

WCC Meeting Notes

February 11, 2022

9:30am by Zoom

Present: Rusty Bastedo, Tama Andrews, David Taylor, Elizabeth Aykroyd (please use her gmail address), Jesse Zacrow, Don Bliss, Polly Newton, Sandy Phelps, Dyanna Smith

Next Meeting: Friday, April 1, 9:30am onsite

Fire System:

Rusty wants to find out if fire permits/restrictions can be exempted for historic homes. The concern is how to save the building if something happens, it would burn so quickly. Don: it is not exempt, but there is no requirement in the state code to have a detection system installed. The advantage is that it would alert if a small situation started. There isn't much we can do about things if it is a larger fire that comes on suddenly. Having one is a smart thing to do, and it sounds like the state is already willing and planning to fund it. Jesse will look into this and confirm with Andrew.

Polly is meeting with the alarm company already – 4th or 5th visit

Maintenance issues:

Landcape

Jesse: the state has a mower person starting on staff, so regular mowing is set up for the season; also, if she knows what projects could be handled by youth groups who are looking to help out.

Dyanna: will move forward with the Master Gardener request for gardening help and organize a site visit with their coordinator, Ruth Smith, and Tama will also be there. (Also include Jesse.)

Don: Eagle scouts are looking for projects, and possibly scout troupes.

Do we need to build a shed for the mower? Polly says as long as it gets painted mansion yellow, there are some nice commercial sheds available. Jesse will follow up with Andrew about these options. Don: Reeds Ferry Sheds in Hudson also makes very high-quality prefabricated buildings. www.reedsferry.com.

Lighting

Jesse: the chandelier project could use our funding help, plus help with the costs of interpretive signs.

Elizabeth: chandelier – Benning did not have a chandelier in that room; do we want to put in something that was never there? The chandelier that Andrew suggested is expensive, and we need some lighting there, but why invest in something that was never there? We need to determine how Andrew feels about lighting in that room and will wait to follow up with him and keep discussing.

Rusty: If we replace it with substitute lighting, we need to meet in person to discuss.

Elizabeth: the Cushings had a hanging light which can be seen in photos. There is a place in VT called Authentic Designs that is affordable, but again, do we want to do it if it's not historically correct? There was no chandelier in the inventory lists when things were sold. He had brass candlesticks on the mantle;

or we could go modern. No idea about the status of the electrical in the mansion. Sandy thinks they must have had sconces on the walls.

Don: Indirect lighting that is hidden could be used that has remote operation, that doesn't need wiring, and can be hidden for modern lighting (this was installed at Canterbury Shaker Village).

Webinars:

Should we be doing these? Rusty and Elizabeth could lead some good history talks and then we would have them to post on our website (and have member-only access?). Maybe have these hosted by groups who already have established webinars? Don suggests the Portsmouth Library that already does webinars. Also, the Atheneum or Discovery Center?

Don: Here is an example of an online webinar being presented by the Portsmouth Public Library:

<https://portsmouthpl.librarycalendar.com/events/wentworth>

Other Projects:

Leach's Island: no update from the state, still in the idea stage. Dyanna checked in with Audubon about the wildlife issues and the feedback was that having a maintained camp situation would not likely help control camping on the island and may serve to push campers into new locations on the island that are more problematic; but this would hopefully be vetted more during the process if it moves forward.

Jesse: yes, this would all be part of the process, if it is moving forward.

State funding: Jesse says she doesn't know about whether historic sites are getting any new funding/attention. She will find out.

Seawall: need to hear from Andrew.

Sandy: the loop trail has been a huge success for attracting visitors to the site.

Next meeting: we can use this in person meeting to make some decisions/plan for how to proceed this year. Have the April meeting onsite. Sandy will send to Dyanna to circulate, her list of guide projects and activities for the year.

Volunteer Agreement:

MOU from the state: we need to review the "Volunteer Agreement (VA)" that replaces the previous MOU; discussion for the next meeting. Jesse provided an overview:

The VA is based on working with the Inc. Captures the names of volunteers and their activities, including an annual work plan. We need to hold our own liability insurance; we might be able to be covered under their insurance.

Dyanna asked for clarification about the work plan. Jesse: it captures requirements for who is in the group (roster), it also serves to give approval for certain activities. On the first page, the description of operations is for things we do on a regular basis. This gives us allowance to do it whenever convenient for us to complete. The approval portion is for larger projects. It can also document our conversations. There are no time constraints on the projects, necessarily. It is meant to offer approval so we can move forward on our ideas/projects. Those projects can continue into other years. Their intention is to support our interests/projects. And to encourage open communications, which we already have (since

we meet regularly with them). It is meant to encourage record-keeping between the two (state and volunteer group). Jesse will draft a volunteer agreement for us to review as a next step.

Dave: Does the state want us to sign this? Jesse: yes, to create a new formal agreement.

Portsmouth 400:

Sandy submitted the bowl as the historic item from the Mansion. They suspect this will go into a book, not a display. There was a long article in the paper two weeks ago about their plans. Polly is sending Dyanna and Tama the emails she gets, because they are not yet connected and receiving information.

Document Storage:

Rusty: we discussed putting our documents in storage with the state, do we want to reconsider doing this so we can get rid of our storage fees? The Portsmouth Library was not interested in storing things.

Elizabeth: the Athenaeum is too pressed for space to accept any new documents.

Dyanna will look at the past projects list and propose a priority list for the year for her attention, including organizing our files, especially if we are going to relocate them.

Tama will check on UNH's policy for storage and whether that is an option to consider.

It will help to know how much space we need?

Meeting adjourned at 10:54am.

Inc. Meeting:

(Jesse, Sandy and Polly left)

Volunteer Agreement: once we see the draft, we will discuss and move it forward if accepted.

Dave will forward some documents he has related to this.

Work Plan: we will spend an hour of the April meeting in person going through and creating a new work plan.

We are not making decisions on appropriations right now, waiting on more information to discuss at the April meeting.

Our tax returns are being completed, as is our Charitable Division report. These will be done by our next meeting and Tama will report on it then.

Tama: We have 11K+ in our checking account; 76K in a CD which will automatically renew near the end of the month. Do we want to transfer a certain amount out of the CD to bump up our checking account reserve? Tama met with Good Works and received good advice re: membership vs donors. We need more members on the Commission. With the amount of things we want to do, we need to have more people involved. Tama suggests a goal of gaining 5-6 more members in the next few months.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:15.