

Sharon Historical Society Interim Board Meeting, Feb. 4, 2021 MINUTES

The Board met remotely via Zoom on Feb. 4, 2021.

Present: Brad Larson (president), Don Williams (vice president), Elisabeth McGregor (secretary), Carolyn Weeks (treasurer), Maria Anderson, Marie Cuneo, Debbie DeBassio, Jimmie Keating, Paul Lauenstein, Shirley Schofield, Doug Southard

Absent: Kristin Slater, Jan Parr, Mare Parker O'Toole, Marcia Springstead

Brad Larson called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM, and reviewed the agenda. Items added were meeting dates, access to materials for schools, and use of Facebook.

Historical Reflection: Shirley Schofield offered a brief history of transportation in Sharon, beginning with the paths created by the Native Americans and the early mail deliveries by horseback following the same paths, followed by stagecoaches stopping at Wainman's Ordinary and Billings Tavern. The biggest change was the beginning of train service with the 1835 completion of the Canton viaduct. This was supplemented by trolley service around 1900, with Cobb's Corner serving as a streetcar hub for several towns. After the trolleys were discontinued around 1920, bus service arose, with buses through Sharon center connecting to Mansfield, Foxboro, and Canton Junction in the 1930s and 40s, and the Connolly school bus service based in Walpole that included Sharon and went as far as Franklin. There was also Moody's Sharon Town Taxi. Today the remaining bus service in town is the Senior Citizen bus.

President's report: Brad is pleased with our collaborative process so far and enthusiastic about a project built around collecting experiences of the pandemic in Sharon. He stressed the importance of creating a communications plan, including changes to the website and a newsletter as soon as possible, and of setting meeting dates.

Treasurer's report and financial issues: Carolyn commented and answered questions on her report sent out in advance. We have spent \$1507 since the beginning of the year. In response to questions, she said we do not have a Paypal account, that it was not used and lapsed. The Comcast bill is \$190 a month; there was concern about the cost and what we get for it. It was noted that we have serious financial needs and should tackle funding issues at upcoming meetings. The question was raised about possible government funding assistance; Maria will check into it, but we don't qualify for the PPA because we have no employees. Maria and Carolyn agreed to serve on the Budget Committee and will invite Jan Parr to join them. Doug offered to help with fundraising. It was suggested that we consider raising membership dues.

Website matters: Kevin Earley, who has been doing the website management, has access to the website and to the Comcast account. Brad noted that it's important for the Board to have access. We also need to ensure continued domain registration, which has been handled by Morey Waltuck, the former webmaster. Doug will follow up on ensuring it is renewed. [Done]

Secretary's report: Beth raised the importance of having consolidated and readily accessible information, including membership, meeting, and financial records. She suggested a

membership and mailing list database that could be easily sorted for purposes of publicity, mailing, membership and dues renewal, and asked what lists were currently available. Don said there is a membership database; he will work on it and follow up with Carolyn about status of dues paid, and with Carol, Shirley and Kristin, who reportedly has a database that can be used to generate mailing labels, about the membership list. He noted that it was important to keep the membership and dues payment records current, since this was a bone of contention last year. As Clerk, the Secretary has the overall responsibility according to the Bylaws to maintain the records and make them accessible, but needs the help of others to gather and maintain them. Don, Kristin, and Shirley can all help with this. We will also determine how many member email addresses we have and try to build on this to make email contact with members a viable approach. Brad will put these matters on the agenda for our next meeting. Beth will add to the current Board contact list with other key contacts, including webmaster, committee chairs, service providers, maintenance contractors etc., and will circulate the list to the Board for other additions. The minutes of the January 7 board meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

Communications Plan: We need to act quickly on revising and updating the website, producing a newsletter, and circulating a President's letter explaining the formation of the interim board, our current status and plans. It was reported that Kevin Earley is willing to administer the website but wants all content to come from the Board.

Brad, Beth, Don, Debbie, Shirley and Paul agreed to serve on a Communications Committee, holding its first meeting on Feb. 18. Beth moved to make Don the chair; it was approved with only Don abstaining.

It was reported that Carol Gannon has agreed to produce the newsletter, but we need to get material to her soon. We should include the President's letter, an introduction of the interim Board members, information about and invitation to participate in the project to collect pandemic experiences, and announcements on a virtual Quarterly Meeting, the Annual Meeting, and election process. Shirley suggested including John Ford's article on growing up with the Jewish community in Sharon as a feature in the newsletter, and John has given permission for its use.

Debbie felt that if we can have a speaker at a spring quarterly meeting, it would show we are active again. Shirley said that Joe Blansfield has a talk prepared on the history of Bay Road; she will approach him about his availability on March 25th. We could invite Sharon Cable TV to record the meeting.

Shirley was granted permission to continue posting historical information on the Society's Facebook page, but without referring readers to the Society's website until it has been revised.

Meeting Schedule: Don proposed and we agreed on the following meeting schedule:

Feb. 18: Communications Committee, with any other Board members invited to attend. Don will see if he can get it covered by the Times Advocate.

Feb. 25: Bylaws Committee (membership tbd), to begin discussion of bylaws or bylaw amendments to be presented for member approval at the annual meeting.

March 4: Next Interim Board Meeting.

2nd week of March: Heritage Hunter newsletter mailed out.

March 25: Quarterly members' meeting with speaker, Joe Blansfield, held virtually on Zoom.
June 3: Annual Membership Meeting with speaker and elections.

Digitization: Doug offered to scan and digitize some materials on Deborah Sampson, in coordination with Shirley, to make them available to students. He also offered to contact Digital Commonwealth and express interest in further work with them. (Kristin Slater is also a good contact with them.) One limiting factor to archival work is access to the building during Covid, which for now needs to be limited to two or three people wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. Paul warned that the next few months are not a good time to let our guard down on Covid precautions—no one wants to be the last person to die in this pandemic.

Pandemic Memories project: Debbie would like us to reach out beyond the membership to the whole community, including the schools, to solicit pandemic memories in prose, poetry and pictures. We need to come up with a communications plan to get the word out and assemble what comes in. Paul suggested creating a time capsule of 2020, to be opened at a later date.

Possible Trust Income: Don shared preliminary information that the Society is apparently one of four organizations named as beneficiaries of the Donnell Trust. Mrs. Donnell was a Sharon school teacher and a member of the Society.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, March 4, 7 PM (via Zoom)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Elisabeth McGregor, Secretary