

**CITY OF NORWALK
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
JANUARY 30, 2013**

ATTENDANCE: Peter Bondi, Chair; Eric Chandler; Holly Cuzzone; Thom Dunlap;
Bruce Kimmel; John Kurtzman; David Westmoreland;
Charles Yost

OTHERS: Jim Brown, Norwalk Public Library; Patsy Brescia and
Susan Gilgore, Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Bondi called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES- November 28, 2012

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Page 3, last paragraph, first sentence should read as follows: ...and said that he received two bids

Page 4, Mill Hill - correct prostate to prostrate

Brookside, correct do to not

** **MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED**

** **MR. KURTZMAN SECONDED**

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

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Peter Bondi

Mr. Bondi said that most of his report has to do with different sections of the agenda.

REPORTS – BOARDS

A. Norwalk Historical Society – David Westmoreland, President

Mr. Westmoreland reported that they had a great December.

B. Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum – Patsy Brescia, President

Ms. Brescia reviewed her written report as follows:

Dear Commissioners:

We are delighted to inform you that LMMM has received notice of a grant of \$179,558, from the Connecticut State Historical Preservation Office to be added to the funds available allowing us to proceed with the 2nd phase of the mechanical upgrades as per our 2008 Strategic Plan. As you know, we requested a sum of \$200,000 for this grant. Whereas we anticipate a possible underfunding for this project, we are asking for \$50,000 in the 2013/2014 City Capital budget. We are therefore adjusting our operating request.

We appreciate your support of these funding requests.

The 1st phase of our construction is almost complete. We look forward to having the electricity available to the Park trails.

The Mansion is closed for the winter season and will reopen in early April. Our Gala evening event is scheduled for April 13th. We will be opening our spring exhibit "What Is It" and the main speaker will be Dr. Lubar from Brown University. We have recently received \$20,000 from the Connecticut Humanities Council to help fund this exhibit. We have invited the Governor to this event and so far it is on his agenda.

Our restoration committee has been focused on restoring the entry foyer mantel and has identified Thomas W. Frank for this project. We estimate that this work will cost approximately \$25,000. One of our Trustees has donated a gift to finance this project. Mimi Findlay has submitted the proposal to Julie Carmelich and the State. We are hereby submitting this project and proposal for your review and approval.

We are anxious to have the roof repairs move forward. As you know, any delays just potentially increase the damage to the Mansion.

Sincerely,
Patsy Brescia, Chairman Board of Trustees
Dr. Susan Gilgore, Executive Director

REPORTS

A. Buildings - Peter Bondi

1. Discuss and Approve Plans for Leak Repairs at Lockwood Mathews Mansion

Mr. Bondi reported that David Scott Parker came up with a plan to address the nine areas where there are leaks. Ms. Brescia said that realistically they may not have the funding for this for five years. Mr. Bondi said that they are going to have to prioritize where they can clearly see where the leaks are coming from. He said that the next step is to ask the Purchasing Agent to go out for RFQs to find contractors who understand this kind of work and historic buildings.

Mr. Kurtzman suggested conducting inspections in the fall and in the spring. Mr. Bondi described the RFQ process.

**** MR. WESTMORELAND MOVED TO ACCEPT THE PLANS FOR LEAK REPAIRS AT LOCKWOOD MATHEWS MANSION AND TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE RFQ PROCESS**
**** MR. KIMMEL SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. Update on Electrical Repairs at Gate Lodge and Lockwood Mathews Mansion

Mr. Bondi gave an update on the electrical repairs. He said that they are going to have to extend the shrubbery to cover the electrical meter near the Gate Lodge. The only other option was to

place it inside, but CL&P did not agree with this option, because they need to be able to read the meter.

3. Update on Old Jail Restoration Project

Mr. Bondi reported that they are at the point where they have picked out the color of the gutters and they are working on the custom windows. They have to replace and re point the brick. He said that he wants to get a mortar analysis before re-pointing the brick. Mr. Westmoreland noted that modern mortar cannot be used with old bricks.

Mr. Bondi said that Mr. Mauro stabilized the barn after the tree fell on it. He said that he met with the architect regarding replacing the porch on the Gate Lodge.

4. Review and Approve LMMM Fireplace Restoration Project w/Donated Funds

**** MR. WESTMORELAND MOVED TO APPROVE THE LMMM FIREPLACE RESTORATION PROJECT WITH DONATED FUNDS, PENDING APPROVAL FROM THE STATE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION OFFICE. THIS APPROVAL COMES WITH GRATITUDE TO THE DONOR FOR THEIR GENEROSITY IN FUNDING THIS RESTORATION PROJECT**
**** MR. KIMMEL SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

C. Cemetery – Holly Cuzzone

A discussion took place about the damaged headstones at Mill Hill. Mr. Westmoreland said that he will follow up with Aegis. Mr. Westmoreland reported that he will be meeting with an Eagle Scout candidate on Friday who wants to do a project at Mill Hill. Ms. Cuzzone said that she will continue to inventory the cemeteries in the spring.

D. Finance - Suzanne Betts

Discuss Capital / Operating Budget Meetings

Mr. Westmoreland reported that he and Mr. Bondi met with Mr. Hamilton and the Finance staff to review the budgets. He said that the Planning Commission seemed to be supportive. Mr. Bondi said that they are showing them that this is a functioning Commission and that they are getting things done.

5. Discuss and Approve Adjusting the Lockwood Mathews Mansion \$200,000 2013 -2014 Budget Request

**** MR. WESTMORELAND MOVED TO APPROVE ADJUSTING THE LOCKWOOD MATHEWS MANSION \$200,000 2013-2014 BUDGET REQUEST TO \$50,000 IN LIGHT OF THE ANTICIPATED STATE GRANT THAT THEY**

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ARE GOING TO RECEIVE FOR THEIR PROJECT
**** MR. CHANDLER SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

E. Norwalk Museum - Peter Bondi

Norwalk Historical Society Proposal

Mr. Westmoreland distributed and reviewed the draft proposal for managing the Museum collection for the City of Norwalk. He said that the purpose of this evening it to present the draft proposal and the feedback from the Commission. A discussion ensued. Mr. Bondi said that the thinks that overall, there will be some savings. He said that there is no proposal from the Historical Commission to move the collection to the Library.

Mr. Bondi expressed appreciation to Mr. Westmoreland and the Historical Society for coming forward with this proposal and asked the Commission to consider the Historical Society as partners with the collection.

Mr. Brown said that Mr. Westmoreland did a good job, but he still believes the best location for the achieves is the Library. He talked about the preparations they have made and said that they submitted a grant request to the grants department to speed up the organization if the achieves come to the Library. He said that the Library is an institution with tens of thousands of subscribers and can offer more hours. He said that they worked out staffing for 40 hours a week. They have the most advanced library cataloguing system which is a big improvement for accessing the collection. Mr. Brown said that the Library has advantages that are not in place at the Lockwood House location.

Mr. Bondi said that the biggest disadvantage of moving the collection to the Library is that they work under the City's budget. Mr. Brown said that it is a pretty robust budget. Mr. Bondi said that once the collection goes to the Library, the Commission will lose control. He said that they need to know that there is an organization like the Historical Society protecting the collection.

Mr. Bondi told Mr. Brown that he respects where he is coming from, but their job is to protect the collection and put it in the hands of someone who knows what to do with this.

Mr. Yost said that the Library will provide more oversight and they will have a real program. Mr. Bondi said that the Library is only proposing to take on one part of the collection. The Historical Society proposes to keep the whole collection together under one roof.

Mr. Kimmel noted that most of the Historical Society is run by volunteers and part time staff. He asked if they hope to attract funding to bring staff on full time. He said that what Mr. Westmoreland described was not as stable as what the Library proposed.

Mr. Westmoreland said that he stepped down as Chair of the Restructuring Committee. In addition, he will recuse himself from any vote on these issues. He assured the Commission that he will not take any decision personally. He said that there are advantages and disadvantages that need to be weighed.

Mr. Brown said that the Library thinks about serving the full community; they see a wide range of people there. He said that they have invested a lot of time to make their proposal palatable.

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Mr. Kimmel asked Mr. Westmorland about cataloguing and about people doing research. He told Mr. Westmorland that he presented an incredible program, but that is not the same as a research facility and that is what libraries do. Mr. Kimmel said that he sees advantages of the Historical Society focusing on what it does very well and the Library focusing on what it does very well.

Mr. Westmoreland said that no one is asking for a decision; this is a draft proposal. He said that the Board did not vote on this; he wanted to present it here first.

Ms. Cuzzone said that she was relieved that the Historical Society would be the caretakers of the collection. She said that she is not clear where the archives would be better off. She said that she knows the Library will take good care, but she needs more time to think about this.

Mr. Brown said that he wants to see the largest public served in the best way possible.

Mr. Chandler said that it is oblivious that the City does not want the Museum to stay in this building. He told Mr. Westmoreland that the plan was very well thought out. Mr. Bondi said that in November, the Commission voted to hire someone to catalogue the collection prior to it being moved. He said that it is going to take a huge effort to do this. A majority of the collection was cataloged on a program, but it needs to be integrated. All of the computers are at City Hall.

Mr. Brown proposed doing an inventory of everything before a move. He said that he thought the move could be done quickly, no more than 2 – 3 weeks. Mr. Bondi said that the City has proposed paying the rent on this building until July 1st.

Mr. Westmoreland said that he needs to finalize the proposal with the Historical Society's board. Mr. Kimmel asked Mr. Westmoreland if he presented this proposal to the Restructuring Committee. Mr. Westmoreland said that he did and they were very enthusiastic.

Mr. Kimmel said that he was under the impression that the Restructuring Committee understood the variety of important reasons why the archives should be located in a research facility and suddenly that is off the table because of the proposal from the Historical Society. He asked if they were in the position to make a recommendation. Mr. Westmoreland said that he would have to talk to Mr. McQuaid about a follow up meeting; they have not voted on this. He said that he is a member of the Restructuring Committee, but stepped down as Chair, because he felt it was a conflict of interest. He noted that Mr. Brown made a proposal and is also a member of the Restructuring Committee.

Mr. Bondi said that the Historical Commission has the authority over the Museum. The Restructuring Committee does not. Under the City's Charter, the Historical Commission makes decisions about the Museum, buildings and cemeteries.

Mr. Bondi said that Mayor Moccia should have come to the Commission, but he did not understand how the Code was written. When there is a Commission in place, they should be trusted to do the right thing. Mr. Brown said that it seemed like the Mayor wanted an outside opinion on this. Mr. Westmoreland said that the Restructuring Committee recognized from day one that they were an advisory committee.

Mr. Bondi reiterated that the Mayor should have consulted this Commission before establishing the Restructuring Committee. He said that the only communication he had from the Mayor

regarding this issue is when the Mayor told him, "I am the Mayor and I can do what I want."

Mr. Chandler suggested viewing the spaces. Ms. Cuzzone said that she would like to know more about how they will use the archives to develop exhibits. Mr. Bondi said that he is leaning toward keeping the collection together. Mr. Brown said that he can provide additional information on the Library's side. He can do this through the Restructuring Committee. Mr. Westmoreland said that the decision lies with this Commission and that they need to do their due diligence to make a decision.

Mr. Brown said that the Library has the best cataloguing system out there. He said that they are working toward upgrading it and will probably get it within the next couple of years. Their technical infrastructure is good.

Mr. Westmoreland said that he will go back to the Historical Society and they will continue to discuss this at their next meeting.

Mr. Chandler asked if the Restructuring Committee came up with anything viable for the Museum. Mr. Westmoreland said that they did not, except for creating a new 501 (c) 3; the Committee voted that the Lockwood House was the right location.

2. Discuss and Approve Final Payment to Onion Hill Designs

Mr. Bondi explained that he went through the inventory in the Gift Shop.

- ** **MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FINAL PAYMENT TO ONION HILL DESIGNS FOR \$104.25**
- ** **MS. CUZZONE SECONDED**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

OLD BUSINESS

Discuss and Approve the Lockwood Mathews Mansion Preservation Restriction

Mr. Bondi said that the City needs to provide a subordination letter to the State.

- ** **MR. WESTMORELAND MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY TO PROVIDE A LETTER AUTHORIZING THE LOCKWOOD MATHEWS MANSION PRESERVATION RESTRICTION**
- ** **MS. CUZZONE SECONDED**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss the "Hope" Oyster Sloop

Mr. Bondi said that this is an item he has been working on with the Seaport Association and The Maritime Aquarium. He gave an overview of the history of the sloop. He said that he hoped The Maritime Aquarium would entertain their proposal to use it as an educational tool for the public, rather than for Parks and Recreation to cut the bottom and use it as a stage at Calf Pasture Beach.

Mr. Kimmel said that this item came before the Parks and Recreation Committee and it seems that The Maritime Aquarium is interested in moving it. He said that they are willing to cut the bottom, but he feels this needs further research.

Mr. Bondi said that he does not fault Parks and Recreation's proposal. He said that Shelton King of King Industries wants to step in and restore the *Hope*. The Seaport Association would like to partner with them and keep the vessel at Sheffield Island. Mr. Bondi said that he is meeting with Ms. Hagadorn from TMA tomorrow; he has already met with the president, Ms. Herring.

Mr. Chandler said that he would rather see the *Hope* used in some form of its original use. He asked if there was something this Commission could do. Mr. Bondi said that the Commission does not have control over this. This is just for information.

Mr. Bondi reported that Mr. Brian Fisher from Lockwood Mathews Mansion donated an archival photo of the Gate House. In addition he came across some wooden nickels and donated them to the collection. They are from Norwalk's 300th anniversary in 1951.

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

There was no other business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services