant Sale for May 9, 2015 as they would like to hold it before Mother's Day.

↓ **Collections Committee**

Mr. Lakowsky noted that he and Mr. MacDonald were approached about a donation of a wooden cradle and that they would be going to look at it.

↓ **Correspondence**

Mr. Lakowsky asked that Ms. Prokop send Darlene a card on the recent death in her family.

Ms. Prokop said that she would.

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

##### **↳ Property Maintenance**

- **Garden Fence and Maintenance** – Mr. Lakowsky said that a community service person would be white washing the fence and the inmates would be working on maintenance.

- **Front Walkway** – Mr. Lakowsky said that this would be done in the spring and was previously discussed.

##### **↳ Museum Development**

- **Educational Programs**

Mr. Lakowsky said that the date has been set for this. It was noted that the Middle School program would have 90 more students this year doing this.

- **STepCT Report**

Ms. DiMartino noted that they are hashing out the Mission Statement and Vision Statements for the Commissioners to review.

Mr. Lakowsky noted that the Vision Statement should be in the Town Charter.

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

##### **↳ Property Maintenance**

- **Barn Roof** – Mr. Lakowsky said that this is part of the 2016 budget.

##### **↳ Museum Development**

- **Educational Program Middle School**

Mr. Lakowsky said that the dates for this are June 1, 3 and 5, 2015.

- **Internet Update**

Ms. Sasso said that she had emailed Ms. Ames and requested a connection to the wireless here or at the school and was told that it would be looked into. She also ran into Mr. Bragaw and he is Ms. Ames boss and he said that he would also look into it.

- **Upcoming events:**

- **Antique Motorcycle Show** – Mr. Lakowsky said that he has been diligently working on this and that the date is August 9, 2015. They will set up groups for this event at their meeting in April.

#### **6. Adjournment**

Mr. Lakowsky called for a motion to adjourn.

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

Ms. Prokop moved to adjourn the February 25, 2015 meeting of the Smith Harris House Commission at 8:32 PM.

Mr. Macdonald seconded the motion.

Vote: 4 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,  
Recording Secretary, Pro-Tem

**Curator's Report--February 2015**  
Submitted to the Smith-Harris Commission

**STEPS-CT**

- Donna Massung, President of the Friends Board, and I attended a full day workshop session in Hartford yesterday, which covered how to hire directors and consultants.
- We have had two very successful meetings to develop new drafts of the Mission Statements for both the Commission and Friends to bring forth for discussion. We have been encouraged by our peer advisor to also develop a Mission Statement specifically for the House.
  - STEPS Committee consists of Donna Massung and Kathleen Patterson from the Friends Board, and Maggi Prokop and Kathleen Sasso from the Commission, along with curator Joanie DiMartino.
    - Upcoming Governance issues to be addressed over the next month:
      - Confirm new Mission Statements (see drafts)
      - Develop Vision Statements
      - Job descriptions for Commission Members and Friends Board
      - Conflict of Interest policy
  - Our visit with our peer advisor, Sarah Griswold, is scheduled for Sunday, March 1st, at 1 pm at the House. It will be a brunch.
  - The next workshop with our peer advisor will take place Monday, March 30th, at the Deep River Historical Society. Each site in our collective will host a peer advisor workshop. All Commission and Friends Board members are invited to attend at no extra charge.

**Programs**

- The Civil War book discussion group is ON!
  - April 8th-- "The Red Badge of Courage," discussion led by Tara Borden & tour of the House with curator Joanie DiMartino and Commission Member Maggi Prokop (House)
  - May 13-- "Gone with the Wind," overview of Depression-era literature with curator Joanie DiMartino, discussion by Tara Borden, presentation on issues of racism within this novel by scholar Dr. David Canton, Associate Professor of History at Connecticut College (Library)
  - June 10th-- "Native Guard," discussion led by scholar and poet Kate Rushin and curator and poet Joanie DiMartino (House)
  - July 8th-- "Where I'm Bound," discussion led by Tara Borden, special Skype-session with author Dr. Allen Ballard, Professor of History and Africana Studies at SUNY-Albany (Library)
- Saturday, June 13th, is the next Museum Open-House Day. I've contacted Liz Kutcha & Bette Mahon regarding another possible collaboration.
- Donna & I also discussed planning a honey tea, based on William Avery's bee-keeping, a short film series on Saturdays in July, an ice cream social (Open-House Day?), a concert series, and an Apple Festival (featuring current and heirloom varieties; based on the Smith-Harris orchard) in autumn, along with the antique motorcycle event Gary Lakowsky is overseeing.
- I've also contacted noted social historian Jane Nylander about the possibility of presenting a talk on 19th-century bedrooms (her current focus); her honorarium would be \$500, and she

Attachment - Curators Report Smith-Harris 2-25-15

isn't available until 2016; I wonder if we should approach working with the East Lyme Historical Society on a joint program to bring her to Niantic.

- The Middle School program is slated for Monday, Wednesday, Friday (June 1st, 3rd, & 5th). We will apply the same format as last year, as requested by the teachers who were very pleased with the presentations.

### **Collections/Grounds**

- Finishing preparing the House for the peer advisor visit, and straightening up for upcoming programs.
- Leslie Evans has offered to gather a group of people together to assist in preparing our garden. She has suggested we approach the UConn Master Gardner program in Norwich to locate college students willing to develop an heirloom garden for a final project, which we would then maintain.

### **Summer Tours**

- I would like to recommend to the Commission that tours be slated for specific times: Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, June--August, open from 12-4 with tours scheduled at 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, and 3:30. (last tour at 3:30).
  - The reasons are two-fold: I would like paid staff to be assigned/select a project to work on over the summer related to the House, and time between tours would allow for that to occur.
  - The current technology today allows people to better plan their time, which is of value, and to be able to let them be clearly aware of when they can access the House will make for a more appreciative and attentive audience.
  - I would like to ask for a discussion and vote to pilot this format for the 2015 summer, with the knowledge that if it doesn't prove beneficial we can reinstate the previous plan.
- I will change my schedule to Tuesdays and Fridays (instead of Thursdays) throughout the summer to assist with tours.
- I would like to set a date in April to offer a training session to Commission and Friends Board members regarding the new tour.

### **Techonology**

- I worked with our web designer Stacey Ventura to add new button to the web page, "Smith-Harris House In the News" which allows us to post information about the House (such as inclusion in STEPS) that isn't an event or program.
- Stacey and I are currently working on a donation button, so that people can become members, renew memberships, and pay for events (along with general donations) on-line, directly through out website.

### **Professional Development**

2/23--STEPS workshop session-- "Mission, Vision, Governance"

2/24--PowerPoint workshop at Groton Public Library

### **Meetings Attended**

1/29--meeting with Tara Borden from the East Lyme Library to finalize book discussion group.  
1/29--STEPS-CT Committee Meeting for MVG.  
2/5--STEPS--CT Committee Meeting for MVG.  
2/12--phone meeting with Richelle Johnson, our Middle School contact.

### **Upcoming Initiatives**

- Continued STEPS-CT work
- Finish new tour script by February; offer training in April
- Continue program development for 2015
- Continue textiles closet work with Donna Massug

### **Mission Statement Drafts**

- Smith-Harris House Commission:

The purpose of the Smith-Harris House Commission is to maintain the Smith-Harris House. The House serves as an historic house museum that engages the community in the history of domestic and agricultural life through education and preservation of the Avery, Smith, and Harris family stories.

- Friends of Smith-Harris House:

The Friends of Smith-Harris House provides volunteer staff and financial support to further the preservation of the Smith-Harris House, the historic site, and family stories.

Submitted by:  
Joanie DiMartino, Curator  
CC: Friends Board