

# Town of Franklin, Massachusetts

## Historical Commission

### Meeting Minutes – February 16, 2016

**Commissioners Present:** Colette Ferguson, Phyllis Malcolm, Mary Olsson, Debbie Pellegri, Bob Percy.

**Absent:** Connie Lawson.

**A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** from Jan. 19th, approved as amended (5-0).

**B. CITIZEN COMMENTS** - None.

**C. APPOINTMENTS** - Jeremy B. submitted an application, to the Town Administrator's office, to be an Associate Member.

**D. PRESENTATIONS** — None.

**E. DISCUSSIONS/VOTES** — None

#### **F. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. PastPerfect Project (Bob) — Bob has been working with Dan Chase and the town IT department to upgrade the museum's PCs. Part of this is sorting out where, and in what form, to make the PastPerfect database available to staff and the public. This will require file sharing among the two upstairs PCs and the single downstairs (desktop) PC.
2. Audio record project (Phyllis and Mary) — Mary spoke to a Mr. Wall at Franklin High School who has replaced Mr. Brady. Mr. Wall is very interested in pursuing the audio preservation project.
3. Digitized documents (Bob) — Bob plans to organize a meeting with Felicia Oti, Vicki Buchanio, and Alan Earls to discuss plans to digitize documents from the Library and the Museum.
4. Textile Preservation (Connie) - Nothing new.
5. WWII Veteran picture display — We discussed Mary's proposal from last meeting to make these framed pictures available at a variety of town venues (Senior Center, at Dean Bank, or at the Town Offices, etc.) on a rotating basis. We need to make a schedule for their rotation, and to add to our information about the vets, each frame will have an accompanying sheet people can use to add names.
6. Treasurer's report (Phyllis) — We have \$3,500., which is available until the end of the fiscal year (June 30th).

#### **G. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Brick School Room Enhancements (Colette) - Colette wants to add more information to the room, which would come from other display cases and info from the Library Room.
2. Native American corner — Bob drafted some signage for the Sons of Liberty and Native American tools, and to contrast the two. Bob will send this to the Commission.
3. Film Project (Bob Oliver) - Nothing new. Bob plans to contact Bob O.
4. Horace Mann writings available in Museum Shop (Mary) - Mary learned that Horace Mann wrote 59 books. A lot of speeches he made are pamphlets that are available online. We would like these to obtain reproductions of these pamphlets and make them available in the Museum Shop.  
An open question - what would it take for us to republish (copyright free) older books?
5. Clothing Room — We discussed obtaining more metal shelves, and having a textile consultant, possibly an intern from another museum (URI? Museum of Fine Arts?) to help us preserve and label our clothing. Question: should we box the clothing before we clean it, or clean it first? Colette felt

we could box them, then circle back to clean them. We also discussed the benefits of having dress boxes that have clear tops for easy identification.

6. Reference Room — Debbie has spent time organizing. None of the items in the files in that room or in most of the cabinets downstairs have been entered into PastPerfect. We discussed labeling folders with color coded stickers to identify their status in the PastPerfect database.
7. Museum Shop — We discussed having more Franklin postcards available, some in packs of ten, some individually. The Commission will have to decide if any Horace Mann related t-shirts or mugs would belong in the Museum Shop. The focus will be on providing items that pertain to Franklin history (not from the Christmas Tree Shop).
8. Process for Incoming Accessioned Items (Bob) — Bob located an older (hardcopy) version of this document (2013). He'll try to locate (or recreate) an online copy, amend it (mention sticker system), then send it out to the Commission for comments. After it's complete, Bob can post it downstairs for staff use.
9. Commissioner and volunteers "things to do" list (Bob) - Bob will complete this and send it out to the Commission for comments.
10. Museum Trek - Mary provided some additional info to Tim Cook.

## **H. UPCOMING EVENTS**

1. We discussed remaining closed on Thursdays until April.
2. Town birthday — we discussed breaking convention by celebrating this in a big way every five years, but in a low-key way (or not at all) in between. Balance this with the other celebrations: Ben's birthday in Jan. and Horace Mann's birthday in May.
3. We decided on be closed on Easter Sunday (3/27).
4. April - school vacation week: How to get kids to the Museum? We discussed opening on Tues. and Thus. from 11 to 2.
5. All of these events require volunteer time. We suggested that each Commission member keep track of their time spent, so we can tally it at each meeting. (This will be useful later when we apply for grants in which in-kind volunteer hours have tangible value.)

## **I. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Cultural District Festival — An event to take place in the downtown on a Thursday night in the last week of August, sponsored by the programming committee of the Franklin Cultural Council, who is dedicated to instilling culture into the downtown. Last year we provided quilting and wool spinning. A motion to participate in this year's festivities passed (5-0).
2. Item of the Month — Susan Elliott and Dean intern Justin are working on this. Would like to start with four items, to be displayed at the Museum, one per month. Each would then rotate to Dean College for display there for one month. The Commission and Susan will need to work out what's is displayed at Dean and under what circumstances. We also discussed contacting Franklin schools to make the item of the month something students could be involved with. Colette agreed to write the draft of a letter we could send to teachers, and have the letter approved first by the Superintendent. We could also post notice of each IOTM to local newspapers.
3. Bob agreed to write letters of response to EBI's plan to use cell technology in the steeple of the Methodist Church, and to the MA DOT's proposal to build runoff areas for drainage along portions of the Franklin section of Rt. 495.
4. Realtor Craig Terry of Carey Realty had contacted Bob, at Jeff Nutting's request, to find out whether the Commission would consider a potential buyer for the Old South Meeting House on Washington

St. After discussing the matter, the Commission voted not to make the meeting house available for sale. Bob agreed to contact Mr. Terry to let him know.

5. We will add a 'Friends' item to the agenda.
6. A great deal of controversy surrounding the donation of items pertaining to the town's bicentennial. Items were left at the Museum with no deed of gift. Donor was never informed of the Museum's donation policy: that while the Commission greatly appreciates donations, donations must be accompanied by a filled out Deed of Gift form which states that the Commission is under no obligation to display donated items.
7. Bob agreed to print out the past year's demolition letters, and file them downstairs.
8. We discussed the possible need for an events calendar. The pros: it would keep the Commission and the Friends coordinated; the cons: it might lead to oversubscribing and overcommitting the Commission's time and resources as has happened before.
9. Debbie formally announced that as a new Town Council member, she can no longer continue as a member of the Historical Commission. We thank Debbie for her years of service on the Commission, and wish her well in her new post.

**J. MEMBERS' COMMENTS** - None.

**K. DEMOLITION REQUESTS** – None.

**L. ADJOURN** - Voted to adjourn, 5-0.