

AUBURN'S HISTORIC & CULTURAL SITES COMMISSION

Meeting minutes from July 13, 2016, Cayuga Museum

Present: M. Alberici, B. Chabot, J. Giannettino, J. Kline, E. McHugh, S. Muldoon, M. Vanek

Excused: D. Lamb, D. Stankus, K. Walker

Absent: Rev. P. Carter, L. Frank, J. Loperfido

Guests: Chuck Mason – City Hall, Kirsten Wise – Cayuga Museum

Approval of the Minutes

S. Muldoon read the Commission's mission and vision statements. E. McHugh made a motion to accept the 5/11/16 minutes as submitted and the motion was seconded. **All were in favor and the motion carried.**

Approval of the Treasurer's Report

J. Giannettino made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as submitted and the motion was seconded. **All were in favor and the motion carried.**

Site Directors

E. McHugh stated the Site Directors met twice since the last Historic and Cultural Sites Commission meeting - once in person and once on a conference call. All were present except for Reverend Carter. Details of the draft budget presented at the May meeting were discussed during the Site Directors meetings. E. McHugh made a motion to table the budget vote and the motion was seconded. **All were in favor and the motion carried.** Members of the Commission openly discussed details about the Meredith Buy.

E. McHugh suggested online advertising options be explored in order to attract a younger (meaning 40s) crowd.

M. Vanek stated the Meredith suite of magazines may have an online option.

C. Mason and J. Giannettino stated a solid argument with tangible figures would need to be brought to City Council to convince them a different form of advertising would surpass the performance provided by Meredith.

M. Vanek suggested an agency be sought for online advertising, for purpose of tracking progress.

J. Kline relayed that Facebook advertising has proven successful, where spending \$100 dollars yields 5,000 hits.

B. Chabot countered that in her experience as little as \$15 can deliver 5,000 hits on Facebook. She suggested the www.historyshometown.com website be shutdown. She displayed her cell phone with the events calendar page displayed to show the challenge she encountered with the mobile version as the site showed a blank page.

C. Mason suggested the City could incorporate the History's Hometown website into the City's website by including a separate page featuring links. He has been running the History's Hometown Facebook page.

M. Vanek stated Googling Auburn, NY leads people to the City's website, which links to www.tourcayuga.com. It is one of our top referral sites.

C. Mason suggested we maintain the domain name, as it is included on the brochures, but then the web address would redirect to a new page on the City's site. The hosting fee may cost approximately \$200 per year. The City could take this over to make a History's Hometown page on the City's site.

The Commission agreed that the Site Directors, Marketing and Finance Committees should meet together to review these ideas prior to the next Commission meeting.

C. Mason stated that Betty Miller, an RSVP volunteer in her 90s, has been stuffing all of the envelopes for the History's Hometown brochure fulfillment. He suggested that we offer her a goody bag as a token of our thanks for her service. Of the approximately 5600 mailings she has prepared only about 25 were returned **leads**.

Marketing Committee

M. Vanek reported on the Meredith Buy results with the inquiry sheet provided in the packet. The figure in May is largest because the ad ran in the May issues. Numbers are expected to gradually decline as the summer continues.

Community Outreach

J. Giannettino stated Steve Penstone is the new DJ for WAUB since Joe Salzone's departure a few months ago. Penstone regularly does interviews and ad spots and is seeking more material to cover. He has offered to cover details about the Sites on a monthly basis for free. Commission members agreed this offer sounded favorable. Individual sites should contact Steve Penstone to set up interviews.

Passport to History Program

S. Muldoon gave an update regarding the Passport to History program. She shared statistics of the class participation and recommended the prizes be announced in advance to encourage more students to participate. S. Muldoon suggested the program dates be changed from Spring to Fall, as this time of year does not compete with regional exams and the students and teachers are fresh from summer break. Members of the Commission discussed their program schedule and concluded that mid September through mid October is the best time during the Fall to run the passport program. The special Historic Sites tour for teachers, to enable them to visit all of the sites in the passport, will be hosted on August 12. Teachers still have time to sign up to participate so an exact number of guests has not been determined.

Executive

The Executive Committee has not met since the last Commission meeting.

Finance

G. Sears presented a 2016-17 draft budget on behalf of the Finance Committee. E. McHugh stated she would like to explore different marketing opportunities so would prefer not to approve the budget at this time. A joint committee meeting of the Site Directors, Finance and Marketing Committees will take place at City Hall on Wednesday, July 27 at 9:00 am in order to bring forth research about marketing options in order to alter or approve the budget as presented.

Unfinished Business

Commission members discussed their preferences for meeting start times. B. Chabot made a motion to change the meeting time from 9:30 am to 9:00 am and the motion was seconded. **All were in favor and the motion carried.**

G. Sears spoke about the Cayuga Community College Video Project. Professor Steve Keeler from Cayuga Community College has received all of the Site Directors' comments about their site videos and confirmed that all of the requested edits can be accommodated (with a few exceptions to Schweinfurth Art Center's requests.) The editing process can be accomplished in the Fall semester when students return to class. He expects the project will take them approximately two months to complete. G. Sears will follow up and report on the status of this project at the November 2016 Commission meeting. S. Keeler has also generously offered to waive the remaining fees due to the length of time needed to present the draft videos. The original total was \$1500; \$400 was paid up front, leaving a remainder of \$1100 in our favor.

New Business

Commission members discussed potential ways to utilize the \$1100 saved. S. Muldoon shared comments gathered from Passport participants about prize ideas, one of whom suggested a logo t-shirt as an option. Commission members liked this idea and took it a step further, suggesting 50 shirts could be produced to accommodate the five grand prize Passport winners and some extras to sell at each of the sites. S. Muldoon agreed to check prices and options at The Printery.

Announcements

Commission Members shared upcoming events at their sites.

M. Vanek announced that the Tourism Office's website www.tourcayuga.com will be undergoing redevelopment soon. Interviews with web designers will be held next week. Summer Saturday hours has been extended through September 10.

J. Giannettino and C. Mason announced City Hall is still waiting to hear which city will be awarded as the \$10 million downtown revitalization grant winner for our region. The other cities competing include Cortland, Oswego and Fulton.

C. Mason announced CNY REDC is coordinating funding for the New York Harriet Tubman Site, whose counterpart is the park in Maryland. A 30-minute preservation video is available on the City's website featuring Frank Barrows from Fort Stanwix, which is part of the National Park Service. Office space for a staff person working on this project will be available at City Hall. City Council authorized a supplemental agreement with Bergmann Associates for the Auburn Sparks project to conduct a ~~feasibility study for a~~ public art master plan. ~~Dia Carabajal is a lead with Donna Lamb on that project, which was approved by the Department of the State.~~ C. Mason requested Bergmann Associates be placed on the Historic and Cultural Sites Commission's September 2016 meeting agenda to give a presentation after our meeting. Grant money runs out at the end of the year.

E. McHugh stated Cayuga Museum has photos of Harriet Tubman during the prime of her life when she was a new resident of Auburn, NY. She suggested those images would be more effective than the visuals commonly being used now during the last several years of her life. She also announced a new local exhibit opens this Sunday, 7/17/16 showcasing pieces by Auburn resident Mike Evangelista entitled, 'The Painter on Perry Street.' A new lecture series will take place on Tuesday nights in August at Theater Mack. An upcoming revisited exhibit coming later this year will feature new Iroquois and Haudenosaunee art.

J. Kline announced the Art Trail brochures have been redone to reflect the latest version of the Exchange Street Murals. She also presented the Founder's Day poster and offered them to Site Directors. Downtown Discounts will take place on Thursday, Friday and Saturday 7/14-23. Several locations in downtown Auburn are participating by offering specials on those six days. Stamped cards may be delivered to the Auburn Downtown BID and the Tourism Office. The drawing for prizes will take place on Monday, July 25. Model T Ford members will be going to the Sites during their week-long stay in Auburn. The July Music on the Mall performance took place 7/8/16 in the State Street Band Shell and went well. The Sizzlin' Summer Kick-Off Festival will feature a burger battle sponsored by IGNITE and live music on June 25 from 5:00 – 9:00 pm. TomatoFest will take place on Friday 9/9 and Saturday 9/10 and will feature buses touring the sites provided by sponsor Centro.

M. Alberici announced Willard Chapel will be featuring Anne Adessa and Off the Cuff at the Sunday Tiffany Concert Series on 7/17/16. Extra credit will be offered to Auburn 8th graders this coming school year for visiting a select Historic Site each month.

The next Commission meeting will be held at 9:00 am on 9/14/16 at the Schweinfurth Art Center.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by M. Vanek at 11:21 am and the motion was seconded.

Minutes by Gillian Sears