



Municipal Building – Town of Franklin  
355 East Central Street  
Franklin, MA 02038

## Town of Franklin, Massachusetts Historical Commission

### Meeting Minutes November 16, 2010

#### **Attending:**

##### Commissioners

##### Present:

Del Arnold  
Dianne Brunner  
Mona Ghiringhelli  
Debbie Pellegrini (Chair)  
Bob Percy (Secretary)  
Alice Vendetti (Treasurer)

##### Absent:

Alan Earls

##### Associates

Colette Ferguson  
Connie Lawson  
Mary O'Neill

##### Absent:

Eamon McCarthy Earls  
Marlene Oliver  
Mary Olsson

Also attending: Deborah Kreiser-Francis

#### **Finances**

No bills were received or paid this month.

**Last Meeting's Minutes** – Approved, as amended.

## **Commission Membership**

Del looked up the Commission bylaws. Currently, the Commission allows 7 members, 7 alternate members, and an unlimited number of associate members. The Commission agreed to amend the bylaw to remove the unused designation of alternates.

→What's the process for amending this bylaw?

(To become an Associate Member of the Historical Commission, prospective Associate Members need to a) send a letter of request to the Town Clerk and b) meet with the Town Administrator Jeff Nutting.)

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **⊗ Communications – (Bob, Alan, and Mary O'Neill)**

No changes proposed so far in the demolition delay bylaw. We will raise this issue again the next time we receive a demolition delay request.

Mary O'Neill has been pursuing research of various types for visitors, including any information about Leo Manning and his orchestra, and the location of ice houses in town. (Located near ponds, these were used to store blocks of ice people would purchase and place in their ice boxes in pre-refrigerator days. An example: the house on Green's Pond on Washington St.)

→Bob will find out from Tim Raposa and/or author Gail Lembo if we can locate the online versions of the Wadsworth Diaries that we used to have posted on our web page.

→Is there a copy of the Museum opening at the Museum? It would be good to have a copy on-hand.

→On Thursdays this winter, the Museum will close if school has been canceled that day. Bob will post that info to the website.

→Bob will investigate the walking trail

### **⊗ Document Preservation and Policies – (Alan, Connie, Del, and Eamon)**

We discussed the need to have someone to coordinate an oral history project, to preserve the recollections of town residents on audio/video.

→Nominate one or more people who would like to work on this project.

At our last meeting, we stated the need for one or two machines that could a) scan and preserve digital images of our photos and text, and b) make copies of images and documents to give to visitors for a nominal fee. Del is leaning towards purchasing one machine that can fulfill both of these needs. Our budget for this item is in the \$300. to \$400. range.

→We need to decide whether to digitize the microfilm of the Sentinels. This will depend in part on a future meeting Alan is planning to have with Library Director Felicia Oti. Vicki Bushanio, head of the library's reference section has expressed an interest in pursuing joint ventures with us.

The Commission agreed to set the price for a copy of a photo or document at 25 cents.

→We need to post a comprehensive fee schedule in the library room (and perhaps on the website).

⊗ **Events - Debbie, Colette, Mary O'Neill, Eamon**

The actress from Sturbridge Village was not available.

Walter Buckingham, also of Sturbridge Village, performed at the Museum by playing old musical instruments and telling stories. A group of 30 of all ages enjoyed his presentation.

→To improve attendance, we discussed creating a calendar of events for 2011, so we can distribute it well in advance.

We discussed the possible need for an events board in front of the museum. The Planning Dept. has a new sign bylaw.

For the upcoming Holiday Stroll evening, we discussed having a jazz band perform at the Museum.

Ms. Rain from the Oak Street School would like to have 85 or so students visit the Museum.

→Can we ask her about having the kids tell us afterwards, perhaps in writing, what they liked best during their visit? This was done in past years, and was wonderful feedback.

The history department at Mount St. Charles in Woonsocket recently held a "Night at the Wax Museum" in which students in costume depicted and spoke as historical personages. We discussed having a similar event at the Museum, perhaps for Presidents' Day, or perhaps have some of the Mount students come to the Museum next year at this time (mid-Nov.). In the former case, we might want to work with Broadway Costume, Inc. on Fisher St. in town.

⊗ **Grants - Marlene, Alan**

Marlene sent informational packets to local political representatives to obtain letters of endorsement: State Senator Spilka, State Representative Vallee, US Senator Brown, and US Representative McGovern.

Del mentioned the need to request a grant to continue our survey of properties in town. The deadline each year is December 1<sup>st</sup>.

⊗ **Hosting - Debbie, Mona**

Forge Hill seniors' visit was postponed, due to bad weather.

Del distributed an updated Hosting Information sheet. (This provides a list of tasks for museum hosts to follow when hosting.)

The Newcomer's Club will be visiting, on an off-hours basis. Mary O'Neill agreed to greet them at the Museum.

→We need "talking points" for different sections of the museum. Bob will work on this.

Del had noted previously that on Saturdays (open 10 to 1), people generally do not arrive until 11AM.

→Discuss whether to change the Museum's hours.

We discussed the possibility of meeting with teachers, perhaps during one of their professional days.

→Debbie will discuss this with Superintendent of Schools Maureen Sabolinski.

→Instructions for exterior lighting need to be provided for Thursday openings.

⊗ **Intern Coordinators – Alan**

Through Del, Prof. Rob Lawson of Dean expressed an interest in having any Dean interns at the Museum be able to perform some non-clerical research.

→Bob and Alan will work on a list some ideas that Dean students could research.

→Who can be our contact for interns from Franklin High?

⊗ **Museum Displays - Del, Alice, Dianne, Colette**

Debbie created a sign for the Blue Bench, and a 'Welcome' sign for the library room.

⊗ **Museum Operations - Del (inventory, requests), Alice (finances), Dianne**

All significant items moved from Washington Street museum to new museum on October 28.

Returned later to set local alarm at old museum and turn on the heaters.

Del met with neighbor Rosanne Walsh, 3 Colt Road She expressed concern with the future use of the old museum. She is an art teacher and can be contacted at [Walshr@franklin.k12.ma.us](mailto:Walshr@franklin.k12.ma.us). She is concerned and wants to be informed about the use of the building.

We approved renewing our membership with NEMA. Annual fee is \$85. We can renew electronically.

→Are we officially renewed?

All items have been removed from the old museum and from 150 Emmons St.

Del made six Chilson movie DVD copies for Robert Vipraio 3271 Berkley Lane, The Village, FL, 32162 in response to his request during a museum visit in October.

For DVD copies, we agreed to charge \$10. or 3 for \$25.

→Add this to our fee schedule.

→Bob agreed to see if the DVD drives can burn new DVDs.

→Is there a functioning lock on the front door of the museum?

The room in the museum basement adjacent to the elevator operating room remains locked. We have many museum items stored there and we need access.

→Who can help us open this?

⊗ **Publicity - Mona, Mary O.**

We have added enormously to the number of publicity outlets we are in contact with.

→Mona is working on a spreadsheet of these contacts

A Mr. Reynolds of 02038.com asked us who to contact for more information about the Museum (donations and hosting).

→Bob will send him email with our contact info for these purposes.

A new monthly newspaper for Franklin will be distributed to all residences in December. This will be a good opportunity for museum publicity. An article has been prepared by the publicity committee.

Additional publicity for the museum can be made on the Web site “Franklin Matters”. Contact Steve Sherlock.

**Friends of the Franklin Historical Museum (FFHM)**

Debbie distributed copies of a spreadsheet of finances:

Revenue to date:	\$ 3,373.35
<u>Expenses to date:</u>	<u>\$1,030.59</u>
Balance	\$2,342.76

**Correspondence** – None

**Housing Rehab Requests** -- None

**Demolition Requests** – None

**Research Requests** – Del received a request for information about a property on E. Central St. He responded that the property is not in our list of inventoried properties.

Spanish American War Cannon -- Repainting will be completed within the next week. Some have objected to it being placed back on the Common.

**NEW BUSINESS**

(??put these items in the agenda)

→Where to put the cupola from the Four Corners School? – One suggestion – to place it near the granite Horace Mann memorial on East Central St.

→Any news about the Spanish American War cannon?

**Museum consultant Deborah Kreiser-Francis**

Deborah visited to discuss possible future directions, and to see the Museum. Some notes:

We mentioned some possible projects for Dean students to work on. She suggested that using our PastPerfect software would be a useful skill for them, and for their resumes. Data entry would require a detail oriented person.

→Bob will email a list of the proposed projects to her.

Expand the system of our log book, to have interns perform research requests that are recorded there.

Research could include researching objects, similar to what the show “History Detectives” portrays. We could post images of these objects on our website. Also post questions and receive questions. We could receive requests for specific events, or types of events.

We can set up a Facebook page, and perhaps an account on Twitter. Social networking could reach a different audience. If you “like” (electronically) the Museum, you can be notified of upcoming events.

We could quickly and painlessly survey each 3<sup>rd</sup> or so visitor to the Museum, by asking:

- How did you hear about it?
- Have you been here before?
- What would you like to see?

Perhaps we could put a survey of this kind in the next Quarterly Town Newsletter.

Focus specific events on specific audiences:

- For spinners? Post sign at the Franklin Mill Store
- For instruments? Post signs at music stores.

This would lead to “quality” visits: people who stay and become engaged.

Do we charge for events? Charging can actually increase the draw. Perhaps charge \$5. and serve light refreshments. We might then also consider something like “Eat at \*\*, get a free ticket to a Museum event.”

We could benefit from a strategic plan, to project 1+ years into the future. This can be an aid in obtaining grants. This is important for continuity through the years, so that focus doesn’t get lost.

Find a template for an interpretive plan. There are books about writing strategic plans. The National Park Service has a lot of resources about this, including free webinars.

For repro machines, NEMA may have some suggestions, such as having one for color, and one for black and white, or suggesting a donation rather than a fixed amount.

At some point, we would like to enlist the services of a textile conservator. Deborah knows one who does not charge for estimates. NEMA also has resources for this.

The cabinet drawers should have UV Plexiglas.

In order to provide a tactile experience at the Museum, we should get touchable things from yard sales or antique stores.

When walking into the Red Brick School room, it isn’t immediately clear whether one is allowed to touch the items there.

Interns with us can broaden their skills in these areas:

- Developing programs
- Filtering displays based on age
- Serve as interpreters

\* \*\*\*\*\* \*\* \*\* \*\* \*\*\*\*\* \*