

North Brunswick Historical Society

Minutes of the Public Meeting Wednesday, Monday, September 22, 2014

Present: Michael Hritz, President; Connie Adamo, Vice President; Richard Liguori, Treasurer; Nansi Krauss, Secretary, Janice Larkin, Trustee, Rose Marie Bennanti, new member, Cheryl McBride, new member.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm by President Michael Hritz.

New Business:

- Michael Hritz reviewed the structure of the Historical Society according to the bylaws, which charges the Board of Trustees with full power to conduct the business of the Society. Members are always welcome and are encouraged to join.
- Michael outlined the three goals of the Society for the funds raised at the Gala:
 - The preservation of the Pulda Farm
 - Archive preservation
 - Historical markers purchased and installed throughout town.

Treasurer's Report:

Rich Liguori presented a summary financial statement which shows an ending balance in all accounts of \$14,865.64. Outstanding items are \$100 to the video editor for the work performed so far, \$500 to the new videographer, and an unknown amount will be due for the subsequent video editing.

Project Updates:

- **The Pulda Farm**

The Township of North Brunswick has a working subcommittee on the Pulda Farm to gain access to Farrington Lake, install a community garden, and similar projects. The Historical Society's focus is on preserving the house and the barn. Michael Hritz intends to write a report to the Township's Mayor and Business Administrator in order to get an official response from the Township acknowledging the Historical Society's role in the preservation of the property so that we can apply for various grants to help fund the preservation of the two buildings.

The residence has a small section from the 18th century and the larger portion is from the 19th century. Michael hopes to tarp off the roof over the 18th century section before winter. The roof in the other section appears to be sound enough to keep the elements out of the house. A group has already been through much of the house and took out many interesting items. Cheryl McBride, Librarian at the Township Free Public Library, volunteered to go through these items and save a representative sample. Subsequently, a group of volunteers and the Middlesex County Youth Corps have gone through and virtually emptied the house of all the debris. The next phase will include the removal of the linoleum floors which have revealed original hardwoods underneath. Michael shared numerous pictures which clearly illustrate the progress.

The basement is a dirt floor, and filled with clothing, papers, miscellaneous junk and barrels filled with unidentifiable materials. This area cannot be cleared with volunteers or Municipal employees as there is a chance that the area is contaminated with hazardous waste. Michael has been in touch with Rapid Recovery and they indicated that they need to contract a company to do air quality tests in the basement. Once this process is complete, Rapid Recovery can submit a quote to completely empty the contents of the basement and dispose of all items. Michael is hopeful that this expense can be borne by the Township.

Michael is hoping to get potable water to the site in the near term and address the septic/sewer issues. The Business Administrator has agreed to run a potable water line to the site.

Middlesex County has advised the Society to hire an historical consultant, HMR of Princeton to come and do an historical assessment and action plan for the site. The County also recommended that we bring in the NJ Barn Company to come assess the barns to determine how that can be saved or restored. The goal of the group is to get this assessment done and have a better idea what is needed to move ahead.

Michael has a grant application from the New Jersey Historical Trust, the 1772 Foundation for a grant of up to \$15,000 for improvements to the house. The grant application deadline is April 1, 2015. The Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission has a \$2,500 grant available to hire a research historian to do a more expansive history of the property. The grant deadline for this is June, 2015. Both grants will be a focus of the Society in the coming months.

- **Historical Markers**

Michael presented a photo of an example of an historical marker. He suggested that Connie Adamo and Nansi Krauss spearhead a group to start a list of sites in town, come up with the text for the markers, find a vendor and get some quotes on for this project. Michael found concise text for the history of the Township which may be appropriate for a plaque in the Municipal Building's lobby.

- **Future Projects**

Michael suggested that in the near future, the Society should have a website. This site can be linked from the Township website. He suggests that we pursue the Township web designer and host to see if he would donate his services, the domain name, and the server space to the Society.

- A discussion ensued about future fundraising opportunities – calendars, afghans, note cards, etc. The group will continue to consider these items.
- Connie Adamo suggested that the Society have a booth at upcoming Heritage Day festivals. This would be a great place to sell our wares.
- Michael suggested an “Antiques Roadshow” type of an evening, charge a door fee, perhaps have a silent auction, etc.
- The group discussed various opportunities for events at the Pulda Farm, such as a Pumpkin Festival or a Tulip Festival.

Membership Dues:

Annual membership dues of \$25 are required by the bylaws to cover the operating expenses of the Society. In deference to this year’s gala related expenses, they will be collected annually beginning in calendar year 2015.

General Discussion:

- Michael met with the proprietor of a frame shop in Princeton that is also an archivist and we can utilize his talents as needed.
- Janice Larkin and Cheryl McBride will spearhead the effort to begin the separation and culling of the historical materials donated by Mark Pinkham’s estate. It was agreed that ideally, we would have a database that keeps track of the collection. Rich wondered if we need to have a volunteer that will cut articles from the newspaper moving forward. A meeting to begin this process is slated for: **Tuesday, November 11th at 10:00am** at the Municipal Building.
- Michael revealed some recently donated printing plates from the National Musical String Company which were used on their string packaging. Everyone was quite impressed.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm with a motion by Rich Liguori and a second by Connie Adamo.