

**Watchung Historical Committee**  
**Minutes of the September 21th, 2022 Meeting**

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

**Absent:** David Scharf, Fred Hayeck, and Maureen Greenbaum

The meeting was called to order at 7:15pm.

Motion was made (Malchow) to approve the minutes from the June 15<sup>th</sup> 2022 Historical Meeting. Seconded (Logan). Minutes were approved.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – C. Vander Fliet**

Vander Fliet mentioned that we had a good number of visitors for Summer Open House (July and August) – About 12 visitors in July and 7 in August.

Vander Fliet reminded everyone that the Texier House Museum was closed September 4<sup>th</sup> and will also be closed on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Otherwise we should continue to follow and participate in the Open House Schedule document.

Vander Fliet mentioned the October “Weekend Journey Through the Past” event which would take place on (**Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>**, 10am to 5 pm & **Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>** Noon to 4pm) and we will need coverage by all committee members, even if that coverage is staggered. It is the best attended event of the year and needs as much help as possible.

Vander Fliet was happy to announce that we received approval for the sale of the Historic Tales of Watchung/Images of America books at the Harvest Festival. We also obtained permission to use the text that provided for distribution on social media and local papers for the Weekend Journey Through the Past event.

Vander Fliet mentioned that the Food Truck Fridays is now a fall event, but that we received approval from PTO (obtained from Jackie Pike) to distribute the Scavenger Hunt program.

Maureen Greenbaum is the admin for our Facebook Page.

The Garden Club Members who worked so hard with the committee on the Tibby Wotherspoon Display finally saw completion of the display.

Lions Club Display and Newspaper Article was sent to the papers and the Lions Club was very happy with the coverage in the papers.

Vander Fliet mentioned that a new signage order was in progress for display descriptions throughout the Museum.

The outdoor patio in the rear of the Texier House was repaired and construction completed over the summer.

The Watchung Historical Committee received a donation of a Dot Kenney Painting from The DiFluri Living Trust on Behalf of Joseph and Joan DiFluri. The donation was noted in the binder the Committee has and a letter was sent to the donors.

Vander Fliet thanked Ralph Diem for watering plants outside of the Museum and provided general maintenance throughout the summer. Vander Fliet also thanked Betse Titus for weeding some of the areas in the rear of the Texier House as well as planting new plantings in the pots as you enter the building.

The donation of the Hosta Plant in the large pot outside of the Museum is from the Blackadar Family.

Pete Martino, Ben Toscano, and Tim Logan helped to install the sign display at the Texier House. Pete Martino and Ben Toscano made a wooden backing for the Ness Silo Property signs.

Ralph Diem and Chris Vander Fliet walked from Texier House to Wetumpka Falls to look for Lenni Lenape Grinding Stones that were lost in flooding from Storm Ida. The stone was not found.

Vander Fliet and Christine Ead are meeting with the Borough so that the town administrator and lawyer can review the Reflections of Watchung Videos.

The Texier House was being power washed in preparation for some fresh painting.

Vander Fliet mentioned that Bob Mayers book "Historic Tales of Watchung" was mentioned in the League of Historical Societies of NJ newsletter and the newsletter that it was mentioned in was distributed amongst the members for review.

### **LIAISON REPORT – C. Ead**

There was discussion that Christine would coordinate with the Borough to make sure that a table would be provided at the Harvest Festival for Bob Mayers to sell books and a second table for Maureen Greenbaum to display artifacts from the Museum.

Council Liaison Ead indicated that the bricks were installed in the area of the Texier House Museum (same bricks that were washed away during Storm Ida). Sidewalk has been repaired. Outside lights are now working. The outhouse, carriage house, and Texier House will be freshly painted in early October in time for Weekend Journey.

It was confirmed that maintenance of the 9/11 memorial is not the responsibility of the Historical Committee. A sealcoat will be applied to the memorial in the near future; coordinated by Seth Alexander with help and assistance from the DPW. Directions will be created by Seth Alexander as to what specific maintenance to the memorial is needed, going forward, and at what frequency.

For security purposes, per Pote suggestion, the video surveillance of the Texier Building (inside and outside) will be saved for the period of time the Weekend Journey Through the Past takes place. The video will be saved so that it can be accessed later if needed. It was discussed that possibly specific items could be secured with an attached cord. Key fobs for entering the Museum were briefly discussed and being coordinated with Bill Hance. The fob numbers would be recorded based on member, and a list of the members and their corresponding numbers would be recorded.

The creation of a scarecrow is encouraged to be created for the Texier House, representative of the Historical Committee. Information is available online. The Scarecrow contest is the 21<sup>st</sup>; October 22<sup>nd</sup> is the Harvest Festival and playground ribbon cutting.

#### **VICE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – J. Malchow**

No Report.

#### **PROJECTS/NEW BUSINESS**

##### **School Display:**

Vander Fliet had spoken to Betse Titus about the school project/display and Betse Titus said she had preliminarily met with Barbara Diem and they started to discuss the history of the schools. Bob Mayers mentioned that he could get in touch with Bruce Ryno, from North Plainfield, who might have a picture of the property, where Valley View School now resides, before the original school was built in 1948.

##### **Weekend Journey:**

Vander Fliet briefly discussed open house procedures for Weekend Journey and what to expect for the weekend. He mentioned that Tim Logan will be picking up food each day of the event, and Fred Hayeck will be picking up signs to hang around the Town in preparation for the event. Bob Mayers will be joining us Sunday 10/9 to sell Historic Tales of Watchung. Sue Tucker may be joining the Committee to do tours.

##### **Historic Sign Obtained:**

Paul Ost joined the meeting to provide a vintage Watchung sign which could be copied and hung up at the Museum. Ost requested that the sign be returned, but that a copy of it could be made and installed in the new sign display at the Texier House. He mentioned that he did not have any context or history on the sign. The sign reads "Have a Ball Visiting Watchung in the Winter". Possibly created during the late 1920's or 1930's? Vander FLiet mentioned that the sign would be installed for Weekend Journey.

### **Cannonball:**

John Malchow mentioned that his Uncle Rich gave him a cannonball that he would loan to the Committee. John mentioned that the cannonball was found when working on the remediation of Somerset Street in the 80's. John will discuss the cannon ball historical significance with Maureen; she will have it at her table during the Harvest Festival.

### **Bylaws Discussion:**

It was decided that under Article 4 Section 1 that the word "usually" be removed from the sentence before the Bylaws are submitted to Christine Ead. Vander Fliet would submit the ByLaws to Christine after this change is made.

Revised Bylaws, as discussed during past meetings, were brought up for a vote to approve (Vander Fliet) and seconded (Malchow). It was discussed again that it should be a goal to stagger new members and their terms, so that loss of personnel and knowledge capital is limited on a yearly basis. ByLaws for Historical Committee were unanimously approved.

As they relate specifically to Historical Committee membership, important highlights of bylaws discussion from previous meetings were again briefly discussed; this includes:

"...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 to 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. But the three-year terms needed to be staggered so that all knowledge capital isn't lost at once.

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.... "

We felt that we should seek future members who have specific talents that are needed for the Committee and progress going forward. This could also help inspire others with these talents to join the Committee.

### **Other Items**

It was discussed that the "Whispering Leaves" newsletter from the 1960s is a fascinating source of information about Watchung during this time period. Don Monetti, a resident in town, has spent a great deal of time reading through these newsletters.

It was discussed that some combination of Steve Pote and Chris Vander Fliet will pre-interview or interview Bruce Ryno from North Plainfield. Bruce has extensive knowledge of not only North Plainfield, but Watchung and its roots. He also has great understanding

of the American Revolution as it relates to this area's involvement. Vander Fliet felt that the interview should be filmed for preservation purposes.

The concept of "disaster management" was raised by Pote and discussed: in the event of a potential, e.g., "300-year storm/event", should there be some prioritization given as to what artifacts from the museum are either a) raised to "higher ground" within the building; or b) removed from the Texier Building altogether and, by procedure, stored in a specific, safe alternative location. After Ida, some mud was in the main lobby. It was suggested that possibly Watchung apply for a grant with County Historical, to possibly provide resources to implement specific procedures designed around safeguarding invaluable items the museum today houses.

In the immediate future, there is good reason to pre-purchase a supply of sandbags that can remain on Texier House premises (basement or in the carriage house), to be used as a first line of defense, implemented well in advance of the event. There are several projects that can come from this (e.g., scanning of pictures and newspapers) which could use help from responsible high school students. There was also a suggestion to prioritize what needs to be done at the Texier House in the meantime to prepare for the next weather or disaster event.

When appropriate, Tim Logan will take interested Historical Committee members through the Ness Property, providing a good history of the property.

#### **Open House Schedule:**

Vander Fliet provided the following open house dates for the remainder of the year:

**October 16<sup>th</sup> 2-4pm**

**November 6<sup>th</sup> 2-4 pm**

**November 20<sup>th</sup> 2-4 pm**

**December 4<sup>th</sup> 2-4 pm**

#### **PUBLIC PORTION**

There were no comments from the public.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32pm.

Submitted by: Stephen Pote (Secretary)

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday October 19<sup>th</sup> @ 7 pm. NOTE: Since this meeting, the date of the next meeting has been changed to Wednesday October 26<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm.**

Attachments:

1. September 2022 – Approved Version of the Bylaws

