

**CITY OF NORWALK
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
JUNE 28, 2017
MILL HILL HISTORIC PARK
2 EAST WALL STREET
NORWALK, CT**

ATTENDANCE: David Westmoreland, Chair; Suzanne Betts; Eric Chandler;
Thomas Livingston; Lisa Wilson Grant

OTHERS: Susan Gilgore, Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum;
Diane Jellerette, Norwalk Historical Society;
Michael Mushak, Norwalk River Valley Trail

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Westmoreland called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting, May 24, 2017

- ** **MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**
- ** **MS. BETTS SECONDED**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present this evening.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Westmoreland did not present a specific report this evening.

REPORTS – BOARDS

Lockwood Mathews Mansion

Ms. Gilgore's report dated June 28, 2017 is as follows:

We are proud to report that we won the most prestigious national award given by

the American Association of State and Local History for the Museum's exhibit, *The Stairs Below: The Mansion's Domestic Servants, 1868-1938*; the first in the Mansion's history. We are very grateful to Chairman David Westmoreland and the entire Commission for supporting the restoration of the Domestic Servants' and lighting which was instrumental for viewing one of the most important areas of the exhibit.

We had a very busy June as we offered discounted mini-tours almost every weekend. We hosted Pride in the Park free of charge in the Billiards Room. It was a busy day as it coincided with CT Open House Day. Mini tours were also offered during the Father's Day Car Show, and the Arts Festival. We joined the City of Norwalk's Sound of Summer efforts and are very interested in seeing the results in terms of increased attendance during the summer months.

We continue to have concerns regarding the financial impact that the ADA construction might have on operations and our ability to attract and hold licensing events; although we are thrilled that this vital work will take place and that we will see the completion of the ADA upgrades. We would like an update of the start date of construction, when possible as the executive director's office may need to be temporarily dismantled. We thank the Norwalk Historical Commission and Chairman David Westmoreland for overseeing this important project.

Upcoming programs will include a talk by Legendary Fashion & Textile Historian June Bove, a Naturalization Ceremony, and the Old-fashioned Flea Market.

We thank you for all your support.

Mr. Westmoreland asked Ms. Gilgore if there were issues with parking in the Park during the recent Arts Festival. She said the spaces were used by the vendors, which made it difficult for the staff to find parking.

Norwalk Historical Society

Ms. Jellerette reported that Optimum replaced the line to the street.

Construction is moving along. The gazebo is getting painted and they are waiting for the railings for the terrace to be completed. Plantings will take place during the next phase.

Work has begun on the new Norwalk History exhibit. The Little Red Schoolhouse program will be completely refreshed. They intend to create a guidebook.

A lecture took place last evening, featuring World War I illustrators. Some workshops took place during the month of June. Eighty-four pieces of artwork are now on display at Mill Hill.

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Ms. Jellerette described the Independence Day celebrating, including a Wreath laying ceremony for Samuel Grumman.

Mr. Westmoreland added that the Norwalk Historical Society created four exhibits that will open later this summer.

REPORTS

Buildings

Mr. Westmoreland reported that he received three bids for interior and exterior finishes for the Fitch Law House and the Little Red Schoolhouse.

Cemeteries

Ms. Betts reported that she, Ms. Cuzzone and Ms. Laird revised the *Take a Walking Tour of Pine Island Cemetery* flyer. She said she would like to do a similar flyer for Mill Hill Cemetery. Cuzzone ordered a waterproof box to hold the flyers.

Mr. Darren Raymond Locke is working on interpretive signage at Pine Island Cemetery.

Finance

Mr. Westmoreland reported that the only capital funding not spent, is for the roof project.

OLD BUSINESS

- ** MS. BETTS MOVED TO REVIEW AND APPROVE STANTEC PLAN FOR NORWALK RIVER VALLEY TRAIL AT MATHEWS PARK AND PINE ISLAND CEMETERY**
- ** MR. CHANDLER SECONDED**

Mr. Westmorland presented and reviewed the plan documents. Mr. Mushak explained that the trail is fully ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant and made of rolled stone dust, which is good for running and bicycles. It will also have a little drainage built in. This trail solves the dilemma of going through Devon's Place Playground.

Mr. Mushak said that two studies were done and both recommended moving the trail through the cemetery. This move will help the cemetery expand its advocacy group and will also help preserve the cemetery for generations.

Mr. Westmorland said this project is being funded by grants, under the jurisdiction of the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO RESCIND ACTION AUTHORIZED ON APRIL 26, 2017**

**** MR. CHANDLER SECONDED**

APPROVE AND REFER THE FOLLOWING TO THE LAND USE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL: AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH DOMUS CONSTRUCTORS, LLC, FOR ROOF REPAIRS ON THE LOCKWOOD MATHEWS MANSION IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$167,400. ACCOUNTS 09176310 5777 C0092 AND 09186310 5777 C0092

AUTHORIZE THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION TO EXECUTE CHANGE ORDERS ON THE CONTRACT NOT TO EXCEED \$30,000

Mr. Westmorland explained that the Commission will be asked to vote on another contractor at their next meeting.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss issues with parking on the lawn at Mathews Park at recent “Art in the Park” event. Refer any actions to Ordinance and Parks and Recreation Committee

Mr. Westmorland explained that there have been problems with this event for a number of years. When people drive their cars on the grass, it compacts the roots, killing the trees. He said that last weekend, they ran out of parking and the event organizers directed people to park on the grass. The lawn where the former Police Department was located was not constructed for cars. In addition, people parked close to the legacy trees, which is very harmful to them.

Mr. Westmoreland said that if there is an event at Mathews Park and the attendance is expected to be over 200, the organizers have to make arrangements for parking off site.

The organizers of “Pride in the Park” met with local companies and created agreements for parking.

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Mr. Mushak explained that the “Art in the Park” event is five years old. During the first event, vendors parked against the legacy trees and he asked people to keep a 24-foot diameter away from the trees. This year people parked on the roots and since it rained, there were mud ruts. “Pride in the Park; did not allow people to park in the Park and they had volunteers along West Avenue, directing parking.

Mr. Mushak said the “Arts in the Park” event was utter chaos. He said he contacted Mr. Mocciaie who told him that parking is never allowed on the grass at the Park. Mr. Mushak noted that this is an historic park and no other city would permit parking in their park. The trees have been around since the mid 1860s and can die if their roots are compacted by parked cars. In addition, the compacted grass will turn brown. A healthy lawn should not be compacted. Cars were parked with their bumpers against these legacy trees. The landscape part of the setting for the historic buildings and is under the prevue of the Historical Commission.

- ** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO REFER THE ISSUE OF PARKING ON THE LAWN DURING EVENTS AT MATHEWS PARK TO THE ORDINANCE COMMITTEE AND THE RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND RECOMMENDS THAT POLICIES AND PLANS BE DEVELOPED WHEN EXPECTED ATTENDANCE AT THESE EVENTS EXCEEDS THE EXISTING DESIGNATED PARKING CAPACITY**
- ** MR. CHANDLER SECONDED**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO ADJOURN**
- ** MR. LIVINGSTON SECONDED**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services