

**CITY OF NORWALK
HISTORICAL COMMISSION – REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 23, 2016
NORWALK HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM**

ATTENDANCE: David Westmoreland, Chair; Suzanne Betts; Eric Chandler;
Holly Cuzzone; Thomas Livingston; Lisa Wilson Grant;
Dana Laird (7:10 p.m.)

OTHERS: Douglas Adams, Robert Jakubik, General Growth Properties, Inc.;
Susan Gilgore, Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Westmoreland called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

2. ACCEPT MEETING MINUTES:

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING MINUTES
AS PRESENTED**

**** MS. BETTS SECONDED**

**JANUARY 27, 2016 REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 3, 2016 PUBLIC HEARING
MARCH 16, 2016 SPECIAL MEETING**

**** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. CHANDLER)**

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Westmoreland reported that the Human Relations Commission will be holding a public hearing on April 28th regarding some of the WPA murals hanging in City Hall. He said that there are a number of murals that people have found offensive and brought to the City several times. He said that this is a complicated issue and is going to demand that all of the murals be addressed.

Mr. Westmoreland said that while he does not like the idea of censoring art, if the decision is made to take some down, there is storage at the Museum. He said that the people who expressed their concerns said that City Hall is the peoples' building and not a museum.

Ms. Laird joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Mr. Westmoreland added that the Museum will protect and save the murals, but is unable to find space to display them because they are so big. He noted that the Arts Commission provided supplemental interpretation.

4. **BOARD REPORTS:**

Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum

Ms. Gilgore's report dated March 23, 2016 is as follows:

Dear Commissioners:

We are thrilled that the Department of Economic and Community Development thanks to the efforts of Sen. Bob Duff, will give a \$500,000 Bonding Grant to the City of Norwalk towards the completion of the ADA construction of a ramp and staircase outside the building. As always, construction comes with a disruption of the museum's general operations and added expenses.

In collaboration with Silvermine School of Art, Lockwood-Mathews Mansion Museum kicks-off its 50 Anniversary with a new exhibition by artist and professor of photography Bruce Dunbar. The exhibition titled, *Endangered & Re-envisioned: Iconic Landmarks and Interiors* will open to the public on April 7, 2016, 12-4 p.m. at the Lockwood-Mathews Mansion Museum, 295 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT. with a fundraising reception on April 7, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

A new multimedia exhibit with photographs, costumes, artifacts, and music will explore the fascinating and tumultuous decade of the 1960s. *Demolish or Preserve: The 1960s at the Lockwood-Mathews Mansion*, curated by Kathleen Bennewitz will open on May 4, 2016 and run through Nov. 20, 2016.

We are participating in several Mathews Park events this season including a familiarization tour of Norwalk for the hospitality sector in Norwalk on April 13 organized by the City of Norwalk and on May 5, the *Ultimate Block Party* launched by Stepping Stones Museum for Children in connection with the National Education Convention.

We thank you for all your support.

Respectfully submitted,

Patsy R. Brescia
Chairman of the Board

Susan Gilgore, PhD
Executive Director

Norwalk Historical Society

There was no report presented this evening.

5. FINANCE REPORT

Mr. Westmoreland reported that the budget meeting went well. He said that he reflected what the Commission has accomplished since 2012, including opening the new museum, and that all sites are in the best shape. The budget was reduced by 33% through restructuring, which saved money for the City. Regarding the capital budget, Mr. Westmoreland reported that the Historical Commission is the only fiscal conservative in the City. He said that the Historical Commission has a good story to tell and should be proud of that.

Mr. Westmoreland said that he asked for an increase in the budget to add a handyman to work an additional 19 hours a week, which will result in coverage five days a week. He also asked for an additional \$25,000 in operating funds for Lockwood Mathews Mansion.

5. BUILDINGS REPORT

Mr. Westmoreland explained the following item.

Action: Approve and refer the following to the Land Use Committee of the Common Council:

**** MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH MILAN'S EXPERT RENOVATION, LLC, FOR CONSTRUCTION OF PHASE I ADA ENHANCEMENTS, FOUNDATION WATER-PROOFING AND DRAINAGE TO THE MUSEUM BUILDING AT CITY HALL IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$169,202.50. ACCOUNTS 09156310 5777 C0549, 09166310 5777 C0573, 091766310 5777, C0573, & 0915 7100 5777 C0235**

AND TO AUTHORIZE THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION TO EXECUTE CHANGE ORDERS ON THE CONTRACT NOT TO EXCEED \$22,000.

**** MS. CUZZONE SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

7. CEMETERIES REPORT

- Review Pine Island Cemetery Archaeological Testing report from Nicholas Bellantoni, State Archaeologist Emeritus
- Review proposed expansion of Crescent Street
- Review and consider improvements to Pine Island Cemetery

Mr. Westmoreland explained that ground penetrating radar was done about a year ago at Pine Island Cemetery. The next step was to do actual test excavations. They were done in November 2015, supervised by Ernest Wiegand, Consulting Archaeologist and Ms. Cuzzone. Thirteen burial features were identified and 11 are within the potential road-widening area. An option is to excavate and re-bury properly and respectfully within the cemetery.

Mr. Westmoreland said that there were two instances where bones were found. He said that he discussed this with Mr. Adams and said that he will entertain re-burying only if there is significant public benefit.

Mr. Westmoreland said that there is no way to connect South Norwalk and West Avenue and feels that having an additional connection is important for local traffic. Some conditions are that GGP will pay for the archaeological work, pave a Norwalk River Valley Trail, pay for plaques and fund payments for professional tombstone conservation work.

Mr. Livingston asked if there is a chance of finding more bodies under the road. Mr. Westmoreland said that possible.

Mr. Jakubik presented plans. Mr. Adams noted that the current plan maintains a crosswalk at Science Drive. Mr. Jakubik reviewed traffic impact plans and a discussion took place.

Mr. Westmoreland said that all of this information will be presented to the public with Dr. Bellantoni and Mr. Wiegand present. Mr. Westmoreland discussed the option to excavate and properly and respectfully re-bury and Ms. Cuzzone agreed that is the most respectful thing to do.

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO SCHEDULE PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION TO PRESENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT, CRESCENT**

STREET EXPANSION PLANS, AND CEMETERY IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC

- ** MS. CUZZONE SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

8. NEW BUSINESS

- ** MS. BETTS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING:**

• RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT \$500,000 GRANT FOR ADA IMPROVEMENTS AT LOCKWOOD MATHEWS MANSION. REFER TO LAND USE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL.

• RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT \$625,000 BONDING GRANT ADMINISTERED BY CT DEEP FOR ADA AND OTHER LANDSCAPE, ROADWAY AND BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS AT MILL HILL HISTORIC PARK, SMITH STREET AND EAST WALL STREET. REFER TO LAND USE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL.

AND TO APPROVE AND REFER THE FOLLOWING TO THE LAND USE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL:

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, CITY OF NORWALK TO AGREE AND ACCEPT THE STATE DECD FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROPOSAL FOR THE LOCKWOOD MATHEWS MANSION GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$500,000.

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, CITY OF NORWALK TO AGREE AND ACCEPT THE STATE DEEP FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROPOSAL FOR MILL HILL HISTORIC PARK IN THE AMOUNT OF \$625,000

- ** MR. CHANDLER SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

9. OLD BUSINESS – WHITE BARN PROPERTY

Mr. Westmoreland explained that an agreement was negotiated where the foundation has four months to come up with funds. He said that the recent public hearing was amazing and they got a lot of press. Ms. Cuzzone said that Mr. Westmoreland did a good job. Mr. Westmoreland said that everyone should be proud and said that developers will think twice before they want to destroy an historic property.

10. ADJOURN

**** MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services