

**CITY OF NORWALK
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
JANUARY 23, 2019
THE TOWN HOUSE
MILL HILL HISTORIC PARK
2 EAST WALL STREET
NORWALK, CT 06851**

ATTENDANCE: Suzanne Betts, Chair; Eric Chandler; Holly Cuzzone; Dana Laird;
Thomas Livingston; Lisa Wilson Grant

OTHERS: Patsy Brescia and Susan Gilgore, Lockwood Mathews Mansion
Museum; Diane Jellerette, Norwalk Historical Society;
Ryan Farrell Eagle Scout Candidate; David Westmoreland

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Betts called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Page 3 – Ms. Gilgore’s report should read as follows:

The water issue continues to create concerns for LMMM; It has now been determined that the City is responsible for installing a new water supply piping system. The DPW has engaged Tighe & Bond to design the system. Until a permanent solution is in place the First District has advised us to run the water at our faucets daily from 9-5. The Rec & Parks department has also been running the hydrant next to the tennis courts weather permitting. The City has agreed to pay the water bills through the Historical Commission budget. The First District Water department had been testing the water on a daily basis since late July when the problem was first identified. They are now testing it on a weekly basis and are instructing LMMM accordingly. LMMM has been buying drinking water and are currently rent Poland Spring water coolers. We have been instructed to submit the related costs to the city for payment,

Schools have continued to take educational tours of the Mansion during the fall season with over 1,200 students attending the Mansion's Educational Program in 2018 and 9 interns working with staff and volunteers for well over 500 hours. We are also proud to report that the Mansion has had a series of successful and well-attended events for our communities including the “Holiday Open House” where approximately 400 people came to visit Santa and listen to gifted students from the Wilton High School program including chorus and orchestra. A new program, Seasons Readings, in collaboration with JIB productions of Westport

was sold out and brought to LMMM professional Broadway actors and had visitors from throughout Connecticut. We continue to collaborate with the Westport Historical society on group tours offering two Victorian houses to regional tour operators. We were very busy with group tours in November as well as December so far.

The new 2019 Season will be announced shortly with exhibits and lectures focusing on the centennial of the 19th Amendment and women's suffrage starting with the exhibit, "From Corsets to Suffrage: Victorian Women Trailblazers."

We hope that you will join us for some of these exciting 2019 upcoming events and programs and we thank you for all your support throughout 2018 that helped us keep the doors open for a very enriching season for our community.

**** MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS AMENDED
** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. LIVINGSTON)**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present this evening.

REPORTS – BOARDS

A. Norwalk Historical Society

Ms. Jellerette submitted the following report:

- Norwalk Historical Society Museum Phase II ADA access continues. The pillars have been built for the iron gates to be installed. New doors installed on the conference room/office entrance and back door. It will be painted along with the back door.
- Planning state for "Norwalk Changing Communities Before 1835" exhibition in the Town House at Mill Hill. Guest Curator is Betsy Fox.
- Planning for Norden Systems and Bombsight exhibition. Guest Curator is Judith Bacal.
- Executive Directors from Fairfield County historical Societies/Museums will met in mid-January at the Westport Historical Society for the first time in four/five years. The Fairfield County Cultural alliance is assisting with organizing the meeting.
- The New Canaan Historical Society has borrowed four of the City of Norwalk's WPA murals for an exhibition January – March 2019.

Past Events

- None

Upcoming Events

- Reschedule to Saturday, January 26, 2019, Kids Care: MLK Jr. Service Day Project, Sunday, January 23, 2019 (snow date: Saturday, January 26, 2019), 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at Norwalk Historical Society Museum. In partnership with Love all Project, this is a family-friendly event to support the non-profit Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigration. Participants are encouraged to bring individually packaged non-perishable snacks to include in the welcome bags for immigrants and refugees settling in Connecticut. Children can create cards and decorate the bags. In addition, they can make peace doves, heart origami and learn about the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Connecticut's African American Heroines Lecture, Saturday, February 2, 2019 (snow date: Saturday, February 9, 2019, (2:00 – 3:00 p.m. at Norwalk Historical Society Museum. In honor of Black History Month, a speaker from the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame will present a multi-media presentation exploring the important contributions some of Connecticut's African American women have made.
- "That's Weird" Exhibition Lecture. Saturday, February 23, 2019 (snow date, Saturday, March 2, 2019) at Rowayton Community Center. In partnership with the Rowayton Historical Society, this presentation explores some of Connecticut Historical Societies strangest items. You will learn how even the oddest items can be gateways into a deeper understanding and appreciation of the State's history.
- I Could Not Call Her Mother: The Evil Stepmother in Early America lecture, Sunday, March 3, 2019 (snow date: Saturday, March 9, 2019) 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Norwalk Historical Society Museum. This lecture presented by Leslie Lindenauer, a professor at Western Connecticut State University explores the role of the evil stepmother in early American popular culture (with a glance into later pulp fiction and film noir!).

B. Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum

Ms. Gilgore and Ms. Brescia submitted the following report:

LMMM enjoyed a very successful Holiday season with strong admissions, a delightful Holiday Open House and Holiday Exhibit featuring beautiful historic decorations coupled with several contemporary Christmas trees. We are now closed for the winter months and plan to reopen in early April.

We are currently in the process of planning an exhibition on the 19th amendment and women's suffrage entitled "From Corsets to Suffrage: Victorian Women

Trailblazers.” We thank Commissioner Lisa Grant for putting us in touch with Wendell Livingston, President of the Rowayton Historical Society, who has generously offered to loan a few key artifacts for the exhibit.

The Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum is launching its sixth annual Young Writers’ Competition entitled. *A Victorian Era Mystery: Whodunit” at the Mansion*, which will start on February 15th and end on June 7, 2019.

There are several areas of physical concerns that are currently facing the Mansion.

Phase III of the 2008 master plan of mechanical upgrades: The 5-million-dollar State of CT bond is in place and we are waiting to receive the contracts for the funding. We are however moving forward with framing the timeline for this extension construction/restoration project which will include upgrades to the HVAC, provide for the first time, a fire safety system and hopefully include electrical service to the upper floors of the Mansion. We expect the final drawings; bidding process and contract signing will take approximately one year to complete. We have been advised that most of the mansion will have to be emptied during construction. To accomplish this is no easy task. Planning for that process is underway with current staff and volunteers. David Scott Parker Architect is in place to guide us through this construction period.

The water supply needs continue to create concerns for LMMM. The DPW has engaged Tighe & Bond to design a new system in conjunction with the First Water Department. That design should be completed within the next two weeks. The Historical Commission is funding the design work. Funds for construction will need to be identified, followed by an RFP and contract award. The current approximate estimates are about \$55,000. The target for completion of a new water line from Butler Street is early April 2019. The City has agreed to pay the water bills during the planning phase. LMMM has been buying drinking water and we currently rent Poland Spring water coolers. We have been instructed to submit the related costs to the City for payment.

We have experienced a mold issue which developed over the Christmas holiday. It was caused by a chimney being capped during roofing work; it is currently being remediated under the supervision of David Scott Parker Architects with professional help. The location is on the second and third floors and most of the remediation is now completed.

While continued construction has improved substantially the physical space of this landmark and the visitor’s experience, we continue to be challenged financially due to the protracted construction and forced reduced activities. We are therefor requesting a \$100,000 operating grant from the City for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

We hope that you will join us for some of the exciting 2019 upcoming events and programs and we thank you for all your support throughout 2018 that helped us keep the doors open for a very enriching season for our community.

REPORTS

A. Buildings

Mr. Westmoreland reported that they are finishing the second phase of the ADA project at the Norwalk Museum. They hope to complete this project in 30 days. They are close to going out to bid for the elevator.

The Common Council approved the bid awarded for the ADA project at the Barn and Jail. The heating system at the Fitch Law office failed.

B. Cemeteries

Eagle Scout project – Ryan Farrell

Eagle Scout candidate Ryan Farrell presented his project to re-set 20 – 25 headstones at Pine Island Cemetery. He plans to do this project at the end of March or in early April

**** MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO APPROVE RYAN FARRELL'S EAGLE
SCOUT PROJECT AS PRESENTED
** MR. LIVINGSTON SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

C. Finance

Ms. Betts reported that the Commission's capital budget request will go before the City next Thursday.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Elmcrest Terrace – Update

The applicants presented their revised renovation plan for the 1880 structure with an addition to the rear of the structure. They said they will bring back the original historical architecture to the 1880 structure and demolish the addition made in the 1970s. The architectural footprint of the original structure will not be altered.

Mr. Bryant of the Norwalk Land Trust said that when he was inside the building about 10 – 15 years ago it was in very poor shape. Its most recent use was as a rooming house with 22 rooms.

The applicants said that both the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission were interested in receiving comments from the Historical Commission.

The Commissioners reviewed and discussed the plans.

**** MR. CHANDLER MOVED THAT THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION HAS RECEIVED AND REVIEWED A REFERRAL OF SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION 12-18SP FOR 3 ELMCREST TERRACE. THE COMMISSION SUPPORTS AND APPROVES OF THE RETENTION AND RENOVATION OF THE HISTORIC VICTORIAN HOME CONSTRUCTED IN 1880 AND THE ADDITION OF A MULTI-FAMILY BUILDING TO ITS REAR AS REPRESENTED IN "SCHEMATICS FOR 3 ELMCREST TERRACE" CREATED BY CROSSKEY ARCHITECTS DATED 1/17/2019 AND PRESENTED TO THE COMMISSION ON 1/23/2019.**

SAVING HISTORIC BUILDINGS LIKE THIS ONE, WHILE ALSO ALLOWING NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED AND COMMENDED. IN MAKING THIS DETERMINATION, THE COMMISSION HAS REVIEWED THE MEANS OF RENOVATION PROPOSED FOR THE HISTORIC HOME AND FIND THAT THE STRUCTURE CONTRIBUTES TO THE COMMUNITY CHARACTER THROUGH ITS ARCHITECTURAL UNIQUENESS AND WE FIND THAT THE DEGREE OF PRESERVATION MAINTAINS THE CHARACTER, AESTHETIC AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE EXISTING HISTORIC BUILDING. THE DIFFERENTIATION OF STYLE, COLOR AND ARCHITECTURE BETWEEN THE HISTORIC STRUCTURE AND THE NEW ADDITION APPEARS APPROPRIATE IN CONTEXT OF A PRESERVATION PROJECT SUCH AS THIS.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

B. Clarkes/Elizabeth Street

Attorney Blank and Mr. Grotheer presented the proposal on behalf of the Clarke's who plan to develop a portion of Elizabeth Street. Two existing structures will come down and replace with two historical structures. The developers will also update the sidewalks and install historic lighting. Two existing structures will be rehabilitated to bring back their original historic features.

Attorney Blank explained that they do not require any action by this Commission but would like their support.

Mr. Westmoreland spoke in support of the project and said he liked the industrial look of the main building. He added that he liked the idea of restoring the existing houses.

Mr. Westmoreland asked the applicants if they were interested in solar on the buildings and explained the program available through SNEW. Mr. Bryant added that there may be some tax credits for the two buildings. He said that the Norwalk Preservation Trust voted to support the concept.

**** MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONCEPT PENDING
REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE FINAL ARCHITECTURAL PLANS
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. CUZZONE MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services