

**CITY OF NORWALK  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
REGULAR MEETING  
FEBRUARY 26, 2020**

ATTENDANCE: Liz Golden, Judith Bacal, Eric Chandler, Dana Laird (Chair), Tom Livingston, Holly Cuzzone

STAFF: David Westmoreland, Norwalk Historical Society; Diane Jallerette, Executive Director, Norwalk Historical Society; Susan Gilgore, Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Dana Laird called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Mr. Livingston requested to insert the line “Mr. Livingston recused himself from the meeting” after the section heading “New Business” on page 2, under A. He also asked to amend page 3 to say “After the motion had passed, Mr. Livingston rejoined the meeting.”

**\*\*MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 22, 2020 MINUTES**

**\*\*MS. CUZZONE SECONDED**

**\*\*MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public comment at this time.

**REPORTS - BOARDS**

**A. Norwalk Historical Society - Diane Jellerette**

Ms. Jellerette reported the following:

- The Norwalk Historical Society received a \$35,000 Implementation Grant from CT Humanities for “Norwalk Changing Communities Before 1835” Exhibition. The funds will be used on the technical design.
- Upcoming Event: “A Journey” - A Musical One-Woman Show in honor of Black History Month on Saturday, February 29, 2020 performed by Kimberly Wilson.
- Upcoming Event: Women’s History Month Program - Women’s Symposium celebrating the passing of the 19th Amendment on Saturday, March 28, 2020. This event will be presented by The League of Women Voters of Norwalk, which is a new organization. Ms. Jellerette said that this is the first time the NHS has ever hosted a symposium before. Free to the public. Ms. Laird suggested checking out TL Duryea’s website and Facebook Page with regards to this event.

**B. Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum - Susan Gilgore**

- The Veranda is currently under construction. Contract has been signed for the architects in the amount of \$5 million, but not for the contractor. They will know more details in the next few weeks. Ms. Westmoreland said that the contract has taken over a year to sign, and it includes detail on the electric upgrades, HVAC, lighting, sprinklers, and more. Ms. Gilgore said that the DOT hasn’t communicated about the fences yet, which will be placed all around the perimeter of the mansion. The fence installation might be starting on April 1st. She said the staging will be between Stepping Stones and CCP, and the Museum will not be closed during construction.
- Upcoming Event: “Health, Healing and Addiction in 19th Century America” - Funds have been received in the amount of \$20,000 from CT Humanities. The exhibit will celebrate the bicentennial of Florence Nightingale, as well as the centennial of the Band-Aid. Show will include inventions, technology, and the transformation of modern medicine from the Victorian Era. A private collector with an extensive collection of artifacts has agreed to loan objects for public viewing for the first time. Information is being shared from the Norwalk Hospital and the Department of History at Yale University. Exhibit opens May 14, 2020.
- Upcoming Event: A Capella Concert by the Princeton University Footnotes, presented in collaboration with the Princeton Alumni on March 21, 2020.
- Upcoming Event: “About Women” exhibit on women finding their voices and making an impact, presented in collaboration with the Silvermine Arts Center from April 2, 2020 - June 21, 2020.

- Upcoming Event: “The Artistry of Afternoon Tea: Rituals, Etiquette, Food, and Fashion” by tea expert and descendant of the owner of Downton Abbey, Ellen Easton. The event includes a talk, demo, and book signing.

Discussion took place regarding the replacement of the original fences on the property. Some of the fences will be original and some will be newly created. Mr. Westmoreland suggested that Ms. Gilgore contact Kevin F. via email at the DOT for an update. Ms. Laird said they were still waiting for the walk bridge report.

Ms. Cuzzone, with respect to the upcoming exhibit on “Health, Healing, and Addiction”, said that there were 2 sanitariums in Norwalk in the 19th century - one at the Wadsworth and the other at Monterrey Place. Ms. Gilgore said that they are going to end the timeline of the exhibit at 1910. Ms. Cuzzone said the sanitariums thought of the patients as inmates and said the practices of medical care offered to the mentally ill in earlier eras were bizarre. She said that some people were brought up by train and then carriage to “Doc Smith’s” sanitarium facilities in Cranbury Park. Ms. Gilgore said they will do a whole section on the wacky treatments by doctors who could do whatever they wanted in the 1800s.

## REPORTS

### **A. Buildings - David Westmoreland**

- Veranda repair is the big project that is coming up. Mr. Westmoreland said that when they took the roof off of it, the underside was completely rotted. He sought approval for the funds needed to complete the project.

**\*\*MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO APPROVE SPENDING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$13,240 FOR VERANDA CONSTRUCTION**

**\*\*MR. CHANDLER SECONDED**

**\*\*MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

- The repainting of the Townhouse is another project in the works. They are looking for an update on the contract.
- Darren Raymond-Walker is working with the Center for Printmaking on the interpretive signs for Mathews Park.
- A handyman is doing repairs on the shingles of the Cottage.

- A new toilet has been installed in the Mill Hill building, which cost \$169 on sale.
- A tour of the jail has been promised for April or May 2020.

## **B. Cemeteries**

No report was made on cemeteries.

## **C. Finance**

Mr. Westmoreland said they submitted a flat budget, which he cut by \$50. He said the City made 2% increases, but he took those out. He said that the Historical Society is in fine shape in the expense budget, and the BET review is on March 9th. He shared a document regarding the capital budget organized in priority sequence.

Mr. Westmoreland asked for \$858,000. The Finance Director recommended \$529,000, but they recommended nothing for their top priority request for the Mill Hill building (more lighting, painting the exterior and interior). They cut the budget for the Lockwood Mathews Mansion from \$85,000 to \$50,000, which supports the repair of the roof, but not the repairs from ceiling to floor. He said the rest of the money will be used to fix the porch and paint it.

Mr. Westmoreland estimated \$155,000 for finishing the jail, and said that the electrical and plumbing systems could be done by next year. He sent a letter to the Planning Commission, who approved this request to put the money back. This was also communicated with the Mayor.

Mr. Westmoreland estimated \$110,000 for cemetery at Pine Island. He said there is no time to work on that this year. He thinks they are in good shape with the budget this year. Mr. Livingston asked about mural restoration.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Bacal said they will begin printing the new Norwalk Rack Card. Mr. Westmoreland said they started this 2 years ago. The Henry Whitfield House in Guilford offered to put the card out in their space.

Ms. Bacal said she invited Sabrina Church from Tourism to meet with her and talk about the location-based, AutoCast mobile app. She said this app has been launched several times, and will

be helpful in promoting the Historical Society going forward. Ms. Golden suggested that they have a story written on it. Ms. Bacal said that the new person handling the app will have a year to implement tourism strategy.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Discussion took place about parking issues for the meetings at Mill Hill. Mr. Livingston suggested that they meet at the Museum instead.

Mr. Westmoreland said that the steps in front of the Mill Hill building are crumbling and he wants to improve the path from the lot to the front steps.

Ms. Golden brought up an email from February 25, 2020 regarding scheduling for hearing on 70 Highland demolition. A quorum is needed. The dates available for hearing are March 18, 19, 24, 26, or 31. Ms. Laird said that they can impose a demolition delay and see if there is any public outcry before the house is demolished. Mr. Westmoreland said that if no one comes to the demolition, it is a waste of everyone's time. Ms. Laird said that she didn't know how to get the message out, and she doesn't want to use Facebook, but she mentioned that her friend saw a notice in the newspaper.

Ms. Laird asked how the Enson Road demolition slipped through the cracks. She said that these houses were on a list of similar homes in the area from the 1930s. Ms. Bacal said if there is a plaque, there should be a sheet of paper associated with that. Ms. Laird said plaques promote awareness. Ms. Golden said that makes history alive. Ms. Bacal said plaques are one of the ways to educate people about historic houses. Mr. Westmoreland said that documentation helps to make sure that developers and potential home buyers are aware of historical significance.

Discussion took place regarding possible tours of historic "storybook" houses in the Pelham, Golden Hill, Pine Hill, and Quintard areas. Ms. Bacal suggested making lists of addresses for Rowayton. Ms. Golden said that Silvermine does a tour and Rowayton might do a garden tour.

Mr. Livingston recalled a time when Stamford had to move its plan for a new police station because they had planned to demolish the oldest building in the city that predated the Revolutionary War.

Discussion took place about notifying people about demolitions. They currently have 120 days to respond, but they can request a change to 180 days from the Ordinance Committee, according to State Statutes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\*MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:09 PM**

**\*\*MS. CUZZONE SECONDED**

**\*\*MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Anaya Sheils  
Telesco Secretarial Service