

Watchung Historical Committee
Minutes of the February 21st, 2024 Meeting

Attendance: Don Monetti, Stephen Pote, Maureen Greenbaum, Chris Vander Fliet, Michael DeParto, Karen Jubin, Emily White, Tim Logan, and Keli Leunes.

Absent: Bob Mayers, John Guzman, and Paul Fischer (Council Liaison)

The meeting was called to order at 6:59PM. 9 members of the committee were present for a quorum.

Minutes to the January 24th meeting were discussed and approved. It was mentioned by Steve Pote that we still need to take photographs of all artifacts at the museum, starting with visible display cases and all visible artifacts; it will be easier to use photographs to individually review, assess and log individual artifacts, versus only video which will be hard to single out individual artifacts. Both video and photographs are needed. Mike DeParto motioned; Tim Logan seconded. Minutes approved.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – C. Vander Fliet

Vander Fliet reminded everyone that Watchung's 100th Anniversary is less than 2 years away! There will be a lot that will be expected of the Watchung Historical Committee over the next couple of years and we need to be ready for this special anniversary.

Vander Fliet reported that resident Laurie Wood made a donation of \$175.00 to the Historical Committee. This donation was part of the money made in the selling of these ornaments. 2023's ornament was Watchung's zip code 07069.

Vander Fliet reported that Maureen Greenbaum has continued to send out advertisements for the Texier House Museum to local organizations including Town Planner. She also updated the online Open House Schedule to make it easier to keep track of who, on the committee, is doing the bi-weekly Open House events.

Weekend Journey will be October 12th and 13th. Vander Fliet will send around a signup sheet for all volunteers to fill out as we get closer to the event. He reiterated that we need support from all committee volunteers.

The Brother Scanner was hooked up to the Texier House computer and is now the third scanning apparatus we have at the Museum. Thanks to Bill Hance for helping to coordinate this; The instructions for all members to use it have been printed out and pasted onto the scanner. It was tested by Vander Fliet and works well!

The historical committee contributed and submitted to the Borough a write up for the Spring Newsletter. This year's submission includes more photos and less text.

A Borough Budget Hearing will be March 4th. Vander Fliet plans to attend. The Historical Committee will request \$15,000 for the 2024 budget, as the committee has several projects that need significant funding. The budget request form was completed.

The Watchung Historical Committee is now part of the NJ Museum Association – Sponsor Level. Thank you, Steve Pote, for helping to coordinate this effort to get State assistance on improved preparedness in case of catastrophic events. It is assumed likely that any response from NJ Museum regarding the submitted application for an artifact disaster preparedness assessment will go to mailbox at Borough Hall.

The Historical Committee will participate in the Watchung Community Picnic in May. The goal would be to have a table with artifacts and the new shirts available to kids to color. More on the coloring shirts under Projects/New Business.

It was mentioned by Betse Titus (not present at meeting but often a guide at open house Sundays) that during open houses at Texier Building, it appears that we are getting more people from out of town who are visiting the museum. A lot of positive feedback regarding the museum.

Steve Pote mentioned to all committee members that Betty Jean Aldrich, an Emeritus Member of the Watchung Historical Committee, longtime resident of Watchung, and active volunteer through the years had passed away on February 10th.

VICE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

No report. Tim's Report was deferred to Project/New Business.

LIAISON REPORT – P. Fischer

Paul Fischer was not present, and no report was provided by Paul Fischer.

PROJECTS/NEW BUSINESS

Digital Picture Frames

The purchase of two digital picture frames was discussed. These frames would be technology enhanced, providing the ability to be motion-censored; plugged in, touch screen capable in order to edit, change, and enhance content that appears in these frames. It can be used with PowerPoint displays. One of these digital frames would be on display as part of the school display downstairs. This first display would be a 10" unit (\$220-\$250), which would display additional pictures of the schools, as well pictures of students, teachers, etc. Related to Watchung's school system over time.

The second display would be 17-19" display (\$375) which would display Veterans and Watchung's involvement during wartime periods.

After discussion, Chris Vander Fliet motioned the purchase of these units; John Guzman seconded. Motion approved.

The idea for a digital screen in the library to showcase Whispering Leaves articles (scanned by Don Monetti) is still in the works. Don has still not yet heard back from the Baumgartner family.

Workroom Cleanup

Tentative dates in March and April were discussed for volunteer help. It was decided that first there is a need for the committee to meet and understand exactly what we are expecting from volunteers. Steve Pote said we need a firm process in place, and we need to understand exactly how volunteers will be used. We also need to be sure that we have all the equipment (e.g., scanners, copiers, supplies) which are needed during these volunteer days. It was discussed that every picture needs to be logged/inventoried; assigned a box, folder, and unique ID, so that documents and photographs can be inventoried and, when necessary, refiled elsewhere.

It was decided that the committee is needed on March (March 3; 11 AM), and then the student volunteers possibly in April (April 14). Steve stated that we need to maximize at 4-5 volunteers the number of students we invite to control the work's quality; we also need to set goals for the day. We need to release the volunteer request after we see how things go at the committee workshop to finalize the process. Jason (contact at WHRHS) will need to know how many volunteers are needed.

Insurance waivers will be needed for any volunteers participating at the Texier House on April 14th.

In regard to another work effort, Mike DeParto also suggested that we need to separate materials we want to keep, versus other materials we may not believe we need.

Community Archiving Day/Flyer for Community Involvement

Keli L. provided a draft flyer for the committee and Maureen G. provided comments.

Watchung 100th/Coloring T-Shirt

Maureen Greenbaum provided updates on the T-Shirt design by providing 4 design options for the T-shirts. The designs were created by Maureen Greenbaum's daughter-in-law. The focus for the shirts is on children who will visit the Texier House. The designs were focused on other historical buildings in the Borough. The committee liked all designs except the one of Watchung Lake. The goal is to have the shirts ready by the Watchung Community Picnic. The following details were decided upon:

Only three designs will be printed for the time being to gauge the success of the program. More designs will be printed if the program is a success.

We decided on one design per shirt (shirts to be one-sided). We would also like to include text above and below the historic structure design, e.g., "Watchung, NJ 1926-2026" and "watchunghistory.org". The text should also be open to allow for it to be colored along with the historic structure design. We thought this text should be arched above and below

the design but will see what concepts are provided back to us from the printer (DebLynn will provide a sample) and also Maureen's daughter-in-law. Also, we would like to have the t-shirts available potentially for Watchung Community Memorial Day picnic.

It was decided that the T-shirt style will be the Standard Gildan Cotton Shirt.
Keli L. will investigate markers for coloring the shirts for the March meeting.

The minimum number of shirts for the three designs will be ordered (36 for each design).

The historical committee decided to order the following T-shirt sizes for each of the three designs:

9 Adult Large
9 Adult Medium
9 Adult Small
9 Kids Medium

Potential Eagle Scout Projects

The Ness Property history was discussed as a possible Eagle Scout project for scout Thomas Schaefer, discussing its history as a farm and home to several living in small houses on the property. It was discussed that there are numerous good stories to document regarding the history of the Ness Property, and many structures and artifacts (farm tools, old barn, antique cards junked on property, green house, tree farm, billing machine, brooder, farm tools) – could be incorporated into the display/discussion.

The concept of a timeline showing Watchung's history was again discussed as a possible Eagle Scout project. Regardless, it was discussed as still a good possible display for the 100th anniversary.

Museum Filming Tour/Strix Media Updates

\$7,500 proposal provided by Strix media for the complete video tour of the Texier House. We need to get another proposal or quote from another film company as the Borough rules require a second price for work that exceeds \$6,600.

Interview with Bruce Ryno

Need to schedule and conduct this.

Emergency Preparedness

Discussed in Chairperson's remarks.

PUBLIC PORTION

(No comments)

Announcements

Vander Fliet announced he will take some time off from the Historical Committee after 2026.

SCHEDULE FOR TEXIER HOUSE OPENINGS (through April is as follows)

March 3, 17 (closed)

April 7, 21

May 19, 27

June 2

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Submitted by: Steve Pote (Secretary)

NEXT MEETING: March 20, 2024 at 7PM.

Attachments:

1. No attachments.