

**Ashburnham 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration Committee**  
**Minutes of March 27, 2014 Meeting**

**Present:** Steve Coswell, Chair; George Cornwall, Co-Chair; Pat Frederick, Secretary; Patty Johnson, Treasurer; Members: Susan Brennan, Tyna Donelson, Bob Fichtel, Karen Mattus, and Linda Ramsdell.

**Guests:** Oakmont music director Kris Demoura; Oakmont Principal David Uminski; Bob Salo of the Ashburnham Fire Department (ret.); Christina Sargent, Chair of the Ashburnham Historical Commission; Police Sgt. Chris Conrad (first part of the meeting); and William "Skip" Nolan of the Ashburnham Light Infantry (end of meeting).

Steve called the meeting to order at 7:00. The secretary's report for February was accepted as written, although that was an unofficial meeting, lacking a quorum. Minutes of the January 16<sup>th</sup> meeting were also accepted as written.

Patty read her treasurer's report, showing the committee's budget to be in good shape. Her report was also accepted as written.

Steve announced that the committee's April meeting with Parks & Recreation Committee will take place April 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Public Safety Building.

Steve read aloud the letter he sent to the Athol Savings Bank and the GFA Credit Union, inviting them to be "Platinum" sponsors of, respectively, the Parade and the Fireworks display.

The Municipal Light Plant's bills for May will include an insert describing the Committee's upcoming events. Tyna asked if the Historical Society could be featured on the other side of the insert, as last year. Karen made a motion that we give the Historical Society the second side of the insert; the motion was carried unanimously.

The first light pole banner, a generic sample, has been mounted at the corner of Routes 101 and 12, in front of Brothers' Pizza. Yesterday and today were a good test of the banner's wind resistance; it seems to be doing fine.

**Parade Plans**

The committee heard recommendations from Kris Demoura about bands' participation in the parade: Basic concerns include length of parade route; beginning and ending locations big enough to accommodate buses, trailers and personnel for each participating band; and expected locations of groups of listeners along the route. Kris suggested high school bands from Gardner, Fitchburg, Leominster and North Middlesex, in addition to Oakmont. He is not sure if Murdock in Winchendon has a viable marching band at this time. Cushing's Penguin mascot will march; it is uncertain if the school will have a band ready that early in the school year. He said the usual cost for a high school band to participate in another town's parade is \$2,000. (somewhat negotiable). Oakmont's band will of course be donating its participation.

The committee discussed other bands that might be interested in participating: Ashby's town band, fife and drum corps, pipe bands, and military bands were mentioned. Groups to invite,

other than bands, include local legislators, police color guard, old cars, fire equipment from the Midstate area, and possibly a Shriners group; there may be one in Lowell.

Various routes and staging areas were considered, as well as parking facilities for participants and attendees. Kris recommended interspersing attractions such as old cars, fire engines and floats, with the various bands, for variety, rather than grouping all old cars or all floats together. Bob Salo said the fire equipment should be at the beginning or the end of the parade, preferably the beginning, in case they are called to duty. Kris asked that vehicles not be immediately in front of bands, so players are not dealing with exhaust, and that fire sirens not compete with band music. He also recommended that we have a contract with each band, including approximately how many players to expect from each. Kris will try to attend our June meeting, as plans continue to take shape.

Bob Salo went online to find the distance from Fairbanks Hall to Briggs School: 2.1 miles, a not-unreasonable distance. The Reviewing Stand will be at the Public Safety Building.

Parade Subcommittee Chair Susie Brennan read aloud her performance agreement letter with rules for participants. She will draft a letter of introduction and invitation this week. It was noted that the Westminster Parade Committee had twelve people – a good working number. Susie added that we will need fifty volunteers, including marshals stationed the parade route. George suggested we get Monty Tech's ROTC members to help with logistics. He said Monty Tech can probably supply 2-way radios, so parade marshals can notify participating groups when it is their turn to fall in line. We will also ask for volunteers from Lions Club, and volunteer firefighters.

Several side streets such as Ames Avenue, Puffer Street and Willard Road will need to be closed while parade participants are lining up there, ready to fall in as the parade passes by. Letters will be sent to residents well in advance, forewarning them of road closures, and a "reverse 911" phone reminder can be sent to townspeople as the date approaches.

The committee discussed realistic parade budget plans: Bob Fichtel moved that the budget be \$30,000, based on parade budgets from other towns. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

The parade should have an honorary Grand Marshal, perhaps the Oldest Inhabitant. Rather than a "Miss Ashburnham" we might consider having a "Little Miss" and a "Little Mister" Ashburnham, two cute kids to ride in the open car with the Grand Marshal.

We will need to arrange for porta-potties and trash disposal receptacles and removal. Vendors will respond when the parade begins to be advertised; we do not need to recruit them. They will need to register with the Town.

### **Fireworks Show Plans**

George reported that the Fireworks Subcommittee is working on our contract with Atlas Fireworks. He showed a "menu" of types of fireworks to choose from. It was agreed that groundworks are insufficiently visible to people in a crowd. The show will cost \$15,000. George and a representative of the Atlas company, with Principal Uminski, will conduct a site review soon, to determine which part of Oakmont's grounds will be best for staging the show. Some of the site determination will concern prevailing wind pattern. Part of the cost of the show will be for a backhoe, to dig trenches for the rockets, and to refill the trenches after the show.

### **Downtown Day, June 27, 2015**

The Celebration Committee's responsibilities on Downtown Day will be for the opening of the Time Capsule, the loading and burial of a new Time Capsule, and for handing out programs for the afternoon and evening festivities leading up to and including the Fireworks Show. Ashburnham's Light Infantry will have cannon firings during the day, as usual. The Time Capsule Subcommittee will send invitations to the Time Capsules event, and will decide what to include in the new Time Capsule.

At Oakmont, during the late afternoon and early evening between Downtown Day activities and the Fireworks Show, there will be a snack bar, a stunt bicycle demonstration by BMX Expo, and two bands playing.

At 8:50 pm, Bob Fichtel moved to adjourn the meeting. So moved. The next meeting (*originally scheduled for April 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm, at the Public Safety Building, with the Parks and Recreation Committee*) will be at the Stevens Library's Malcolm Stewart Room at 7:00 pm on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

*Patricia H. Frederick*

Patricia H. Frederick, Secretary