

Sharon Historical Society Board Meeting Jan. 6, 2022 Minutes

The Board held its regular monthly meeting in Zoom format at 7 PM on Thursday Jan. 6, 2022
Present: Brad Larson (Pres), Don Williams (VP), Beth McGregor (Sec'y), Carolyn Weeks (Treas), Doug Southworth (Chief Archivist), Maria Anderson, Joe Blansfield, Marie Cuneo, Debby DeBassio, Carol Gannon, Hana Jenner, Jimmie Keating, Shirley Schofield, Meg Winikates.
Absent: Paul Lauenstein

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM. Due to a full agenda, Shirley decided not to offer the historical reflection that often begins our meetings.

Brad began by acknowledging the major workload being carried by Don, and pointed out that we need to spread out the work and all help out. He also acknowledged that as president he can't keep on top of all that's happening, but welcomed anyone reaching out to him; he felt we're getting more able to rely on committees to run with the various tasks.

Treasurer's Report: Carolyn added to her monthly report previously circulated, showing receipts of \$1642.05, disbursements of \$1092.67, an operating account balance of \$5008.37, and total account balances of \$199,963.31. She noted that Cochrane Roofing made a corporate contribution of \$300, and the Winter Market (listed as Ways and Means income) brought in nearly \$1000. Hana said the Market proceeds came primarily from the fees of 24 vendors, plus donations for hot chocolate etc. She was complimented on the great results and gave credit to the volunteers who helped make it happen.

Carolyn also reported that our old accountant has retired and we need to engage a new one; Beth suggested we also needed someone to do an audit.

Secretary's Report: Beth said that having been absent for the Dec. 9 Quarterly Meeting she couldn't post a report on it on the website. Don offered to prepare a report on that meeting.

Moved (Don), seconded, and voted (unan.) to approve the minutes of the Dec. 2 meeting.

Archives Report: Doug summarized his previously circulated report. He has let Digital Commonwealth know that our archival photographs are ready to bring to the Boston Public Library for scanning. We can keep adding to them until DC is ready to take them.

Board Member Priorities: We continued with briefly sharing our 3 goals for the year and near future as requested by Brad. A separate document captures them in detail; the following is a brief summary of what was said:

Brad: Have a new attractive website in 6 months. Increase membership. Board enjoying working together.

Hana: Increase members by 50 per year. Host more fun activities (walks, movies etc). Build a list of active volunteers who will be easy to recruit.

Doug: Create an archives collection database, cloud hosted, easy to access (probably Past Perfect on web.) Focus on outreach and diversify to reflect our increasingly diverse town. Update the 'red book,' History of Sharon.

Shirley: Create more storage space, either a new shed or addition to Carriage House. Bylaws and procedures update. Host interesting events like a historic ramble, cemetery walking tour.

Don: Keep mission, reflect and review. Improve museum with new fresh and rotating displays. Have fun working together.

Joe: Recruitment, retention, education. Recognition of new members and old members, sharing storytelling. Bring education about Sharon to schools and other venues.

Carol: Be true to mission, improve the museum, increase the number of volunteers and programs.

Deb: Do more with Jewish history; collect oral histories, maybe with videos. Hold a Deborah Sampson road race as a fundraiser. (May 23 is official Deborah Sampson day).

Meg: Examine and review mission with members and townspeople. Visioning and strategic planning. What should be our focus, where are holes? Remedy the current overlap in committee responsibilities, clarify roles of committees. Consider hiring a part-time staff person to help with administration.

Developing planning and programming calendar a year ahead, including collaborating with others in town like Sharon Day, Reading Frederick Douglass, Trunk or Treat, etc. .

Jimmie: Outreach program with schools. Develop program and invite schools to participate. This might also increase membership. Increase and rotate displays, publish them ahead of time and take suggestions.

Maria: Finance—Make sure we have proper financial controls in place. Financial planning. . Make goals visible. Have budget in place for 3 years. Get Donnell funds invested.

Carolyn: Get younger active members. Make sure Paypal works clearly to identify source and purpose of payment. Get funds invested to meet increased expenses.

Beth: Broader communications, engaging public programs. Update bylaws. Work on organizational structures that survive changes of individuals in charge.

Marie: Reach out to other groups, get more diversity. Restore good school programming of Jean Santos and Joanne D. In person meetings at museum.

Brad suggested that at our next meeting we might pick two or three ideas to develop more thoroughly and work on first.

Committee reports: Brad started with the list of committees defined in the bylaws and asked for reports or the status of them.

Ways and Means: Doug and Meg reported that the committee is working on a fundraising plan. Meg will submit the Veterans Grant proposal tomorrow; she thanked those who had helped her put it together. They are putting together a fundraising calendar to coordinate with our events calendar. Work w membership to update membership fees. They plan to proceed with a town wide appeal mailing this year, focused on primarily on membership along with fundraising. We need to work out things like getting Wild Apricot software running before we

can send out an appeal. The plan is to hold spring fairs like the Winter Market (led by Hana), and antiques and collectibles flea markets (led by Debbie).

Education: Not formally active; may also include Activities. Hana has approached Joanne Douglas about resuming an education program for school children, and reports that Judy Bookbinder is also interested. Joe said he is happy to work in this area but needs guidance on where we are and want to go. Are Education, Activities and Programs distinct or lumped together under one umbrella? Brad replied that there's ambiguity and we need to start clarifying. Hana noted that it's fine to have separate endeavors or combine education with events; she suggested that Joe might check w Joanne about getting involved in education.

Newsletter: Paul is serving as editor, and Communications Committee is taking responsibility for it. Brad thinks it may combine logically with other media in the same committee. Don noted that Ways and Means has set up target dates for newsletter distribution, asking that articles and reports get to Paul by Feb. 7. The March 10 Quarterly Meeting may feature a speaker on Dr Griffin, which would need newsletter coverage. Also Veterans exhibit to support funding the matching grant. Don proposed that the Communications Committee meet on Tues Jan 11. to work out newsletter details. Doug noted that Shirley is working on an article on the Donnells.

Buildings and Grounds:

Don has acted on board approval to sign a T&E agreement with Associated Elevator, which has sent a technician who was able to stop the leak in the cylinder. The next step is to sign a service contract with Associated for quarterly service at a cost of \$225/quarter plus extra for repairs. They need to conduct a weight test before arranging with the inspector for an inspection that would allow us to legally operate it. We will still need state inspection biennially.

Hana expressed appreciation for Don's work, and wondered if there was any chance to find a grant to help with ADA compliance. Don said that Meg has identified one possible grant.

Debbie suggested that we should authorize proceeding with the contract.

Agreed by consensus to approve signing the service contract with Associated Elevator.

Don also reported his research on the alarm system; he noted there are problems with the current system including lack of responsiveness. He reached out to ADT, who provided a quote on replacing the current system, \$338 initial cost and \$55/month, or upgrading to add cameras at the entrances with a recorder, for \$1217 initial cost plus \$96/month. The alarm company notified the police. There was considerable discussion of how the system would work, how it would improve our current security system, any hidden costs, and whether we were ready to act on the costlier option or needed more information and budget planning to prioritize. Hana, Maria and Marie raised financial questions. Don, Jimmie and Debbie all felt strongly that the camera is important and serves as a deterrent, and the price could go up if we delay.

Moved (Debbie), seconded and voted (10-1-2) to authorize purchase of a new ADT alarm system including two security cameras.

Membership: We discussed the committee's recommendation to buy the Wild Apricot digital platform. Meg and others spoke to its advantages, also attested to by Kristin Slater, who is

willing to handle the setup. It provides an easy way to add and track members, can generate mass emails, automatic renewal notices, donation receipts etc. It provides technical support, cloud backup and storage, and spam protection; it interfaces with Quickbooks, Paypal and Wordpress, supports a website, and can manage event registrations. It is web accessible so can be updated and worked on from home. It provides for up to 5 administrative sign-ins, and members can access their own records to update their information. Kristin is currently working with a free limited test that allows up to 50 entries. The cost is \$60/month for up to 250 entries, \$110/month for up to 500 entries, with discounts for paying a year or two years in advance.

Moved (Beth), seconded and voted (unan.) to begin the 30-day free trial of Wild Apricot as soon as Kristin is ready to do so, to approve paying for an additional two months, and based on our experience with it either extend payment month-by-month or sign on for a year.

Other Business:

Museum opening: We discussed whether to open the museum this weekend given the predicted storm and the Covid surge. Don said he's all set to plow and use the snowblower. Shirley reported that she had asked the DPW to sand the driveway and parking area. Don felt that it was a good idea to have some presence at the museum this weekend. Shirley and Hana both said they planned to be at the museum during the regular opening hours. Debbie noted that we should keep enforcing Covid protocols including a mask policy with any visitors.

Zoom account: Hana proposed that the Society consider purchasing a Zoom account, so that we can conduct meetings and broadcast programs from the museum without Brad or Don having to arrange to share their personal accounts. Cost is \$140/year. There was general agreement with the idea. Debbie noted that we're likely to keep using Zoom extensively not just because of Covid precautions but for inclusion of distant members and people who can't come to the museum. Shirley reported on an expression of appreciation from a long-time member now in Kansas City that he could now attend the quarterly meetings. We could also use zoom for the Dearborns' genealogy workshops. Carol felt we should clarify whether it should be used only for Society activities, as approved by Board or Communications Committee.

Moved (Beth), seconded, and voted (unan.) to approve the purchase of a Zoom account, to be used for standard Society business and activities (Board, committee and membership meetings and public programs) and other uses by Board pre-approval.

Black History Month Display: Debbie reported that she, Carol and Shirley are working on a display related to one or more local figures who advanced racial equity.

Moved (Beth), seconded, and voted (unan.) to authorize them to proceed with the display.

A motion to adjourn was made (Debbie) and voted (unan.) The meeting ended at 9:01 PM
Next meeting Thurs. Feb. 4.

Respectfully submitted,
Elisabeth McGregor, Secretary