

Historical Committee
Minutes of the October 12, 2016 Meeting

Attendance: B. Diem, B. Aldrich, L. Franklin, B. Titus, R. Stomber, L. Stahl,
D. Mobus, Liaison

Presiding: B. Diem, B. Aldrich, Chairpersons

The minutes of the Sept. 14 and 28 meetings were approved.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Barbara advised the Committee that the water cooler has been removed. The door was taken off of the Elsinore room. The light switch still needs to be changed for the hall light.

Betse took pictures of the McCumber property. It's going to be torn down.

Barbara discussed the historic Homes in Watchung-Harper, Hollingsworth, and Darby Company Mill Complex, Mooney/Sockwell House, Mount Saint Mary Academy.

FINANCIAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Lynn F. reported that our Borough budget for Sept. was \$8913.36 and that our Watchung Community Foundation budget was \$17,684.56. We received donations for two notecards and there were no expenses.

Lynn reported on attending the Somerset County Cultural and Heritage meeting. She told the Committee that there are pictures of historic buildings in the gallery of the Administration Building and there will be an employee sponsored art show. She also reported that there were 23 hotels in the area that were given the guides for Weekend Journey; the County did a nice video to advertise Weekend Journey. There were also ads in newspapers and on Patch on line. Delaware Valley College students will develop plans for using the bridge and land of the old stone arch bridge.

Lynn F. discussed Weekend Journey through the Past. The Committee agreed that it was very well organized and was attended by many people from out of town. Lynn F. asked for any additional comments. Betse thought people were interested and were surprised that we have the history of Watchung at the Texier House and that they said they would come back to visit again when they had more time to look at all the displays.

In 2015 we had a total of 126 people and in 2016 we had a total of 81 people who visited during the weekend. Lynn will send in the information to the County. Lynn read a thank you note from a visitor from the weekend who said she enjoyed the visit and that the light in the museum is very good.

LIAISON'S REPORT

Dave will meet with Buildings and Renovations. He will follow up with Bob Byrnes about the electrical. He advised the Committee that he reported at the Council Meeting that the locking system is not working for the Texier House.

Barbara told Dave that there is a section of bricks leading into the Texier House in which the bricks are uneven. Someone almost fell while walking there during Weekend Journey.

OLD BUSINESS

Barbara spoke about the publicity for the benches outside the Texier House and that Lynn F. will do a press release about them.

Barbara mentioned the Watchung signs are falling apart. She loves the old Watchung signs and would like to see them fixed. Dave said the DPW repaired a sign recently; they used a cedar post. Rick talked about it being a topic of discussion on social media that the signs are falling apart. Dave put it on his to do list to find out about the signs and who takes care of them.

Festival of Trees—Betse made a motion that we use the tree that we currently have and only buy a new one if we need one in the future. The Committee approved the motion. Barbara asked when we would like to set up the tree and it was decided that we will set it up on Tuesday, November 29 and then take it down on Thursday, December 29. We'll use the Watchung quilt for around the base. We need to provide at least a 10' extension cord.

Barbara mentioned the Girl Scout Project and they they're thinking of trying to restore the outhouse. The girl's mother is supposed to get in touch with the Mayor and Council about a scavenger hunt. The mother is Tammy Benc and the daughter is Alexandria.

Dave, Rick and Diddy were at the Texier House along with Linda Goldshein the day of the Re-Enactment. Many people attended. Barbara asked if they would do that every year and Dave said he wasn't sure. She mentioned that if we have notice about the event, we could make arrangements to be there. Barbara asked who picks the date. It's not connected to any specific time in history. No one knew who picks the date for the event.

Barbara mentioned that there was miscommunication about the shelving for the school display. Rusty Leffert was waiting to get advised from Huston Lumber that it is in and then he'll cut it. Lynn and Tom were going to pick it up, so they will work out the details of who will pick it up.

NEW BUSINESS

The Committee discussed Veterans Day and that we will be leaving it up to the Council to find someone to honor that day. For Memorial Day, we would like to honor Fred Ruckriegel.

Betse will submit bills for flowers purchased for the Weekend Journey.

Barbara mentioned that the Watchung video is not continuous, so when it is running during events, you have to keep it going manually.

Barbara discussed the sandwich board; Rick said it's fixed. Barbara thought that if we put holes in it then we could hang it on the sign ourselves and not have to depend on the DPW to put out the sandwich board sign when the Texier House will be open.

Lynn F. was at a house sale and found a 1904 edition of Andersen's Fairy Tales and wants to put it on loan for the children's school display.

There was a discussion about the Holocaust in Watchung since someone during Weekend Journey through the Past mentioned that we only have one Jewish book in the museum. We have one Holocaust survivor in town -- Luna Kaufman. Dave knows Luna and thought it would be interesting if we have Holocaust survivors living in town mentioned at the Texier House. Mark Weisberg's mother is a survivor and she wrote a book about it. The Committee discussed that we don't know of any other survivors and it was decided that we not pursue this idea at this time.

Rick asked if anyone knew of the Hedleys, Steves, and Walkups as names of people living in Watchung in the past. He was asked by someone during Weekend Journey. No one on the Committee recognized any of the names. Rick will follow up with the woman who inquired about the names.

Schedule for Texier House—November 6 - Barbara and Betse

November 20 - Rick and Lynn S.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Submitted by
Lynn Stahl
Interim Secretary