

Watchung Historical Committee
Minutes of the May 18th, 2022 Meeting

Attendance: Chris Vander Fliet, Stephen Pote, Bob Mayers, Tim Logan, and Christine Ead (Liaison)

Absent: Maureen Greenbaum, John Malchow, David Scharf, and Fred Hayeck.

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm.

A quorum was not present, therefore the minutes for the April 20th 2022 meeting could not be approved. They will be deferred to the June meeting for approval.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – C. Vander Fliet

Vander Fliet mentioned that the **May 30th** Memorial Day event (ceremony starts 9:30am and coverage requested 10am-12am) and the October Weekend Journey Through the Past (**Oct. 8th**, 10am to 5 pm & **Oct. 9th** Noon to 4pm) events at the Texier House Museum are two of the largest events we hold each year when the greatest number of people visit the Texier, and we will need coverage by all committee members, even if that coverage is staggered. A schedule will be sent out later in the summer for members to sign up for specific time slots for the Weekend Journey event.

Vander Fliet provided a quick summary of Operation Pride, with special thanks to those who helped and supported the event including Fred Hayeck, Pete Martino, Jim Demato and Christine Ead.

Vander Fliet mentioned that Bob Mayers held his second book signing at the Texier House Museum Open House on May 1st (the first book signing was in early April). A total of 80 dollars was donated to the mural account between both events. The May book signing drew approximately 10 people from the public over the 2-hour event. Vander Fliet concluded by saying thank you to those who volunteered for the recent Open Houses!

The town was still looking for members to attend the Mayor's Regatta and said that if anyone was interested that they should contact Linda Monetti. Vander Fliet mentioned that the event was scheduled for Saturday June 11th from 10 am to 12 noon, but Christine Ead said the time might have changed from the original time. Vander Fliet mentioned he would call the town and confirm the time and let the committee know.

The Garden Club has been hard at work working with Chris Vander Fliet on updates to the Tiby Wotherspoon Display. Portions of the display have been installed, but there is additional work that needs to be completed. Members of the Garden Club who have been hard at work making the display a reality and also donating resources include Anne DeParto and Marta Blumberg. Some photos have been secured for this display, depicting specific events in the life of Tiby.

Vander Fliet mentioned that Maureen G. worked to revise the Borough of Watchung Historical page website information. He asked the members to review what has been revised.

There was a brief discussion on Jake Feldman who is a local film editor who has assisted Vander Fliet in the second installation of the Reflections of Watchung, an oral history film about the Borough of Watchung. Jake was paid for his work from the past, but in discussions with Vander Fliet was willing to donate some of his time as the remaining installation is completed. Vander Fliet wanted to thank him for his help.

Emails of our members were provided to Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission for current and future events that will take place. Vander Fliet wanted to confirm that all members present have been receiving the emails and if they are not to please let him know.

Vander Fliet concluded his report about the meeting regarding the Legend of Watchung mural with George Alexis, Superintendent of Watchung schools. He mentioned that John Malchow, Steve Pote, Christine Ead, and he (Vander Fliet) were present at the Tuesday May 10th meeting at Valley View School. George was very pleased with the mural report and commented that the report tells a good story. George enthusiastically said he is supportive of the location for the mural (Valley View School, across from the stage in the auditorium) as recommended by the Historical Committee in the report. George said he will be distributing the report to the Board of Education and he would let us know when we are on the Watchung Board of Education agenda. Vander Fliet mentioned he would be sending an email out over the weekend to George to have him confirm when the mural would be on the agenda, more specifically which meeting (if not both) in June. Christine stated that she passed a copy of the mural report to Ron Jubin and Keith Balla.

VICE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – J. Malchow

No Report. John mentioned that he would have a report at the next meeting.

PROJECTS/NEW BUSINESS

Legend of Watchung Mural Report Discussion:

It was mentioned that donations are still required to complete the mural project. We will intensify opportunities to collect donations, e.g., at the May 21st Watchung Spring Picnic.

Gold Award for local Girl Scout:

A local girl scout is looking to receive her gold award and approached the Watchung Historical Committee asking if there was a small project that could help satisfy the requirements for her Gold Award. Vander Fliet mentioned that some updates to the school display, more specifically a timeline of different schools in the Borough's History, as well documenting associated pictures with the timeline, would be a simple, yet powerful display. This includes showing the transformation of each school over time.

Vander Fliet also spoke to Betse Titus about the project and Betse Titus will be meeting with Barbara Diem to come up with a list of all of the different schools, their locations, and important dates associated with the places identified to aid in the development of this project. The timeline would go in the location where the current school display is.

Bylaws Discussion:

In the past, Diddy Addario and the Committee at the time provided initial creation of Historical Committee bylaws, and the ordinance was reshaped several years ago by the Council. The bylaws call for 9 members and 2 alternatives. The committee needs to get full membership. The bylaws and ordinance call for one-year terms. The group present liked the idea of three-year terms, as it provides members more of a chance to get educated and to contribute towards Committee projects and goals. The idea of an “auxiliary” member was discussed; these would be members who may not, at the current time, live in Watchung (or live any longer in Watchung) but who, because of their vast, in-depth experience and knowledge, may provide invaluable contributions to the group in order to pursue certain projects. Sue Tucker is someone who would fit this description.

It was raised that there are over 50 historical societies in New Jersey, and only one historical committee (in Watchung). The question was raised as to whether this should change or if there was a constraint or reason why this should remain.

There was a quick discussion on Emeritus status and how this status should become a part of the bylaws. There was strong support for designating 10 years as the timeframe for Emeritus status eligibility. This discussion then raised the question by Pote as to whether Betse Titus had yet received Emeritus Status. Vander Fliet mentioned that he sent an email to the mayor last November asking for this request to be fulfilled, and he had additional discussions with Pete Martino following the email to the mayor. Pete Martino had asked Vander Fliet last year if there were any specific dates on which Betse might like to be honored. When Vander Fliet spoke to Betse Titus, she did not have any particular dates in mind. Pote said this honor is long overdue given Betse’s long-time involvement and contributions; Betse’s work and continued willingness to support when asked just exemplifies why she should be given Emeritus status along with Barbara Diem, Diddy Addario, and Betty Jean Titus.

It was discussed that there needs to be an appointment of someone who could handle the role of Financial Manager. The committee had someone in the past (Mary Ann Webber) who did a great job managing (in a timely fashion) donations, the administration of received funds and distributions, providing monthly reports, goals status, etc. While discussing finances, the group also believed that the Historical Committee Chairperson should be allowed to make up to \$300 purchases without first seeking committee approval.

The idea of an executive committee (three members) was discussed, who would make decisions in an emergency. Nothing was decided. The group felt comfortable to permit the committee leadership to make emergency decisions when they had to be made; however, it was expressed that at first an attempt should be made to call for an

emergency full committee meeting, where a quorum (of five) could be gathered to discuss the issue on hand. If this is not possible, it was suggested that permission should be granted for committee leadership to take action on behalf of the committee.

Open House Schedules:

Vander Fliet noted that the following Open Houses through August 2022 were as follows: 2 hours following the Memorial Day ceremony on May 30th, then June 5th, June 19th, July 17th, and August 21st. He also opened the floor for discussion about the two Open House dates in October (October 2nd and 16th) and their proximity to the Weekend Journey date which was collectively a significant time commitment by the Committee. The committee decided that the October 2nd open House date should be cancelled and that we keep the Open House date on October 16th, the weekend following Weekend Journey.

Vander Fliet also asked if the Open House on September 4th (Labor Day weekend) should be cancelled as it is likely we will have little to no visitors as well as volunteers to cover the date. It was decided that the September 4th Open House date should also be cancelled.

Loose Ends:

Vander Fliet provided a quick update on the following displays and their status:

Lions Club Display: The display is complete except for the final gold plates with the text in them. These plates with the text will be ordered with the larger sign order for the museum before Weekend Journey Through the Past in October. Vander Fliet met with members from the Lions Club to gather history and information on the organization and incorporated that into the display.

Sports Display: Vander Fliet mentioned that he was in touch with John Malchow and would be completing a writeup on Luke Graobyes (golfer) prior to Memorial Day for incorporation into the larger and existing Sports Display.

Tiby Wotherspoon Display: Detail provided in the Chairperson's report.

Old Sign Display: Tim Logan will be working with Vander Fliet on the installation of the old sign display at the Texier House following Memorial Day and likely over the summer.

LIAISON REPORT – C. Ead

Texier House Exterior Patio Project. Christine knows that this requires Borough's attention.

- Christine stated that the borough is still working through final contracting as it relates to cleaning service for all Borough buildings. This service is badly needed everywhere.
- Carriage House/Outhouse Painting: Christine stated that the two will be painted together, and it is on DPW's work assignments.
- Electrician coming to check exterior lighting of the Texier Building; this also is dangerous and badly in need of fixing.
- Memorial Day Event: program will begin at 9:30am.

- 9/11 Memorial Updates: it was discussed that a maintenance plan is needed for the 9/11 memorial. The group felt it should not be the Historical Committee who manages the shrubs, weeds, structure, but the Borough. Vander Fliet will talk with Seth.

PUBLIC PORTION

No one from the public was present.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Submitted by: Stephen Pote (Secretary)

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday June 15th @ 7 pm.

Attachments:

1. Draft version of the Bylaws
2. Print out of current Borough ordinance on Historical Committee

WATCHUNG HISTORICAL COMMITTEE BYLAWS

Proposed: XXXX XX, 202~~21~~²⁴; adopted: _____

ARTICLE I

NAME

Section 1: The name of this organization shall be The Watchung Historical Committee as established in the Borough of Watchung Code Book, Chapter 2 – Administration, Article V, Boards, Committees and Commissions, Section 2-24-1.

Section 2: The Watchung Historical Committee shall also be abbreviated as WHC.

ARTICLE 2

PURPOSE

Section 1: The purpose of the Watchung Historical Committee is to record, preserve, protect, and promote interest in the history of Watchung and to maintain the Texier House as a local museum containing all artifacts and materials pertaining to the history of the Borough displayed for the community to enjoy. The WHC will also gather current items of future interest and catalog and store such items for the future. The WHC will conduct programs as necessary to educate citizens on the history of the area and encourage resident participation.

Section 2: The Watchung Historical Committee operates in accordance with the Borough of Watchung Code Book, Chapter 2 – Administration, Article V, approved in 2000 and amended in 2013 and 2017.

ARTICLE 3

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: The nine-member Committee is appointed by the Mayor, with the consent of the Council, for a term of one year. One Year or three-year terms? Makes more sense for three-years on this committee.

Section 2: The nine full-time members of the Committee are to be residents of the Borough of Watchung.

Section 3: Two alternate members (in addition to the nine full-time members) are appointed by the Mayor, with the consent of the Council, for a term of one year.

Section 4: In the case of a vacancy one alternate member becomes a full member and the Mayor and Council appoint another alternate member.

Section 5: The Mayor shall appoint a liaison from the Borough Council to serve ex-officio to facilitate communication between the Committee and the Borough Council and Administration.

Section 6: Those Committee members who have served as full-time members and remained active on the Committee for a period greater than, or equal to 10 years, are eligible for Emeritus status. In the case that a member is eligible for Emeritus status, the Committee shall make a recommendation to the Mayor on behalf of the member who is eligible. In addition to the recommendation to the Mayor, the Committee shall provide a summary of the members contributions to the Committee and greater community.

Section 7: The Committee shall have up to three Auxiliary Members, a position opened for those members of the public who are no longer residents of the Borough of Watchung, but have previously been residents of the Borough of Watchung for at least 20 years. provide significant contributions to the preservation of the Borough's history. These members will do not have the same voting rights as those full-time members.

ARTICLE 4

OFFICERS

Section 1: The Committee shall elect, as soon as possible upon appointment, a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary, usually at the first meeting of each calendar year.

Section 2: Any vacancy shall be filled as soon as possible. The Chair will communicate the vacancy immediately to the WHC and the Borough Council. At the next regular meeting following a vacancy, the committee shall consider persons who may be willing to volunteer as alternate members. Upon a majority vote of the members, the WHC may recommend such persons to the Mayor and Borough Council for consideration.

ARTICLE 5

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1: Chair – the Chair of the WHC is the official representative of the WHC. The Chair shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the Committee, prepare an agenda for each meeting, call special meetings as necessary, report on the WHC's progress and activities at each meeting, and submit an annual report at the end of the year to the Borough Council. The Chair shall sign or co-sign any documents on behalf of the Committee in accordance with the Borough's Code Book, Chapter 2, Article V, and appoint sub-committees as necessary.

Section 2: Vice Chair – the Vice Chair shall assist the Chair in all activities of the Committee, preside at regular and special meetings in the absence of the Chair,

and assume all duties of the Chair during the absence, disability, or upon the vacancy of the Chair.

- Section 3: Secretary – the Secretary shall assist the Chair to prepare and distribute an agenda for each meeting, record attendance at all meetings and establish that a quorum exists for purposes of conducting official business, record and maintain a permanent copy of minutes of each meeting and other information as directed by the Chair, provide all members with a copy of the minutes from all meetings and distribute final meetings to Borough Liaison and Borough Clerk. Electronic distribution is an acceptable method of distributing Committee information. The Secretary shall receive the WHC annual report at the end of each calendar year, consolidate, and archive administrative papers annually. The Secretary shall preside at meetings in absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair.
- Section 4: Financial Manager – the Financial Manager is responsible for reporting to the Committee the total remaining budget, and serves as the Committees main point of contact with the Borough of Watchung Chief Financial Officer. The Financial Manager is responsible for reporting on Committee expenses, received donations, and any money in the Committees specific accounts. All receipts and purchases made by Committee members are to be submitted for processing to the Financial Manager who is responsible for submitting them to the Borough of Watchung Chief Financial Officer.

ARTICLE 6

CONDUCTING BUSINESS

- Section 1: A quorum of five members shall be necessary to conduct business. No business may be conducted in the absence of a quorum. Emeritus Members are not considered voting members.
- Section 2: The Committee shall submit an annual budget request to the Borough of Watchung at the beginning of each year, and within a month after officer appointments.
- Section 3: Any funds raised by the Committee in addition to the approved budget are to be related specifically to Committee projects or goals. Funds raised shall be specifically designated to a specific Committee project or goal, and are to be managed specifically through the Borough.
- Section 4: An Executive Committee, consisting of three full-time members, shall be elected by the Committee members following election of officers. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chair, Vice Chair, and one full-time member. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to make decisions on behalf of the Committee for time-sensitive matters only. These decisions are to be made by the

Executive Committee only in the case that a non-scheduled (emergency) meeting of the Committee with a quorum cannot be organized.

Section 5: Those purchases not exceeding an amount of \$400 and which is directly related to the upkeep and updating of the Texier House Museum display does not require Committee approval. (Amount to be spent without committee approval? Up to \$200, \$400? - needs further discussion)

Notes/Suggested Changes to the ordinance:

1. I do not believe the historical committee is to operate and maintain the 9/11 memorial per the current ordinance.

§ 2-43 **HISTORICAL COMMITTEE.**

§ 2-43.1 **Establishment of Committee; Members; Appointments.**

[Ord. No. 00/08; Ord. No. OR:13/02; Ord. No. 2017-07]

There is hereby established in and for the Borough of Watchung a Historical Committee to be known as the Borough of Watchung Historical Committee. The Committee shall consist of nine members and two alternate members designated at the time of appointment as "Alternate No. 1," and "Alternate No. 2," all to serve without compensation. The Mayor shall nominate and, with the advice and consent of the Council, appoint the members of the Historical Committee, said members to be residents of the Borough. In addition to the nine and two alternate Historical Committee members, the Mayor shall appoint a member of the Borough Council as liaison.

§ 2-43.2 **Terms of Office.**

[Ord. No. 00/08; Ord. No. OR:13/02; Ord. No. 2017-07]

Appointment of the nine citizens of the Borough as members, and two citizens of the Borough as alternates, shall be for a term of one year, and said members shall hold office until their successors have been duly appointed. If a vacancy shall occur other than by expiration of term, it shall be filled as provided by appointment of the Mayor, with the advice and consent of the Borough Council for the unexpired term. The Councilmember appointed by the Mayor shall serve for a period to correspond with the Councilmember's term in office.

§ 2-43.3 **Organization.**

[Ord. No. 00/08; Ord. No. 2017-07; Ord. No. 2018-05 § 1]

The Committee shall organize immediately upon its appointment and elect from its members a Chairman, Vice-chairman and Secretary at its annual organization meeting.

§ 2-43.4 **Powers and Duties Generally.**

[Ord. No. 00/08; Ord. No. 14-09; Ord. No. 2018-05 § 2; Ord. No. 2019-02]

The powers and duties vested in the Historical Committee shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

a.

Research and record pertinent data relating to the history of the Borough of Watchung.

b.

Document, list and mark, where appropriate, historic buildings and sites within the Borough.

c.

Make recommendations to the Borough Council for the preservation or acquisition of historic sites.

d.

Advise residents of the Borough and the public as to points of interest of its historical heritage.

e.

Develop programs relating to the history of the Borough. Plans for any such programs shall first be brought to the Borough Council for approval prior to any announcement and/or implementation.

f.

Operate the Texier House Museum subject to approval by the Borough Council.

g.

Complete construction, maintain and operate the 9/11 Memorial all subject to approval by the Borough Council prior to any announcement and/or implementation.

[Ord. No. 2019-02]

h.

The Historical Committee shall also work with the Environmental Commission and Recreation Commission, whose responsibilities also include the acquisition of property. Before any recommendation is made to the Borough Council, that recommendation will be presented to the Environmental Commission and Recreation Commission for their comment, which comment will be forwarded to the Borough Council, with the Historical Committee's recommendation. The Historical Committee will also consult with any other committees, commissions or other body it deems appropriate.

§ 2-43.5 Expenditures Subject to Budgetary Approval.

[Ord. No. 00/08]

The Historical Committee shall expend no funds and shall incur no expenses. The Governing Body of the Borough may authorize the expenditures of funds by specifying such expenditures in the annual Borough budget. All expenditures as budgeted shall be approved by the Governing Body.

1. § 2-43.5 Expenditures Subject to Budgetary Approval.

[Ord. No. 00/08]

The Historical Committee shall expend no funds and shall incur no expenses. The Governing Body of the Borough may authorize the expenditures of funds by specifying such expenditures in the annual Borough budget. All expenditures as budgeted shall be approved by the Governing Body.

§ 2-43.6 Meetings and Minutes.

[Ord. No. 2018-05 § 3]

a.

Schedule of Meetings. The Chairman of the Historical Committee shall annually, within the first two weeks of January, schedule a minimum of four quarterly meetings which will be posted on the Borough Website. Such meetings may be cancelled by the Chairman, within one week thereof. Notice of any cancellation must be posted on the Borough's Website.

b.

Minutes. The Secretary of the Historical Committee shall keep minutes of all meetings of same. All minutes will be transmitted to the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Watchung within one week after approval. All such minutes are government records within the scope of the State's Open Public Records Act.