



Town of Franklin Massachusetts
Historical Commission

Meeting Minutes April 12, 2023

Commission Members Present: Randy LaRosa, Jan Prentice, Phyllis Malcolm, Paul Pisani, Mary Olsson, Alan Earls; Associate Member Will Lee; Archivist Rowan Lowell

Minutes of the March 8, 2023 meeting were accepted as written

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

APPOINTMENTS: None

PRESENTATIONS: None

DEMOLITION REQUESTS: None

FFHM Report: No one present

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- TREASURER: \$2,506.29 spent, \$1,483.71 left to spend per report prepared by L.Darling
- ARCHIVIST update: Rowan continues to work at organizing items in the basement. She will set up a meeting with Mike D'Angelo and Kevin Hart to look at what needs to be done to optimize organization, i.e. steel shelving. We will keep the wooden cabinets for now. She wants to open up the room in the middle. She is working with Jan to help put together an exhibit for Dean Commencement weekend May 6th and 7th. The large display cabinet needs to be cleared out, Mary to take care of that this week.
- Second Sunday Speaker Series May, Horace Mann, June, Wrentham Stat School Ingrid Grenon.
- CPC Update: Phyllis reported nothing new on the timing of the cupula. Mary had asked Jamie about Mike D'Angelo attending a future commission meeting to give us an update, Jamie said it was too soon. He said it probably wont happen for a year.
- Exhibit Committee: Alan and Randy met and came up with 4 general ideas
 - Historic Pipe Organs in Franklin
 - Old time radio and old-time radios
 - Terrors of Typing Class = a look at vintage typewriters
 - Revisiting the Dial Telephone

See attached draft from their meeting for more detail.

OLD BUSINESS:

- The Ladybug Tail Spring Walk is scheduled for Saturday 4/15/23. We will give away Ladybug bubbles and stickers and encourage people to visit the gift shop. Trail maps will be available.
- Silent Saturday: The next event is 4/15/23, Alan will host

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- Dean Exhibit for May: Jan and Rowan working with people from Dean
- Strawberry Stroll: June 9th, a Friday, special hours. Live entertainment by Greenwich Bay Brass, we will give away fresh popped popcorn,
- Bell at Old South Meeting House: Mary contacted Jamie, there is no timeline for the removal of the bell.
- Local Historic Districts: Alan drafted a letter to Jamie suggesting we get started on the idea. Mary to print, sign and send to Jamie.
- Boston Cane: The Cane has been returned and is back in the case. We need to put Mrs. Spencer's name in front of her photo.
- Docent idea: tabled until next month.
- New verbiage for Master Plan: Alan drafted a letter for Jame. Mary to print, sign and submit.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Archeology months plans: Alan has been speaking with reps from Mass Archology and is arranging to have someone speak at the museum, possibly in October. They are interested in working with us on a walk of the CCC Camps (off Grove Street) Alan will see if the conservation commission would like to participate. Mass Archeology have reports on surveys and research they did when expanding the high tension lines that could prove interesting on the subject of Native American inhabitants in the area.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

- Randy said there is a course in sociology at BU regarding towns with growth, there are three chapters on the town of Franklin. Randy will get us more info
- Jan reported that the house recently approved for demolition at 805 Washington Street has come down and the cellar has been filled.
- Alan brought up the plans for the St. Mary's property and although we were told there were no plans yet, Alan believes there are in fact plans and drawings.
- A Legacy Tree application has been submitted for the old oak tree at the corner of Main and Pleasant. There are pictures of the tree when it was part of the Hayward Gardens dating back over 100 years.
- Paul asked is there any way to stall decisions for future demolition requests if the petitioner only has a plan to demolish but no plan to build.
- Mary said she had spoken with Director of Humanities Tim Frazier; Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Tina Rogers and Admin Denise Miller with the Franklin School Administration regarding setting up a program for 3rd graders to visit the museum as part of their curriculum. They liked the idea and want to work with us. More to follow.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:07PM

Exhibit Subcommittee Report

Randy LaRosa, Alan Earls

Report for April 12, 2023

I. The Powerful Pipes and Resonant Reeds – An appreciation of the historic organs of Franklin

For centuries, pipe organs were arguably the most complex machines devised by humans. In the 19th and early 20th century, Franklin institutions – churches and Dean Academy – acquired a number of representative instruments that were a point of pride for town. Less wealthy institutions, such as the Old South Congregational, made do with lovely “Reed Organs” like that still in the possession of the museum. The proposed Exhibit could include:

- The museum’s reed organ
- An event, perhaps a Sunday afternoon ‘stroll’ to encompass brief concerts at each of the existing reed and pipe organs Or this could be a concert series sponsored by the Museum and the respective congregations. [By chance, I met with Rev. Juncker ‘across the lot’ and he is interested and said he had been looking for an opportunity to showcase their organ]
- Slide show about organs and how they work and what makes them significant

II. Old Time Radio and Old Time Radios.

We have, I think, about 3 pre 1930 (I think) radios from the battery era that we have never made a fuss over. And it isn't very much to build an exhibit around but in our brainstorming, I recalled that Pete Fasciano at FranklinTV/Radio has a nice collection of gear that he might be willing to loan. In addition, there might also be possible "interactive" things that could give this some liveliness and longevity such as:

- Showing of the made-for-TV movie, The Night That Panicked America or some similar thing about the Orson Welles martian landing radio drama of 1938
- Have some amateurs put on a radio drama with WFPR at the Museum. If we were really ambitious (I am not) a series, in the best of all possible worlds it could be adapted to Franklin characters, historic or present day.
- Arrange a field trip for townspeople to the broadcasting museum in Woonsocket
- Convince a scout troop to come build crystal radio kits with some help from old timer
- A lecture on the history of radio in the region (Donna Halper, maybe?)

III. Trowbridge Pianos

This could include 'our' piano (perhaps with a concert, though I think it needs tuning or repair), a slide show or film about how pianos are made, what a big deal they were until mid 20th century, how Boston became a huge center of manufacture, and as much as we can find about Trowbridge...

IV. For those under 40, TYPEWRITERS

- * Have some battered typewriters that people can play with
- * Revisit the terrors of typing class
- * Office Culture pre word=processing (and let's not forget Mike Nesmith's mom inventing whiteout!)

V. Dial me! Revisiting the dial telephone.

Yes, have dial phones for people to handle. Maybe we can even find a way to set them up to make calls...

I think Maureen Martello's mom is still around. She was actually an operator in Franklin around 1960

Etc.

A discussion of how phones were revolutionized from the late 1970s Ma Bell monopoly to cell phones in the 1990s...