

**Watchung Historical Committee
Minutes of the September 17th, 2025 Meeting**

In Attendance: Don Monetti, Karen Jubin, Stephen Pote, Chris Vander Fliet, Michael DeParto, Emily White, Tim Logan, and Maureen Greenbaum, liaison Mayor Ron Jubin, Sue Tucker

Absent: Frank Lazzaro

Guest: Greg Fitzgerald (Borough Historical Committee website updates process)

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: 6:59p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from the 06/18/2025 meeting need approval.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Journey Through the Past 2025 October 11th and October 12th

Watchung will again participate in Journey Through the Past (see below).

Mike DeParto (New Display on the Police) & Echoes Article

Mike DeParto worked with Chris Vander Fliet over the summer on a new display which incorporated artifacts from the Police Station into the Texier House Museum. A small article was written and published by the Echoes Sentential on this new display.

Ordered/Hand Out Shirts for the 100th Anniversary

Thank You Mike DeParto

Banner for Texier/Watchung 100th Anniversary

The banner has been created and hung on the Texier Building

Brook Hill Sign Restoration

Thank you, Emily White and John Schaefer for the installation of the Brook Hill sign in the foyer of the Texier House.

Interview with Bruce Ryno

Sue Tucker, Don Monetti, Bruce Ryno, and Chris Vander Fliet completed a long interview with Bruce Ryno describing select historic homes and families of Watchung and the surrounding area. Bruce was a schoolteacher. Seth Alexander was kind enough to open his studio to us to use the space and professionally record the interview (audio only).

Reflections of Watchung

Completed/Backed Up over the summer

Folk Art Rug

Being worked on by Sue Tucker. It is considered on loan. The rug belongs to Kathy Beeson. It was created in 1990. It may well be hung in the entry foyer to the Texier House.

Diddy Addario – Update/90th Birthday Party

Members of Historical Committee and Rescue Squad, as well other close friends, are welcome to visit Diddy Addario at her home, to celebrate her 90th birthday on September 28th. Diddy is currently in Hospice care.

International Dinner

The town celebrated with new residents of Watchung, at the International Dinner. Frank Lazzaro and Karen Jubin both participated.

Watchung Newsletter

The newsletter has been submitted to the Borough, for publishing at the end of September/ early October.

2025 Accomplishments

- a. Continued creation/additions to the watchunghistory.org website
- b. Creation of the new Police Display
- c. Ordering/starting Watchung 100th Anniversary T-shirt coloring program
- d. Creation of the Watchung Industry Display
- e. Completion of the Reflections of Watchung film series/YouTube Channel
- f. Obtaining the Watchung Folk Art Rug
- g. Restoration and hanging of the Brook Hill Sign
- h. Installation of the Gods Acre Sign (old one at Texier) and new one around the lake.
- i. Ordering/Installation of the 100th Anniversary Banner on the Texier House.
- j. Photography of Museum artifacts with Russ Desanti
- k. Addition of QR codes around the Texier House Museum
- l. Audio interview with Bruce Ryno
- m. Categorizing/adding descriptions to over 600 photos stored at the Texier House Museum/continued coordination with Foveonics on the scanning of these photos and adding descriptions to these photos (stored online)
- n. Ordering of 100th Anniversary Committee Shirts
- o. Planting/Dedication of the Bob Mayers Tree
- p. Creation of questions/Display of Watchung Trivia on the Digital Sign outside of Borough Hall
- q. Installation of the video display frame (for veteran photos)
- r. Display on Watchung Schools (2023)
- s. Henry Long Display (2022)
- t. Interview with Bartels
- u. Continued operation and availability for open houses of the Texier House Museum throughout the year for many tears!
- v. Participation in Journey Through the Past for over 8 years!
- w. Attended a seminar on Artifact Assessment Program earlier in the year, sponsored by New Jersey Association of Museums. Work at seminar inspired QR codes on walls in Texier building; as well the hiring of a photographer to take pictures of artifacts for security and insurance purposes. Artifact Assessment Program also introduced the need

to prioritize artifacts that might need to be removed during emergency evacuation (to be completed late 2025/ early 2026). Enhancements on building security, relating to motion detection, use of FOB keys, and changes to the key pad have been completed according to Jim D'Amato, administrator.

VICE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Tim Logan - Tim Logan briefly reported with Emily White on the restoration of the Brook Hill Sign. There was a brief discussion on the location of where it should be installed at the Texier House.

LIAISON REPORT – Mayor Jubin

Per Mayor and Council: Bylaws will be reviewed by the Council; from them, there might be ordinance changes. Ultimately, the bylaws will be removed.

Texier House –

Meeting was held to discuss the adequacy of current security levels at the Texier House. At the Mayor's request, Steve Pote arranged a meeting with Mayor Jubin, Administrator D'Amato, and Police Chief Anderle. At the meeting it was confirmed that motion detectors in building are working. FOB keys are required and should be used for entry. Existing key pad on back door will be updated with new code only available to select personnel.

Routine cleaning at least every two months should take place.

100th celebration: There was discussion about possibly doing something in January 2026 to kick off the year with something regarding Watchung's 100th year.

Steve suggested that the Historical Committee and the Mayor/Council focus on what is priority during this year of celebration for Watchung. There are a lot of potential great things that can be done; but valued resources and timeline need to be focused, and specific goals need to be identified and supported by Mayor and Council. A budget is needed again to ensure that priority activities are completed in time for 100th anniversary festivities. Possibly there are historical grants that might be applied for.

OTHER PROJECTS/NEW BUSINESS

Presentation by Greg Fitzgerald/Website Updates

Greg Fitzgerald, who currently works with Warren on their website, has offered to help rebuild (at a cost) Watchung's Historical Website, organizing website contents and updating use of technology (e.g., how Google Maps might be used) to improve information access. Use of QR codes could lead one to the Historical Committee's website. The QR codes thus become an extension of the Historical website. It was discussed that historical content could provide a basis for discussion among students (part of the curriculum). This was attempted in the past; the Committee needs to assess and offer possible incorporation of Watchung history into borough school curriculum.

Updates to the website would not be a replacement but instead a “clean up” effort, as part of ongoing maintenance, but on a different website platform. Issues around online security, backup process, anti-hacking, search engine optimization, and accessibility all needs to be considered. ADA compliance and transferability from laptop to phone needs to be evaluated.

Centennial Plans

Lots of items are being discussed as it relates to celebratory activities for the 100th anniversary of Watchung, e.g., video library, time capsule opening, fireworks, music in the park.

Journey Through the Past

The Journey Through the Past will take place October 11th and October 12th. Emily White offered to create a scarecrow for the Historical Committee’s display. We need volunteers to provide coverage at the museum during the hours requested by Somerset County for Journey Through the Past. Hours of operation are 10a.m.-5p.m. on the 11th; 12p.m.-4p.m. on the 12th.

SCHEDULE FOR TEXIER HOUSE OPENINGS

October 5th

October 11th

October 12th

October 19th (??) cancelled

November 2nd

November 16th

December 7th

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:41 PM

Submitted by Steve Pote (Secretary)

Next Meeting: October 15th at 7PM

Attachments:

- 1. No Attachments**