

Watchung Historical Committee
Minutes of the September 20th, 2023 Meeting

Attendance: Chris Vander Fliet, Stephen Pote, Terri Pavlak, Tim Logan, Maureen Greenbaum, Michael DeParto, Keli Leunes, and John Guzman.

Absent: Fred Hayeck, Paul Fischer (Council Liaison), Bob Mayers, Don Monetti

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Motion to approve the minutes from the June 21st 2023, meeting was made by Steve and seconded by Keli and approved.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – C. Vander Fliet

Vander Fliet thanked everyone who continued to Operate/Open our Museum to the Public/Open House Schedule Document. Vander Fliet mentioned that we still need a member to cover the Open House in early October. Tim Logan volunteered.

Vander Fliet reported on Helena Ruta's School Display which included a Timeline, Scavenger Hunt, and Teacher Interviews which was completed over the summer. The Special September Open House occurred on 9/10 to celebrate her achievements and showcase the display. It was very well attended (about 45 people), and Vander Fliet thanked those who helped out to provide coverage for the Museum that day.

Vander Fliet reported that the language from the Historical Committee for the Borough Newsletter was submitted. He thanked those who helped to review the information. Because it is time sensitive, we hope that the newsletter is sent to residents in early October timeframe.

Vander Fliet reported on the Verizon Wireless Application and thanked Steve Pote for his review. Steve Pote commented that these notices are provided by utilities before digging in the area. In this case they wanted to be sure that there were no historic sites or artifacts that were at risk in the area off Route 22 that where they to work.

Vander Fliet reported on the following donations from the summer. It was decided that the committee should provide thank you cards to those who donated the items. Keli Leunes volunteered to write the thank you cards if the information on the donations is provided.

1. Monetary donation from Phyllis Juetten and Christine Ead
2. Karen Pennett/Pennett Family donated a Laundry Mangle (roller to remove water from washed clothing) to the Museum.
3. The Acosta Family (Jorge and Erin) donated an old bench from the German Camp which was in Watchung.
4. Tim Jones donated Ice Cutting tools from Watchung Lake and they were hung up. He also donated slide photographs of Native Americans and Wetumpka Falls.
NOTE: We should check with Tim Jones to understand anything we can from the photographs of Native Americans, especially if the pictures were taken locally.

Vander Fliet reported that approval signatures for historical videos for Website have been ongoing all summer and that the video on Tiby Wotherspoon was saved to our committee hard drive.

A new door lock was installed on the back door to the Museum. Vander Fliet reported that he would go over new entrance and closing procedures for the Committee at the end of the meeting.

Weekend Journey through the past is to occur on October 7th 10am-5pm & October 8th Noon to 4 pm. Vander Fliet reported that we need as many members as possible all weekend. He also asked all members to sign up on the online sign in sheet for the weekend so he can understand the availability of each member (“2023 Weekend Journey” tab). Vander Fliet thanked Don Monetti for working with Borough on application an insurance.

Tim Logan volunteered to pick up food for the members each day as part of Weekend Journey and that the cost for food would come out of the Historical Budget.

VICE CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

Ness Property: Tim Logan reported that he will work on some historical notes related to the Ness property and existing artifacts from the Ness property, for a future display or website.

LIAISON REPORT – P. Fischer

Paul Fischer was not present; no report was provided. Reviewing a draft copy of the Municipal Budget, Maureen Greenbaum reported that the new lock that was installed at the Texier House costs \$3,000 dollars. We have to verify the cost and what exactly was incurred that would cost \$3,000 dollars.

PROJECTS/NEW BUSINESS

Interview with Bruce Ryno:

Final arrangements need to be made to prepare for and conduct Bruce Ryno interview.

Historical Website Discussion:

Maureen showed the process for creating an Historical Website with links to numerous Watchung-related material and video archives. She demonstrated how to create pages, folders, store and replace images, etc. , and stated that it is not difficult to do. She said it would not be that much effort to maintain. She also indicated that it costs about \$200 per year for the website’s “sign/address”. Maureen showed great progress in website development.

ISP Mentor Project

Terri Pavlack reported on the ISP Mentor Project. Great progress has been made in the creation of a listing and description of projects for each of the projects identified as potentially substantive enough to be an appropriate project for both the Historical Committee and the students. The listing is identifying a good group of potential projects

that can be offered to students in the next school calendar. Students from WHRHS, Pingry, St. Mary's etc. might want have interest in these projects.

As part of the discussion, there is interest in performing additional interviews with other longtime residents, including Don Monetti (on Rescue Squad), Tim Logan (on Ness property, and Alice Olejar (Steve Pote contact).

Loose Ends/Other

It was suggested that the Historical Committee make potential use of the Borough electronic sign, to "advertise" the Historical Committee, maybe by periodically posting an historic history-related question on the Borough Hall Sign.

It was mentioned again that we might want to try to schedule a cleanup date later in the fall, to clean up the upstairs work room at the Texier House.

Mike Departo brought in a vintage WWII newspaper describing a disaster in Russia during the war.

Mike said he may have 3 volunteer students from Saint Mary's. It might be that these students could take projects or pieces of projects, defining each project, understanding the required hours, being able to ask questions, etc.

Emergency Preparedness

Steve Pote will get details on the help that can be provided by the State as it relates to assistance with Emergency Preparedness. In the interim, we know that we will want to systemically and methodically take pictures of all the artifacts on display, potentially temporarily open up (over several afternoons or evenings) the display cases so that pictures can be taken. Some thought would need to be put into how the pictures should be taken, marked (if further description of objects is deemed necessary).

The committee also needs to digitize each picture in the cartons on shelves in the work room. Thought also is needed as to how pictures can be taken of large scrap books.

Legend of Watchung Mural Discussion

We remain "status quo" in that the mural continues to be safely stored in Cape May, NJ. We are, however, now being charged monthly storage fees. To protect the integrity of the mural, we need to get the mural permanently unfurled in the near future (within the year).

Schedule for Texier House Openings

November 5th and 19th

December 3rd

PUBLIC PORTION

(No comments)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Submitted by: Stephen Pote (Secretary)

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday October 18th @ 7 pm.

Attachments:

1. No attachments.