



**Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial Commission Minutes
January 20, 2015 @ 7:00PM
Open Forum- The Greater Newtown Community
NHS Lecture Hall**

**In Attendance: Joanne Brunetti, Daniel Krauss, Agni Pavlidou Kyprianou,
Chairman Kyle Lyddy, Vice Chairman Alan Martin, Sarah Middleleer, Tricia Pinto and
Donna Van Waalwijk
Staff: Lynn Kovack**

The Commission introduced themselves to the group and told them of our Charge. Kyle stated that the Commission was appointed in September of 2013.

Kyle stated that the last 4 open forums had similar crowds and the purpose of these are to let people speak. We would like people to participate in conversation and to join us if they have something productive to contribute to us. We are an open forum and an open Commission and understand the public can have a say. It is something that is very important to the Commission. Kyle stated the Commission has been going for approximately 17 to 18 Months now and is excited about the process and progress that has been made. A few things the Commission is expected to do is to solicit ideas from the different groups and that is the stage they are at now. Honor the 26 lives that were lost. Honor what is best for the Newtown Community. Submit recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.

We have reached out to several other Commissions that have had tragedies for input and guidance. Early on reached out to gather information we may not have known as a Commission. What changes would you make, etc. as there is not a book to walk us through the process. we are comfortable with the pace and not in a rush as we need to get it right.

Kyle told the group he was not disappointed in the turnout. We just want people to understand they do have a say and to join us if they would like to. The 1st 2-3 months the Commission just organized itself as a Commission. Understanding what they had to do and understand the Charge the Board of Selectmen presented them with. The Commission then came up with the following Mission Statement:

The mission of the Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial Commission is to make a recommendation to the Board of Selectman for a Permanent Memorial that remembers, honors and celebrates the 26 who died as a result of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting and serves to provide comfort to those who loved and were touched by them

Kyle explained there was question as to who is "The Greater Newtown Community"? He explained it is anyone connected to Newtown. Residents, business owners, people who work in Newtown and anyone who is connected to Newtown in some way. He explained at this time the Commission is not endorsing any specific design at this stage. He explained the reason for this

is to make sure everyone is heard from and the families are a major part of the process. The families are a major part of this process. They are the first group we reached out to and they will be the last group we reach out to . The 4 family members on the Commission have been a tremendous help in the process and we keep them informed through our Monthly portal. The families are the priority in this process.

The small forums held have been small but have provided tremendous insight.

Kyle discussed the sub-committee for locations that has been set up. Alan Martin told the group of different groups that are being researched for property in Newtown/Sandy Hook area. He stated possible land the Town of Newtown owns, The State of CT, Property managed by Newtown Forest Association and maybe even a philanthropist who may be willing to donate land. The sub-committee is working with the Zoning Dept on these potential sights and will get back out in the spring when weather is a little warmer. Alan explained there are a lot of potential sights but they each have parameters and limitations that will help dwindle down the list. We need to find the right fit. He stated it needs to be a destination and not something you have to drive by daily.

Paul Babbage asked if the Commission had narrowed down a size? Kyle explained that is the next process after understanding all the designs and submissions that have come in. Have to go through all inventory and trends to get to that answer. This is an ongoing question

George Osuch asked how a final decision would be made. Kyle explained the Commission was told by the Board of Selectmen it will be the Commission's decision. They will bring their recommendation to the BOS and they will trust the Commission's decision.

The Commission is focusing on one Memorial.

Paul Babbage asked who has been presenting to the Commission?. Kyle explained the majority has been from within the Community. We had a 4th grader do a presentation and have a NHS student coming to one of our next meetings to do a presentation. Kyle explained we have an inventory of all items that have come into the Town since 12/14/12. We have architectural designs, designs from space, benches, trees, etc. These are all things that can be used if decided on.

Kyle explained that fundraising has not started yet because we are not sure what the Memorial will be at this time. We have approximately \$80,000 that has been submitted to the Town to be earmarked for a Memorial.

Bob Schmidt from the Newtown Lions Club complimented the Commission on their diversity of the group. He stated it is a great representation and he thinks it inspires trust and that is why he thinks a lot of people have not showed up tonight. He thinks it is because they are saying they trust the Commission. His question was how close is the Commission to selecting a design?

And what point do you start fundraising? Kyle explained the next step after the Forums is to go back to the families. They are not all on the same page but we are trying to understand what they want. We are welcoming them and showing them what we have collected and see if these are things they agree with. Some families still need time. There is still lots of work to do and we need to make sure it is done right. So we do not have a timeline set so we hope everyone can be patient with the Commission through the process. We are still working through things ourselves as a Commission.

Josie Schmidt thought even though she is sure there are many talented people all around the world, she thought that local talent would be best suited for the Memorial. Kyle stated we need all information to go to the families and then if we can find someone local we can trust and can create what the 26 families want we may do that.

Pat Babbage thinks it should be something with a loving feeling connected with it. She stated that Newtown evokes love . She also asked if any of the other commissions had any problems with anything along the way? Kyle stated that Virginia Tech stated that they did not honor those that had survived so 2 years later they went back and changed that. These groups have been great resources and we will continue to reach out to them if needed.

The Commission is happy with the process at this point. 18 families have engaged with the Commission with different opinions. But we also see trends starting to show. As time goes by we are hoping the other families will engage. We keep them informed through our Monthly Portal. Once we get a few locations set the Commission will then go to them and hope the remaining families will reengage once we have something more solid to go on. This is not about the event. It is about the lives lost A lot of this is evolving and we can't please everyone. We have a very difficult task and understanding what we do is appropriate for Newtown and the 26 lives lost.

Meeting adjourned at 7:57PM

These minutes are subject to approval by the Commission