

**CITY OF NORWALK
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
JANUARY 28, 2009**

DRAFT

ATTENDANCE: David Park, Chair; Peter Bondi; Eric Chandler; Thom Dunlap;
John Kurtzman; Kathryn Martino; Kelly Straniti; Charles Yost;
Joe DiIorio (7:09 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Park called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – November 19, 2008

**** MR. BONDI MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED
** MOTION PASSED WITH THREE (3) ABSTENTIONS (MR. YOST, MS.
MARTINO AND MR. DUNLAP)**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A. **Welcome New Commissioner Thom Dunlap**

Mr. Park welcomed Mr. Dunlap to the Commission and said that two weeks ago he was appointed for a five year term. The Commissioners introduced themselves. This was Ms. Straniti's last meeting and Mr. Park thanked her for her service on the Commission as a representative of the Common Council.

Mr. DiIorio joined the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

B. **Review and Approve Historical Architect for Requirements of Deed
Restriction of (2) Fodor Farm Houses**

Mr. Park explained that he had solicited requests for qualifications from historical architects for review of the exterior renovation plans of the homes and received prices from five different architects. Mr. Lo notified Mr. Park that the Common Council had approved the two buyers for the homes. Mr. Park explained that \$3,500 from the sale of each of the two homes will be used to hire an architect.

Ms. Gunn-Bromley will on behalf of the Commission get the plans from the new owners and submit those plans to the architect for architectural review. Mr. Park said that he is leaning towards Silver/ Petrucelli & Associates, Inc. from Hamden, CT. They are qualified and Recreation and Parks has hired them to do architectural plans at the main

house at Fodor Farm. They are very familiar with Fodor Farm. In addition they have also done business with Public Works.

Mr. Kurtzman asked about the cost of traveling from Hamden to Norwalk. Mr. Park said that he asked about that. They are charging \$33.00 round trip from Hamden to Norwalk.

Mr. Park said that he got the names of the historical architects from the Trust for Historic Preservation. He explained that the work is going to be done by the property owner's architect; these people are going to review those plans to be sure they are in accordance with the deed restrictions.

- ** MS. STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE HIRING SILVER/PETRUCELLI & ASSOCIATES, INC., FROM HAMDEN, CT TO PROVIDE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW OF THE PLANS SUBMITTED BY THE PROPERTY OWNERS AND TO ENSURE THOSE PLANS ARE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DEED RESTRICTIONS, AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$3,500 PER HOME**
- ** MR. CHANDLER SECONDED**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

REPORTS – BOARDS

a. Norwalk Historical Society

No one from the Norwalk Historical Society was present this evening. Mr. Bondi read Mr. Westmoreland's written report.

b. Lockwood Mathews Mansion

There was no one present from the Lockwood Mathews Mansion this evening. Mr. Park said that he was waiting for someone from the Museum Board to contact him about their master plan. He is also waiting for someone from the Museum Board to contact him about doing an RFP for the sprinkler and fire system at the Museum. Mr. Park said that he has not had any responses from them.

REPORTS – SUB-COMMITTEES

A. Building – John Kurtzman

Mr. Kurtzman said that there is going to have to be a stipulation about the safe disposal of paint chips. Mr. Park said that the painters should know the guidelines. Mr. Kurtzman said that he understood that Mr. Mauro is building the door at the Fitch House. He said that there is perpetual maintenance needed there because of the moisture that it grabs from the ground. Mr. Kurtzman said that he read that the sills used to be made of chestnut, which is impervious to rot. However, those sills are no longer there and he noted that blight wiped out the chestnut trees.

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Mr. Kurtzman suggested reconstructing a peak over the door, which would take care of the problem with the door. Mr. Park said that he has a draft RFP for a preservation plan.

Mr. Kurtzman reported that there was a problem with the sewer at the jailhouse. Mr. Bondi said that Mr. Mauro took care of the problem.

1. Discuss Leasing of Smith Street Apartment

The Commissioners discussed rental fees for the newly renovated studio apartment at the jailhouse. Mr. Bondi created a rental application. The Commission agreed on a rent of \$725.00 a month. The rent goes into the general fund.

Mr. Park said that he received prices for window replacement at the Little Red Schoolhouse from two different woodworking shops. The Purchasing Department is putting this out to bid because each of the prices was over \$10,000. They will do this by the end of the month. Mr. Mauro will remove the old windows, take out the glass and install the new windows.

B. Cemetery – David Park

Mr. Park said that he had nothing new to report this month.

C. Finance – Kathryn Martino

Ms. Martino reported that both budgets were submitted to the Planning Commission. Their public hearing will be held on February 9, 2009. Mr. Park, Mr. Bondi and Ms. Gunn-Bromley met to go over the proposed operating and capital budgets with Mr. Hamilton and Planning and Zoning. Mr. Park said that the Commission does not have any new capital requests for FY 09.

Mr. Hamilton has to be contacted in February to find out the balance of the Rogers Ritch Merritt House money which can be earmarked for other historical projects. Mr. Bondi reported that the painting bids will include all of the buildings

D. **Norwalk Museum** – Peter Bondi

Mr. Bondi reported that Mr. Chris Naples is going to put up a new exhibit. He restores paintings and was hire to restore painting for the Daggy estate. A book signing has been scheduled for May 3rd. The title of the book is *Lost Loot Ghostly New England Treasure Tales*. Mr. Bondi said that he would like the Stamford Metal Detector Club to create an exhibit using the historical artifacts they find.

1. Discuss Norwalk Museum Signage

Mr. Bondi said that he met with Planning and Zoning to discuss signage. He noted that the signage regulations are being changed. He said that there have been discussions about changing the name of the Norwalk Museum and said that is something to think about. Mr. Park said that new signage has to do with increasing the number of visitors to the Museum; using more signage such as banners would be more welcoming to visitors.

Mr. Dunlap asked about using public access to provide more information to the public. Mr. Bondi said that Ms. Gunn-Bromley provided City Hall with information about the Museum. Mr. Dunlap will find out about public access.

Mr. Bondi said that it would be good if the Museum could piggyback with Redevelopment regarding wayfinding with historical information. Ms. Straniti suggested contacting the Friends of Cranbury Park. Mr. Bondi said that they are trying to promote the fact that the Museum is free. Mr. Kurtzman said that was a good point.

**MUSEUM CURATOR'S AND ASSISTANT TO THE HISTORICAL
COMMISSION REPORT**

Mr. Park said that the written report was part of the package. Mr. Bondi reported that Ms. Gunn-Bromley's computer was re-built.

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES

Mr. Park said that a draft copy of the Preservation Plan RFP was supposed to be submitted to the Purchasing Department by January 28, 2009.

**** MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD AN
ITEM TO THE AGENDA
** MR. BONDI SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MR. YOST MOVED TO APPROVE THE PRESERVATION PLAN RFP
** MR. CHANDLER SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Chandler reported that the Historical Commission accomplished a lot in 2008 with total input from Mr. Park.

The following list is a result of a lot of hard work on the part of Commission members, the museum curator/assistant to the Commission with the assistance of a number of outside organizations and individuals:

- Complete headstone restoration at Kellogg-Comstock Cemetery in West Norwalk
- Headstone restoration at Brookside Cemetery in Rowayton
- Clean-up, improvements and tree removals at Brookside Cemetery
- Review of applicants and hiring of a part time Historical Commission handyman
- Installation of track/exhibit lighting in the Town House at Mill Hill Park
- Installation of a new, donated flag pole at Mill Hill Park
- Several headstones restored at Mill Hill Burying Grounds y \$2,500 State grant
- Painting of the Town House façade at Mill Hill Park
- Re-appropriation of the Rogers Ritch Merritt House funds to other worthy Historical Commission projects
- Masonry repair of outdoor steps at Mill Hill Park
- Major increase in approved capital funding for Historical Commission projects over previous year
- Implementation of the new Norwalk Museum Management Policy and Code of Ethics
- Renovation of the Smith Street efficiency apartment
- Tree removals and grounds clean up/improvements at Mill Hill Park and Pine Island Cemetery
- Numerous small projects completed by the handyman at Mathews and mill Hill Parks and museum
- Proposed widening of Crescent Street impact on Pine Island Cemetery studied and documented
- Elimination of “Friends of the Norwalk Museum” gift shop for other museum activities including a new gift shop
- Sprinkler and fire alarm design engineers approved for Lockwood Mathews Mansion museum
- Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum Master Plan studied and approved for implementation
- Installation of site lighting for Pine Island Historic Cemetery
- Mill Hill Historic Park Master Plan request for proposal approved
- Hiring of a part time, temporary curatorial assistant for the Norwalk Museum
- Hours of research completed for application of the Pine Island Historic Cemetery nomination to the National Register of Historic Places
- Thousands of new and exciting collections/donations cataloged and accession at the Museum
- Many new exhibits at the museum including “It’s Magic” and benefit show at the Crystal Theater, Peter Correnty’s “The Way We Were” Norwalk art show, history of Gallaher Estate/Cranbury Park and coming in June 2009, History of Norwalk Sports
- Other project moving forward include:
 - The window replacement at the Little Red Schoolhouse, exterior window paining at Lockwood Mathews Mansion
 - Mill Hill burying grounds headstone restoration
 - Installation of HVAC for the Town House at Mill Hill

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Mr. Park said that he is looking forward to this year. He said that they should have a master plan for Mill Hill that will be done and paid for by the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency. There are also on-going capital improvement projects.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Nomination and Election of Officers: Chairman and Vice Chairman

Mr. Park said that each January a new Chairman and Vice Chairman have to be elected. He asked for nominations.

**** MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO ELECT MR. PARK TO RETAIN HIS POSITION AS CHAIRMAN
** MR. BONDI SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MS. STRANITI MOVED TO ELECT MR. BONDI TO RETAIN HIS POSITION AS VICE CHAIRMAN
** MR. CHANDLER SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Park said that this has been a fun and challenging year and is looking forward to moving forward with more projects in 2009. Mr. Park said that he will contact the Commissioners regarding Committee assignments.

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

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services