

**CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK HISTORICAL COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 25, 2009**

ATTENDANCE: David Park, Chairman; Peter Bondi; Eric Chandler; Thom Dunlap;
John Kurtzman; Kathryn Martino; Steven Serasis;
LaTanya Langley (7:20 p.m.)

GUESTS: Jessie Thompson and Dan Godleski, Nor'easters Metal Detecting
Club; Scott Kuykendall, President, Norwalk Historical Society

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Park called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES—January 28, 2009

The following correction was made to the minutes:

Page 2: under Lockwood Mathews Mansion: second sentence should read: *Mr. Park said that he was waiting for someone from the Museum Board to contact him about their master plan being approved by the State.*

- ** **MR. CHANDLER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED**
- ** **MR. BONDI SECONDED**
- ** **MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. SERASIS)**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A. Welcome Councilman Steven Serasis

Mr. Park welcomed Councilman Steven Serasis to the Historical Commission. He explained that Mr. Serasis is the Common Council's representative to the Commission and holds a one year term. The Commissioners introduced themselves.

B. Metal Detector Club Presentation

Mr. Thompson and Mr. Godleski gave a presentation to the Commission. They explained that they can help to establish the historic nature of a property by metal detecting. They presented the metal detectors along with various items they have found. They explained that the equipment allows them to go approximately 2 inches to 1 foot down and helps them to pinpoint the metallic content of an object. Mr. Godleski noted that they can not identify glass; their detectors look for metal.

The metal detector club gives demonstrations to schools and works with local Police departments. Mr. Thompson said that he found Prussian coins in Darien dated 1782 and donated them to the Stamford Historical Society. Mr. Chandler said that the Hessian soldiers raided Stamford from Long Island.

Mr. Thompson said that he has also dug up historical buttons that dropped from the Soldier's uniforms during different battles. He said that a large range of people are members of their club. They carry full insurance for any hunts they do. Mr. Thompson said that he found tool tags from the old Nash Engineering.

Mr. Chandler said that a Colchester resident tried to establish that his home was the site of a former inn. In the process of the hunt they found 18th century military items on his property.

Mr. Thompson said that he has been doing this for 10 years and Mr. Godleski for eight. Mr. Godleski said that they never go anywhere without permission. As a group they help one another identify items. One of the metal detection magazines has a service to help people research and identify items they've found. He said that Mr. Thompson produces a newsletter. Mr. Godleski said that if they find something such as a ring, they always search for the owner. They have been successful 85 – 90% of the time.

Ms. Langly joined the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Mr. Godleski said that this is a great hobby. If they hunt on an historic property, they donate any items they find.

Mr. Park told Mr. Thompson and Mr. Godleski that he appreciated their presentation.

C. Approve 2009 NHC Committee Assignments

Mr. Park said that following the January meeting, he contacted the Commissioners with his suggested committee assignments. Everyone agreed to serve as suggested.

**** MS. MARTINO MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING 2009 NHC COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

Building Committee

Peter Bondi, Chair

Joe DiIorio

John Kurtzman

Cemetery Committee

David Park, Chair

Thom Dunlap

Kathryn Martino

Historical Commission

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Finance Committee
Kathryn Martino, Chair
Charles Yost

Museum Committee
Eric Chandler, Chair
Peter Bondi
Thom Dunlap
LaTanya Langley

The Chairman and Vice Chairman are on all committees as needed.

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

REPORTS: BOARDS

A. Norwalk Historical Society—David Westmoreland

Mr. Westmoreland was not present this evening and there was no report provided to the Commission. Mr. Kukyendall said that he was here this evening to hear about the Little Red Schoolhouse.

B. Lockwood Mathews Mansion—Chris Cooke

Mr. Cooke was not present this evening and there was no report provided to the Commission.

REPORTS: COMMITTEES

A. Building Committee—Peter Bondi

1. Review and approve mechanical contractor to supply and install ductless air conditioning for the Town House building at Mill Hill Park

Mr. Bondi reported that a bid was put out for the air conditioning at the Town House building. It is going to be a ductless system, which will keep the holes in the walls and ceiling to a minimum. He said that they received three bids and the lowest bidder was Main Enterprises in Stratford for \$8,175.00.

Mr. Park explained that the specifications given to all of the contractors was simple and the quality of all of the three contractors should be considered the same. All of the mechanical contractors are known and have done work for the City.

- ** MS. MARTINO MOVED TO APPROVE HIRING MAIN ENTERPRISES OF STRATFORD TO SUPPLY AND INSTALL DUCTLESS AIR CONDITIONING FOR THE TOWN HOUSE BUILDING AT MILL HILL PARK FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$8,175.00**
- ** MR. BONDI SECONDED**
- ** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. SERASIS)**

2. Review and approve contractor for the window replacement program for the Downtown District Schoolhouse building at Mill Hill Park

Mr. Bondi reported that this item went out to bid through the City's Purchasing Department. Five bids came back and the lowest bidder was Mattern Construction at a cost of \$15,120.00.

Mr. Park said that the bid deadline was yesterday afternoon. He said that he went to the Purchasing Department to open the bids. He said that he wants the work completed in time for the Norwalk Historical Society's third grade program. Mr. Park said that this contractor gave 42 days lead time and they produced construction drawings for his approval.

Mr. Park said that he called Mattern Construction to be sure they understood the scope of work. They are located in Baltic, CT and came down for the pre-bid walk through. Their references are all for historical buildings. In addition, they have fabricated windows from scratch before. They have been in business for 21 years and have 19 full time employees.

- ** MR. BONDI MOVED TO APPROVE HIRING MATTERN CONSTRUCTION OF BAL TIC, CT FOR THE WINDOW REPLACEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE DOWNTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOLHOUSE BUILDING AT MILL HILL PARK AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$15,120.00, WITH THE CONDITION THAT THEIR REFERENCES ARE RECEIVED BY MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2009 AND ACCEPTABLE. OTHERWISE THE SECOND LOWEST BIDDER WILL BE AWARDED THE CONTRACT**
- ** MR. DUNLAP SECONDED**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

B. Cemetery—David Park

Mr. Park reported that Mr. Bondi was contacted by a family who claims to have a plot at Pine Island Cemetery. He said that technically, the Historical Commission is the burial authority for the Cemetery. The person passed away on Tuesday and the family was able to produce their deed for the plot. Mr. Bondi said that he referred this request to the Law Department who said that the family could go ahead with the burial as long as the location of the plot could be identified. A meeting will be held tomorrow at the Cemetery to find the location of the family plot.

The last burial to take place at Pine Island Cemetery was on January 5, 2001. Mr. Park said that they have the records from 2001 when Mr. Fred Sammis was buried at the Cemetery. The Church that handled that burial is in Darien. The funeral home that conducted that burial was contacted. Mr. Park said that they have to be sure that they are compliant with State laws regarding the burial. He noted that there are no costs associated with the burial to the Historical Commission. Mr. Park said that the deed is dated 1863 and is on file in City Hall. The last time a person from that family was buried at Pine Island Cemetery was in 1960.

C. Finance—Kathryn Martino

Ms. Martino said that she did not have a report this evening.

Approve Rogers-Ritch-Merritt House capital account balance of funds for reappropriation (Special Capital Appropriation) to an account titled “Building Maintenance and Improvements” To be approved by Common Council.

Mr. Park said that nearly a year ago, the Commission voted to reappropriate funds from the RRM account to other historical projects. A balance was left in case any private donors wanted their money back or if they wanted that money put toward other worthy historical projects. Some people did not respond.

Mr. Park said that Mr. Hamilton approved the concept to call it the Building Maintenance and Improvement Capital Account so that the money can be used for any building under the purview of the Commission. Mr. Park said that three sides of the Town House building have to be painted and some remediation for lead had to be done too.

- ** MR. BONDI MOVED TO REQUEST THE ROGERS-RITCH-MERRITT-HOUSE CAPITAL ACCOUNT BALANCE OF FUNDS FOR REAPPROPRIATION (SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION) TO AN ACCOUNT TITLED “BUILDING MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS) TO BE APPROVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL**
- ** MR. CHANDLER SECONDED**
- ** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. SERASIS)**

D. Norwalk Museum—Eric Chandler

Mr. Chandler read the following report dated February 25, 2009:

The exhibit “*Two Artists of Note – Augustus Smith Daggy and Richard Daggy*” opened on February 6th and has been well received. The paintings are being offered for sale. However, the museum has requested the provider of the art to confirm, in writing, the percentage of the sale price or the per piece handling donation that the museum will receive for actually conducting the sales. Thus far, to my knowledge, this has not been firmed up in writing. The museum will not undertake the sale of the art works until such time as a written agreement is in

place. The exhibit is scheduled to run through early May. The sports exhibit will follow.

The Curator is currently out on sick leave. During her convalescence, Sharon Soltis is keeping the museum operating during most normal hours of operation.

Prior to Ms. Gunn-Bromley's leave, she recorded her tour dialogue onto a micro-cassette recorder, which I transcribed and printed and was bound by Sharon Soltis. This has allowed for any volunteer to have the ability to give a coherent tour of the exhibits. In the alternative, visitors may do a self-guided tour. This has already proven to be an effective tool. However, I will encourage the Curator, to upon her return, add to or modify the material contained in the tour guide to make it more complete as she may deem appropriate.

So far this month, the museum had 150 visitors who signed the guest book. We have no way of keeping track that all visitors to the museum sign as requested.

Volunteerism at the museum has significantly increased. Ms. Gunn-Bromley has introduced me to several new volunteers.

Peter Correnty is regularly seen at the museum and has recently made a donation of books to the museum collections.

In particular, John Eintsman, a substitute teacher, has been an almost daily volunteer. Mr. Einstman is the individual who is organizing the war-gaming club and undertaking the diorama of the 1779 British incursion into Norwalk to eventually be displayed in the Merchant's Court concurrent with the Burning of Norwalk re-enactment.

Mr. Einstman asked me to query the Commission as to the possibility of holding an out of doors gift shop sale/cookout as a fundraiser in the spring. I advised him that there might be issues under the lease affecting that type of activity. Also, there is the issue of a food-vending license to consider. Perhaps this could be undertaken, sans food vending, under the aegis of the SONO Art Festival or some similar SONO activity.

Ms. Gunn-Bromley has requested, and I have heartily agreed, to assist her in the publicity areas of the museum activities. I believe that Ms. Gunn-Bromley and I can more effectively promote the museum's programs and exhibits as a team.

Mr. Chandler said that he asked Mr. Einstman to write up a proposal. Mr. Serasis suggested that in the future, the Commission look at having a signed agreement before hanging pictures in the Museum. Mr. Bondi explained that they tried to do that before they hung the pictures and told the exhibitors that they would not sell anything until they had a signed agreement.

Mr. Serasis suggested creating a draft document for future use. This will be discussed further at the next meeting. Mr. Chandler suggested asking the Law Department to draft an agreement. Mr. Park agreed and noted that a written agreement will take the grayness out of this. Mr. Bondi asked Mr. Serasis to contact Mr. Chandler if he has ideas as to the content of the agreement.

Mr. Dunlap said that he gave information to Mr. Chandler about posting free information on the local Cablevision guide. Mr. Chandler said that he posted the Museum on Yahoo Norwalk events. He suggested establishing a Museum Yahoo account.

Mr. Serasis asked how they could make the youth in the City more aware of the Museum. Mr. Bondi said that they have been doing that through the Board of Education. Mr. Serasis suggested that the Museum become a member of the After School Alliance. The cost is \$100.00 and there are 42 members. In the summer, they run summer camps and one of them is within walking distance of the Museum. He said that this is a good way to promote the Museum to the youth.

Mr. Park said that the Museum had more visitors in 2008 than in the previous years. He added that a Raggedy Ann Tea Party was held last year as well and it was a good event.

Mr. Serasis said that he will bring information about the After School Alliance to the next meeting. He said that he feels it would benefit both the Museum and the children. He said that a lot of people are not going out of Norwalk on field trips and he added that the Museum is free.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Park reported that the RFP for painting at the Carriage House and Gate Lodge will be ready next month. He said he met with representatives from the Carriage House and Stepping Stones Museum. Stepping Stones is going to repave the parking lot and the Carriage House asked if they could have their section paved. They created the specs. This request will have to go before Parks and Recreation. Mr. Parks said that he will put this on the Parks and Recreation Committee's agenda.

Mr. Park said that he inspected the wall by Contemporary Printmaking and the Gardner's Cottage between Mathews Park and Ferra Park. He said that the wall is in bad shape. He talked to Mr. Lo who told him that the wall falls under the authority of the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Park said that he e-mailed Mr. Mocciae and told him his opinion about the wall and that it needs attention before the stones fall out.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR. BONDI MOVED TO ADJOURN
- ** MR. CHANDLER SECONDED
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

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

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

