

**CITY OF NORWALK  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
APRIL 24, 2013**

ATTENDANCE: David Westmoreland, Chair; Holly Cuzzone, Vice Chair, Suzanne Betts; Eric Chandler; Thomas Dunlap; Bruce Kimmel; Charles Yost

OTHERS: Julyen Norman, Center for Contemporary Printmaking  
Susan Gilgore, Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

Mr. Norman, Executive Director of the Center for Contemporary Printmaking welcomed the Commission to the Center.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES** – March 26, 2013

Mr. Westmoreland suggested the Commission postpone acceptance of the minutes until the May meeting, given the absence of Ms. Lombardi from Telesco Secretarial Services.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Mr. Westmoreland reported that he met with the Arts Commission at their request to discuss the City's WPA murals collection. The Arts Commission inquired if the murals should come under the Historical Commission's oversight, as there is currently no department or organization overseeing the murals. Mr. Westmoreland indicated that further discussion would be needed, including a proposal outlining the issues, needs, etc. and suggested the Mayor and City Council would need to be involved in further discussions. Mr. Kimmel asked if there were any murals in storage. Mr. Westmoreland said he believed the only WPA related items in storage were small-scale sketches that were officially part of the Norwalk Museum collection.

Mr. Westmoreland also met with officials from the Bruce Museum of Greenwich. The Bruce is developing an oystering exhibit and asked to see some of the items from the City's collection. Mr. Westmoreland indicated that the Bruce might request to borrow several items for their exhibit in the future.

Mr. Westmoreland also reported that Ms. McCarthy, the museum collections manager hired by the City, along with several assistants had started work on preparing the  
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Museum collection objects for transfer. He explained her qualifications, described the process for organizing, documenting, photographing and packing the objects. He explained that through the move process, we would establish a computer inventory with a photo of every object in the museum collection that is keyword searchable, and will include a brief description of the object as well as its stored location, so that objects can be easily retrieved. This information will be located into the museum software "PastPerfect". He noted that Ms. McCarthy had already retrieved the computerized inventory data that was completed for parts of the collection by former museum employees and volunteers. Each object will also be housed in a customized archival box that will become the item's "home" when it is not on display. He suggested that the May meeting of the commission take place at the 41 N. Main location so that commissioners can see the process for themselves.

Mr. Westmoreland said that he also met with Mr. Lew Marino from the Laurel Athletic Club who had expressed concern for items that had been donated to the Museum. Mr. Marino had previously contacted Mr. Bondi, who could not locate the items. Since the meeting with Mr. Marino, several of the Laurel Athletic Club items have been located in an unmarked archival box and the team is on the lookout for the rest of the items.

Mr. Westmoreland also reported that Mr. Don Bell had contacted him regarding items he had loaned to the Museum for an exhibit that he wanted returned to him. Mr. Westmoreland explained that the items were apparently not used for the exhibit and had been subsequently misplaced by the former curator and have yet to be located, though Mr. Bondi had looked for them in the museum without success and had contacted the former curator as to their location. Ms. McCarthy has been alerted to look for the items as she and her staff continue to document the collection. However, if the items are not located, the City may have to reach some kind of settlement with Mr. Bell.

Mr. Westmoreland reported that he has been cleaning out the former curator's office in the Museum. He has been separating Museum paperwork from Historical Commission paperwork and will establish an office space for the Commission and its files at the former Lockwood House, which can also be used by the future part-time staffer that is budgeted in the 2013-14 Historical Commission budget. There will also be a conference room that will be available for Historical Commission meetings. The office and conference room use will be part of the terms of the proposed lease amendment with the Historical Society.

During the process, Mr. Westmoreland said he made disturbing discoveries of archival documents and museum collection items buried beneath miscellaneous paperwork, including: pictures from the collection out of their protective sleeves, protective sleeves

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missing the photos, mislabeled sleeves, a Revolutionary War hand-written document from 1779 buried in a box of trash, un-cashed donation checks from 2007/2008, many un-accessioned donations, and a book from the archives that had an accession number was found in a garbage can. Mr. Westmoreland said he stopped counting at approximately 500 collection items found in the former curator's office alone. The Commissioners further discussed the disarray and the process for identifying missing items from the various inventory lists. Once all items have been documented, any items that are still missing will be included in a police report as lost/stolen in case any of those items ever come up for sale in the future. He said that the conditions of the museum were photographed prior to starting any work, and photographs and documentation of the findings were being taken as they are working through the process.

Mr. Westmoreland also reported that substantial progress has been made transferring the archives to the Library. In the course of packing the files, it was noted that many files were mixed up and in various states of disarray. A number of boxes and piles had been found throughout the museum containing archive items that had been pulled from the archives, presumably for research, but never re-filed. Mr. Chandler asked about the process and oversight of the transfer, specifically citing the "two commissioner oversight rule" established in a previous commission meeting. Mr. Westmoreland stated that the "two commissioner" rule was specifically adopted for overseeing the return of items loaned to the museum from private individuals. The transfer of the archives involves transferring items owned by the city to another department (the library) of the city. Mr. Westmoreland stated that either he was on site and/or at least two City employees were onsite at all times to oversee the process and volunteers, and that all items were transferred via the Library van by library employees; no personal vehicles or volunteers were used to transport the archive items between the buildings.

Mr. Westmoreland anticipates that the collection items will be transferred out of the Museum location by the end of July at the latest, but that it would be a challenge. He reported that the landlord is cooperating on the month-to-month lease.

Ms. Betts has offered to organize the electronic files from the various Museum computers and disks. Mr. Westmoreland has requested that the City's IT department transfer the data from the computers to a portable hard drive.

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## REPORTS-BOARDS

### A. NORWALK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Ms. Betts reported that Mr. Westmoreland had stepped down as President of the Society and that she had been elected as the new President. Ms. Betts further reported that the Historical Society's Little Red Schoolhouse program is underway and that the Society has a full schedule of events and programs for the 2013 season. She highlighted several upcoming events, including a Community Tag Sale on April 27<sup>th</sup>, a wine tasting on May 16<sup>th</sup>, and the Society's first juried art show, Secret Norwalk. The Society's calendar includes:

Mill Hill Historic Park season June 22 – November 16, 2013

- Little Red School House Program – Mill Hill Historic Park – Mon., 4/22 – Fri., 6/14
- Norwalk Historical Society Tag Sale – Town House Museum – Sat., 4/27 – 10am-2pm
- Wine Tasting – Mill Hill Historic Park – Town House Museum – Th., 5/16, 6-8pm  
Wine & speaker provided by Fountainhead. TBD - chocolate or cheese. Ticket: \$30 in advance/\$35 @ door.
- Secret Norwalk Juried Art Exhibit - Opening Reception - Fri., 6/21, 6-8pm – In partnership with FACES of Norwalk mural arts trail, a Norwalk2.0 project.
- Mill Hill Historic Park - Museum – Season Opening – Sat., 6/22. Open Saturdays and Sundays, 1-4pm, Sat., 6/22 – Sat., 11/16. Evenings - 6/27, 7/11 & 7/17, 6-8pm with light refreshments.
- July 3rd Fireworks Fundraiser – Home of David Westmoreland & Michael Mushak – 50 Elmwood Avenue, Norwalk – Wed. 7/3, 8-11pm. Cost: \$20
- Independence Day – Walking Tour of Historic Norwalk Green & Neighborhood – Th., 7/4, Noon-3pm, Rain date: Sun., 7/7, 2-5pm,
- Summer Beer Tasting – Th., 7/25, 7-8:30pm
- Civil War BBQ & Encampment, Flag Exhibit – Sat., 8/17, 11:30am-3pm
- Halloween Event – A Haunting @ Mill Hill – Mill Hill Historic Park – Fri., 10/25 & Sat., 10/26, 6pm, 7:30pm & 9pm – Chair: Samantha Kulish with volunteers assistance.
- Mill Hill Historic Park - Museum – Season Close – Sat., 11/16
- An Evening of Historical Proportions – Town House Museum – Th., 12/5, 6-8:30pm

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## B. LOCKWOOD MATHEWS MANSION MUSEUM

Ms. Gilgore reported that the Mansion's Gala on April 13<sup>th</sup> was successful, with a speaker providing an overview of the history of technology in Norwalk during the Victorian era. She also described the Museum's opening on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Gilgore indicated that the response has been very positive and that several school and adult tours have been scheduled. The Mansion's new exhibit, "Steampunk: Nature & Machine" opens on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Gilgore also reported that the Mansion was broken into, but that nothing was stolen or damaged. The museum is currently in the process of finding a new alarm/security company to update the system, install cameras and other devices to more effectively secure the Mansion.

Mr. Kimmel asked about funding for the security upgrades. Ms. Kilgore reported that once they have cost estimates they will need to raise funds and will approach various sources, including the City. Mr. Kimmel recommended that the Mansion consult experts on what would be needed to protect the LMMM.

## REPORTS

### A. BUILDINGS

Mr. Westmoreland reported that the new electrical service to Mathews Park had been switched over on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, a necessary step in allowing further improvements to proceed.

The LMMM roof repair drawings were completed and City Purchasing will seek bids. Mr. Westmoreland attended the ribbon cutting for the new tenant at the Gate Lodge, the Fairfield County Cultural Alliance. The Alliance had requested that the interior be repainted. As a result of some recent emergency repairs, repainting was needed in certain areas and the cost was split with the tenant (\$600). He said the Gate Lodge interior never looked better and was pleased to have the Alliance as tenants.

Preliminary drawings for the missing Gate Lodge porch and the Town House ADA bathroom are almost complete by Faesey-Smith architects. Gill & Gill, the architectural firm, is moving forward with construction drawings for ADA access at Mill Hill.

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The City has submitted a claim package to FEMA for damages to City property, including the Smith Street Barn. The damage to the barn was also reported to the State, as FEMA will only cover 80% of the repair costs. The State is currently working on grant funding to help cover the additional costs for historic properties around the state, as FEMA will not fully reimburse the City for all the costs.

Repair work to floorboards in the Fitch Law office has been completed by Tony Mauro and work on the Jail has been progressing. The City has ordered new window sashes for the front of the Jail and a mortar analysis purchase order was issued on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Tony Mauro will install the new windows. Once the jail is "weathered-in" we will likely bid out the rest of the work to complete the restoration.

#### B. CEMETERIES

Ms. Cuzzone reported that the Eagle Scout and his team completed work on the Pine Island Cemetery project on April 6<sup>th</sup>. She said that over 60 headstones were reset and debris was removed. Mr. Westmoreland added that there are two additional Scout projects in the works. Ms. Cuzzone reported that Aegis had repaired a headstone that was either vandalized or the repair failed, and that there are problems with groundhogs at the cemetery.

Mr. Westmoreland added that FEMA funds are now available in our capital accounts to be used to repair cemetery damage from Hurricane Irene. He said the Finance Director has approved using the small balances in two of the cemetery-related accounts along with the FEMA money for headstone repairs.

**\*\* MS. CUZZONE MOVED TO APPROVE THE USE OF FUNDS FROM THE CAPITAL ACCOUNTS C0294, C0459, AND C0448 FOR HEADSTONE REPAIRS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,418.87.**

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

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### C. FINANCE

Ms. Betts reviewed the financials, indicating several small expenditures since the previous month.

#### D. NORWALK MUSEUM

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Ms. Cuzzone reported that she has started to review the collection of pottery shards in the Museum collection. She indicated that there are two barrels of kiln furniture, or “wads” and other miscellaneous pieces used during the firing process, along with over a dozen other bins full of shards and at least one flat file full of shards. There seems to be no records to indicate where these items were collected or who collected them, but this is being researched. She is considering a plan to select a representative sample of these pieces to create a “study collection” to showcase the variety of inclusions and glazes that were used.

Ms. Cuzzone is consulting with her archeological colleagues at both Yale University and Norwalk Community College about the large collection of pottery shards and whether there is any value in keeping all of them, or creating the study collection and discarding the rest. Some of the shards have lead glazing and will likely require some kind of hazardous waste disposal if they are to be discarded.

Ms. Cuzzone indicated that the Commission could review the shards and possibly make a decision at the next meeting. Mr. Norman said he knew a pottery expert who may be able to offer advice and offered to contact her.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

No old business was discussed.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **Center for Contemporary Printmaking**

Mr. Westmoreland reported that Mr. Norman had submitted a letter on behalf of the Center for Contemporary Printmaking (CCP), formally requesting a new 10-year extension of the lease for the two buildings currently occupied by the CCP. Mr. Westmoreland reported that under the terms of the current lease, the CCP is allowed to make leasehold improvements. In light of several planned improvements, the CCP had requested that the lease be extended for a new 10-year term before proceeding with their investments, as they have only one year left on the current lease term. The CCP had also discussed the lease renewal with Mayor Moccia, who indicated his support for the renewal. Mr. Westmoreland said that the Mayor had confirmed this to him as well.

**\*\* MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO APPROVE THE RENEWAL/EXTENSION OF THE LEASE FOR THE CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY PRINTMAKING FOR A NEW 10-YEAR TERM.**

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**\*\* MR. YOST SECONDED**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The issue will be referred to the land use committee, then the city council. Upon their approval, the legal department will draft the amendments to the lease.

Mr. Westmoreland reported that he had two additional items he would like to discuss. Mr. Chandler indicated he would like to raise a topic as well.

**\*\* MS. CUZZONE MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD THESE ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO THE AGENDA**

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

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### Gardener's Cottage Painting

Mr. Westmoreland reported that Mr. Norman had obtained three quotes for painting the Gardener's Cottage at Mathews Park. The low bid of \$3,800 came from Juliani's Painting. Mr. Westmoreland reported that they had been pleased with the work completed by Juliani's Painting for two of the buildings at Mill Hill.

**\*\* MS. BETTS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE BID FROM JULIANI'S PAINTING TO PAINT THE GARDENER'S COTTAGE USING \$3,800 in FUNDS FROM ACCOUNT C0403.**

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

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### Lockwood Mathew's Mansion Museum Photos

Mr. Westmoreland reported that three photographs of the interior of the LMMM were found among the Norwalk Museum's collection of LMMM photos. The photographs contained labels indicating that they are the property of the LMMM. There are no Norwalk Museum accession numbers on the items or records to indicate otherwise. There are copies of these photos in the Norwalk Museum's archives.

**\*\* MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO RETURN THE THREE PHOTOGRAPHS TO THE LOCKWOOD MATHEW'S MANSION MUSEUM**

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**\*\* MS. CUZZONE SECONDED**  
**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Ms. Gilgore acknowledged receipt of the three photographs from the Norwalk Museum on behalf of the Mansion.

Function of the Commission

Mr. Chandler would like the Commission to consider its future function. He reported that the Commission was created to oversee the Museum's collection, cemeteries and other resources, but that in light of the transfer of management of the Museum's archives to the Library and of the collection to the Norwalk Historical Society, he posited whether or not the Commission needed to exist and offered potential alternatives for oversight of the remaining properties and resources by other city departments and the Historical Society. Mr. Chandler indicated that he had no desire to eliminate the Commission but that the Commission should reflect on its purpose.

Mr. Westmoreland agreed that reflection and reassessment is a positive thing to do, but emphasized the importance of having a City entity to hold the Commission's 501(c)3 partner organizations accountable, advocate for and oversee repairs and investments in the city's historic resources, and provide for responsible use of the city's demolition delay ordinance. Mr. Kimmel added that the Commission is established by City Charter and would require changes to the City Charter and ordinances that would be unlikely to happen.

ADJOURNMENT

**\*\* MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO ADJOURN**  
**\*\* MS. CUZZONE SECONDED**  
**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne H. Betts  
Norwalk Historical Commission

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