

AUBURN'S HISTORIC & CULTURAL SITES COMMISSION

Meeting minutes from November 9, 2016, Auburn Public Theater

Present: M. Alberici, C. Eidel, J. Giannettino, J. Kline, E. McHugh, D. Stankus, K. Walker

Excused: Rev. P. Carter, B. Chabot, A. Daddabbo, D. Lamb, S. Muldoon, M. Vanek

Absent: L. Frank, J. Loperfido

Guests: Chuck Mason – City Hall

Approval of the Minutes

K. Walker read the Commission's mission and vision statements. E. McHugh made a motion to accept the revised 9/14/16 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

No Report.

Marketing Committee

C. Mason noted that Karen Hill, CEO and President of Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. currently has only 70 days to submit necessary paperwork for the National Park.

He recently met with Pinckney Hugo (PH), where he shared Meredith buy statistics, which they considered impressive. They are interested in taking on Auburn's Historic and Cultural Sites Commission (HSC) as a digital media client, even with the small budget. They recommended HSC not to replace their magazine advertising in exchange for a digital program, as it may not yield a comparable return for the money invested. Instead, they suggested operating both marketing strategies simultaneously if additional funds can be acquired to run a test for digital marketing. C Mason recommended making the decision about what to do with the Meredith buy in spring 2017 when payment would come due. A representative from PH is interested in attending a committee meeting soon to offer a proposal. C. Mason encouraged all marketing staff from each site to attend the proposed meeting for a work session. C. Mason will help to facilitate the meeting date and time; options will be offered soon. He suggested the media room at the Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce would be an ideal location to host the meeting.

E. McHugh suggested a Monday would likely be the best day of the week to have the meeting, as many of the sites are closed that day and participants would more likely be able to attend.

Community Outreach

M. Alberici stated the new Chair can choose to keep or remove this category from future agendas.

Passport to History Program

G. Sears reported on behalf of S. Muldoon. Since the last meeting, S. Muldoon has lead group presentations with the fourth grade teachers and students and attended three open houses. G. Sears reminded members about the Passport Saturdays, scheduled for 11/12 at Willard Chapel and 11/19 at the tourism office from 10 AM – 2 PM both days. According to K. Walker, Willard Chapel will be open to the public for free on 11/12 in conjunction with offering passport tours to the fourth graders and their families. S. Muldoon will be contacting site directors soon for their donations to the five grand prizes; one per school. She will be seeking five of the same item from each site, preferably with the site logo. Examples include pens, pencils, bookmarks, t-shirts, magnets, etc. The Passport to History logo t-shirts have been ordered. G. Sears confirmed for K. Walker that the bill, in the amount of \$500 for 100 shirts, will come from the \$1100 saved when Steve Keeler chose not to charge the remaining balance for the video project earlier this year. The maroon-colored t-shirts, size small, medium and large, will be awarded as prizes for students who visit all eight sites. These will be passed out in January 2017, after the program has concluded. Those students will be entered in the drawing for the grand prize.

E. McHugh expressed her preference for the Passport to History program to not be directly affiliated with the field trips, as this discourages students from coming with their families. This topic will be further addressed at the January 2017 meeting.

Executive

The Executive Committee has nothing to report.

Finance

The Finance Committee has nothing to report.

Unfinished Business

D. Stankus stated that per the bylaws, the Chair should rotate annually. She previously consulted members to seek the next Chair of Auburn's Historic and Cultural Sites Commission. E. McHugh has accepted the nomination of Chair of Auburn's Historic and Cultural Sites Commission for 2017. D. Lamb was appointed as Vice Chair. C. Eidel made a motion to accept E. McHugh and D. Lamb in their respective Chair positions and the motion was seconded. **All were in favor and the motion carried.**

Officers need to be elected then the list needs to be updated and forwarded to Mayor Quill, per the new Chair, E. McHugh. Also, roles need to be assigned within the Executive Committee. M. Alberici appointed K. Walker as Treasurer.

A Bylaw Review Committee was appointed. K. Walker will Chair with E. McHugh and J. Kline as members. Together they will update the current version and send to City Council for approval after it is presented at the January 2017 meeting.

J. Giannettino urged the Bylaw Review Committee to include an addendum to require representation at every meeting from each of the sites. When site directors are not able to attend meetings, a staff member from their site should come in their place, and will have the same jurisdiction to vote at meetings on their behalf.

C. Eidel suggested a quorum requirements also be included in the Bylaws to determine whether a minimum number of members be present to vote.

New Business

E. McHugh offered to host the January 11, 2017 meeting at Theater Mack.

C. Mason shared details about the proposed Regional Info Center, which would operate as a joint State and City partnership. Governor Cuomo appreciated Auburn's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) that was submitted for grant approval last spring. Though the City was not awarded the grant, the Governor would like to act on that plan. At the Tourism Summit held in Albany on October 18, ten regional info centers were announced would be developed throughout New York State. The Central New York location has been proposed to be a new build in downtown Auburn. Partners for the project are being sought. The Cayuga County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) as well as the Auburn Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) are on board with the project. Features of the new info center include a Taste NY Marketplace and information kiosks, and will likely also incorporate the ideas for the Harriet Tubman/Auburn welcome center.

Proposed locations include Loop Road, as was noted in the DRI; State Street, though that option is unlikely; the parking lot near Seward House Museum; and the Police/Firestation, although the timeframe may not be suitable as those organizations probably will not be prepared to vacate by the time this project comes to fruition. Conversation continued amongst the Commission members about the possibility of a new build in what is commonly referred to as the Seward House parking lot or YMCA parking lot. C. Mason clarified that in this location, the building would consume about half of the space in the parking lot.

J. Giannettino shared statistics about the parking garage across the street, indicating that at peak times, it is only at most half full to capacity. Therefore, parking would be readily available for visitors and employees.

Announcements

Commission Members shared upcoming events at their sites.

K. Walker announced tours at Willard Chapel are up 15-18% since last year and the site appears on target to get 10,000 visitors by the end of this year. Booked weddings are up 10%, likely a result of the new online booking. 2017 will see one Sunday concert scheduled per month. The New York State Restoration grant is being sought to improve the exterior of the building. Chef's Night, held on October 6, 2016 brought in a \$6000 profit. October seems to be a better time of year than in February when the event was previously held, so the 2017 event has already been scheduled for October 5, 2017.

C. Eidel announced Auburn Public Theater (APT) is reorganizing. Music and dance are being taught in the local schools. Attendance has been down this year so Anastasia has been working with bus tours to increase patronage. C. Eidel has found \$10,000 in the budget he has generously offered to the other five Historic and Cultural Sites, therefore will be providing \$2,000 for each site to afford more programming to use by June 30, 2017.

J. Kline announced Miracle on Genesee Street and the Annual Holiday Parade will take place on Saturday, November 26, 2016. APT will be providing family fun indoors. Holiday wreaths and white lights will adorn all of the street lamps in downtown Auburn. Music will be featured outside as well.

E. McHugh announced the Cayuga Museum is currently closed to set up an exhibit but will reopen on Thursday, November 10, 2016 with a quilt show and photo show. The Annual Party will be held on Saturday, November 19. The Museum will be closed in January and February, 2017. The Citizen was contacted regarding a regular, recurring Arts and Culture column. Rob Forcey indicated to E. McHugh that they would prefer to offer coverage for all of the Historic and Cultural Sites rather than just one. E. McHugh suggested to the Commission members that each site provide an article on a rotational basis.

C. Mason announced the meeting with City Council will be held in the Chambers at City Hall on Thursday, December 8, 2016 at 6:00 PM. Site directors are encouraged to attend the presentation. Topics of discussion will include the Passport to History program, thanking the Council for the budget and how it is utilized, etc. Data figures from the sites are requested to be sent to M. Alberici and G. Sears by December 5, 2016 so the information can be compiled.

The next Commission meeting will be held at 9:00 am on 1/11/17 at the Theater Mack.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by C. Eidel at 10:37 am and the motion was seconded.

Minutes by Gillian Sears