

## **Sharon Historical Society Interim Board Meeting, June 3, 2021 – Minutes**

The Board met remotely by Zoom on June 3, 2021.

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

Brad Larson called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. He reported that he had enjoyed his vacation, thanked the Board for its ongoing good work, and noted that we need to keep our eye on the ball over the summer to be prepared for the Annual Meeting and elections in September.

**Historical Reflection:** Shirley Schofield offered a history of Flag Day as celebrated in Sharon. Flag Day is celebrated on June 14<sup>th</sup>, commemorating the adoption of the flag by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1777. As a child in Sharon, she recalled that teachers shared the history of the American flag, including the story of Betsy Ross designing and sewing the first American flag. Students also saluted the flag every day at school. In the past few years, the town has adopted the tradition of observing Flag Day at the lake, although this was skipped last year due to Covid. At precisely 7 PM, a time coordinated with towns all across the country, the Boy Scouts raise the flag. Paul Bergeron, the Veterans' Agent, generally serves as master of ceremonies. Typically there is participation by Boy and Girl Scouts and students, sometimes including a chorus; proclamations from the State House and the Select Board are read, and the Fire Department brings a ladder truck flying the flag. Asked whether there have been any changes in local Flag Day observances, Shirley noted that in the past few years we have celebrated it more than in earlier years.

**Treasurer's Report:** Carolyn briefly reviewed the monthly figures she had sent, showing May receipts of \$337, disbursements of \$1291.38, and balance of \$5677.27

Meg suggested that getting a donation module on website and adding a donate button on the Facebook page would be very helpful in bringing in funds, and volunteered to help make it happen. Maria agreed but cautioned that we need to be aware of what the fees are. Shirley asked about when Eagle Elevator inspection would be due; probably not for 6-7 months. Don reported that he has talked with Kevin about online transactions, and asked if the Communications Committee could meet June 24 on it and recommend action to the Board. Marie asked about the status of the Darnell Trust. Don reported that it's waiting for court to finalize it We know only that we'll receive 17% of the funds but have no idea of the amount.

**Secretary 's Report:** Beth asked for any additions/corrections to the minutes of the May 6 Board meeting. There were none, and the minutes were approved unanimously. She asked about her responsibility for notes of the June 10 Quarterly membership meeting. Shirley suggested there should be brief notes on the President's and Treasurer's report and on the speaker, and an estimate of attendance based on Zoom participants.

**Memorial Day activities:** Don reported that there were quite a few important people at the cemetery on Sunday despite the rain. There was no march to the site this year. Participants included a select board member, a pastor, veterans' agent Paul Bergeron, and Boy scouts, with a firing salute and flag lowering and raising. Volunteers had gathered on Friday evening to help spread the flags and flowers on veterans' graves. The event was mentioned on Channel 25.

**Nominating Committee:** Maria reviewed preparations for the election to be held at Annual Meeting, with target date of September 30<sup>th</sup>. The committee will meet before the next Board meeting to finalize the ballot and election procedures. Paul is working on the draft ballot for the committee to review, and then it can be presented to the full Board for approval. We discussed insuring election clarity and integrity; the plan is to check people in at the door on arrival and give ballots to members. Paul asked if we needed to reopen nominations. Don saw no need, and noted that Brad had told members it would be the same people who volunteered in May. We need to decide whether we will have a speaker in addition to business.

**Stewardship and Best Practices:** Brad stressed the Board's obligation of responsible, accountable stewardship of the Society. He recommended following Meg's guidance as a NEMA professional about standards, recognized best practices, and usual processes for small museums and historical societies. She noted that the AASLH STEPS Program offers very good guidelines. Brad felt it would be helpful to have a one-page checklist of best practices and processes that we need to pay attention to.

One thing that needs attention is the usefulness and attractiveness of the website. Brad noted that the website is slow to update and is currently down. Don said we're working on getting it up again.

**Fundraising:** One of the most pressing stewardship issues is financial. Brad noted that finances and fundraising currently command the most energy. Doug stressed that we need to move forward actively with fundraising, and get appeals for donations going out soon, because we're in danger of running out of money; he offered to help with outreach to businesses.

Don asked the board's permission to do a letter campaign to corporate sponsors, as has been done in past years. Meg suggested updating the language of the letter used previously to demonstrate that we're cohesive, active and doing good things.

It was moved (Beth), seconded (Debbie) and voted unanimously to approve Don's sending out a corporate sponsorship/donation appeal with refreshed language.

Don proposed holding a yard sale in the fall, probably a Saturday in October. He had asked for permission from the American Legion to hold a community yard sale at their South Main Street location as an alternative to the museum parking lot. There was general interest in holding a sale. Marie, Shirley and Jimmie all spoke in favor of having it at the museum as usual, noting that people are used to it, it's easy to get permission to use the town parking lot, and hard to haul items elsewhere.

Doug raised the question of how much work goes into running a yard sale in proportion to the revenue it brings in. Carolyn responded that the last one brought in over \$2500. Jimmie noted that after the last yard sale he hauled away three truckloads of unsold items.

Debbie asked if there were any farmers' markets in Sharon where we might have a table with food and other things. (Not sure if there's one at Crescent Ridge this year.) Is anyone aware of other organizations planning a sale whom we could coordinate with?

Doug suggested that rather than committing quickly and specifically to a yard sale, we should step back and make a plan, like instituting an annual appeal to raise money that might have bigger return. Meg concurred that most organizations do an annual appeal and find it worth doing. Don said that we could do a community-wide direct mailing appeal and possibly recruit sponsors for special projects. Jimmie suggested that if we send out an appeal we should also invite donation of historical items.

**Quarterly meeting:** Things are pretty much set for the June 10 quarterly meeting. Don has emailed the link to members. He also plans to send the link again Tuesday, plus we should post a message on the Facebook page and website describing the meeting and inviting people to email the Society if interested. The speaker, Joe Blansfield has checked out the link and plans to practice, testing his camera and slides. He and a few others will be at the museum for the program. Meg said that zoom bombing no longer seems to be an issue. We can livestream the program to Facebook and share the Facebook link. Whoever is in charge of our Zoom account should be in touch with Meg.

#### **Archives:**

We received a deaccession request from Mary Ann Clanton. Her father gave the Society a photograph of the Massapoag Lake Hotel, and she would like to have it back. Doug noted that we have two other copies. It was moved (Don), seconded (Debbie) and voted to deaccession and return the photo. Doug will take care of it; Shirley will give him the contact information. Doug also reported that the Archives Committee will have its first in-person meeting on this coming Monday. Jim Zuis, Joanne Douglass, and Jean Zaniwski are all interested in attending, and Doug has contacted the Bookbinders.

Doug raised the question of whether the Board should be tasked with approving accessions recommended by the Archivist or archives committee. We will review our collections policies around accessions.

#### **Opening the museum to the public:**

We have had a 'soft opening' for several Saturdays, where member volunteers and a few others have shown up. Don suggested that beginning June 19 we open publicly on Saturdays 1-4 PM for now (perhaps the summer); we can decide later about Thursdays. We will post the opening information starting the 19<sup>th</sup>. Paul and Debbie asked about signage requesting visitors to follow Covid precautions, including masks, and having masks available. Marie suggested that it should be a soft request, something like "for your protection and that of others, we request that you observe Covid protocols." Beth offered to bring a box of masks and post the sign.

It was moved (Don), seconded and unanimously voted to open on Saturdays as of June 19, with the friendly amendment by Debbie that a mask request would be included.

Debbie, who has been doing some cleanup and organizing, also suggested that we should still do a fuller cleaning, including carpet shampooing.

**Other business:**

Grant update: Meg reported that she had submitted the grant application to Mass Humanities for “Reading Frederick Douglass Together” with the sign-on of the town Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEIC), and that we would hear by June 14 whether or not it is accepted.

Two other agenda items were deferred to a later meeting due to lack of time:

Filling committees and appointing committee chairs.

Assessing and improving data systems, including membership database and other record-keeping.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elisabeth McGregor  
Secretary