

City of Norwalk
Museum Restructuring Committee
July 10, 2012 -MINUTES

Attendance: Judith Bacal (6:20pm), Patsy Brescia, James Brown, James Clark (5:52pm) Erin Halsey, Mary Alice Fitzgerald, Atty Mickey Koleszar, Mary Roman, David Park, Scott Wands, David Westmoreland, Charlie Yost

Guests: Tom Hamilton
Ralph Bloom
Mayor Frank Zullo

Mr. Westmoreland called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm and turned the meeting over to Mr. Hamilton, who began the discussion about how all future funding for the museum will have to be approved by the BET. He said there is \$100,000 slated in the budget for transitional costs for the museum, and a few of the options currently being considered are: 1) negotiating a short term lease with the landlord in SoNo 2) establishing a smaller footprint in the building or 3) moving. A discussion ensued about the various plans for future funding and that currently the landlord is charging us the same rent he did when it was open. Mr. Hamilton discussed a rate per square foot if the space is reduced, but has not heard back from the land lord yet on these various options and explained that it is hard to negotiate **when he doesn't know how long the lease would be**, exactly how much space is needed, etc. Bottom line is what does the committee want to recommend and the cost of that recommendation. Ms. Brescia asked who the current landlord is and was told it is Norwalk Museum Partnership, Fred French from Stamford. She then asked what the rental income was from the original Lockwood House location and Mr. Bloom confirmed it was \$45,000/year.

Mr. Westmoreland led the discussion about costs that would be incurred for having a curator, and various other expenses to run the museum. Mr. Yost asked if there was an estimate for moving the archives from the current location to alternate location. Mr. Brown talked about the costs of moving, and how they will be determined. Mr. Wand informed the committee that he has been researching different consultants to come up with a realistic estimation of what the total expenditures might be. Mr. Brown has gotten estimates for carpet removal and replacements, he has also identified a person who is interested in organizing the archives, on a part time basis, 19.5 hours a week, and that it would be a no benefit position. Mr. Yost asked about other expenses, and Mr. Brown explained that the Library would absorb some additional expenses.

Former Mayor Zullo came in and told the committee about how he had met with Mr. Manice DeForest Lockwood on several occasions. During one of those visits, Mr. Lockwood shared with Mayor Zullo how he wanted to maintain the Lockwood furniture collection. It was Mr. **Lockwood's** wish to keep all of the furniture together, as it had been. Mayor Zullo wanted to abide by his wishes, but when the city decided to move the museum, that did not happen. Mayor Zullo feels the collection could be set up in the Lockwood House so it could be exhibited the way it was intended to be. Ms. Brescia asked if there were any written obligations and Mr. Bloom quoted Mr. Lockwood as saying, **"I will never be a hand from the grave..."** and reiterated that the main goal was to show the collection as a home, with the entire collection in one place. Ms. Brescia asked if we still had the all of the furniture and Mr. Bloom said that the nucleus of the furniture had never changed and is currently housed at The Norwalk Museum in SoNo. Mr. Westmoreland explained that the collection currently is larger than the original Lockwood House contents, and that there are many other artifacts which have been donated or loaned to the city of Norwalk, and that rotating exhibits would be a great idea.

Ms. Brescia inquired as to the water problem in the basement of the Lockwood House,

Mr. Hamilton didn't know if anything had been done, and Mr. Westmoreland said that there is still work to be done.

Next steps:

General discussion about costs or moving, and Mr. Yost suggested that the committee pull a list together of what all the costs will be to move or to stay. There needs to be compelling reasons to: 1) stay in SoNo or 2) move. Mr. Westmoreland went on to talk about moving the items out of the basement of the current location and where they should go. They was also a discussion about a new location for vault; the library, the basement of the Health Department or basement of the Lockwood House.

Atty. Koleszar talked about "known's vs unknowns" in the context of moving or staying. Mr. Westmoreland brought the conversation back to where will be the best location and who will manage it. The topic of becoming a non-profit, 501C3 was approached by Ms. Brescia and then a discussion about inventory and cataloguing took place. She went on to suggest that a schematic be developed so the committee can make recommendations on where things should be moved. Mr. Brown said that the current archives are daunting and that it will take a long time to catalogue them accurately. Ms. Brescia wanted to know if measurements had been taken to see if the Dunn Hardware Store would fit in the Lockwood House. Mr. Westmoreland said he will be at the Museum in SoNo this week and will take measurements then. He also said that the floor plan for Fodor Farm is still pending.

Mr. Brown told us there are still no estimates on the cost of moving the items from the basement and thought maybe the Historical Commission could identify said items. Mr. Wand said he could get some recommendations for costs to design the schematic.

Ms. Brescia explained the benefits of moving out from a realtor's perspective which was very helpful. Mr. Parks talked about the pros and con's and **Mr. Westmoreland said he would come up with a list.**

Mr. Brown then asked how a 501C3 non-profit would function. Mr. Westmoreland explained that the Norwalk Historical Commission runs Mill Hill, and that the city maintains the buildings, but the non-profit agency runs the day to day activities and provides reports to the city. Ms. Brescia explained to the group that LLM, Board of Trustees currently has 24 members and she talked about the extensive fundraising they do for the mansion; the city provides some funding, but the majority of funds are raised. She also told us that the board owns some of the collection housed in LMM and that the city owns part of it as well.

The next meeting will be on July17th, at 5:30 in the 1st floor lounge, as Room 101 is not available.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin E. Halsey
Secretary