

**TOWN OF EAST LYME
SMITH-HARRIS HOUSE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, FEBRUARY 24th, 2010**

Present: Beth Hogan, Chairman; Carol Marelli; Rich MacDonald, Finance Officer; James Littlefield, Secretary; Gary Lakowsky, Vice-Chair; Maggie Prokop

Also Present: Mary Cutillo, Friends of Smith Harris
Gene Medley, ELMS
John Birmingham, Board of Selectmen, Ex-Officio

Chairman Hogan called the February 24, 2010 Regular Meeting of the Smith-Harris House Commission to order at 7:05 PM.

1. Delegations

Ms. Hogan called for delegations.

There were none.

2. Friends of Smith-Harris Report

Mary Cutillo reported that the drapes were ordered for the dining room. She also reported that they would serve breakfast or lunch to the inmates on April 1, 2010 who were working the House grounds. She said that they were also still looking for a banjo clock.

Mr. MacDonald asked what they will do with the drapes that are being replaced by the new ones. Ms. Cutillo said that they would store them away as they would like to have summer and winter drapes to be able to change for the seasons. Should they decide that they no longer wanted them, they would try to sell them.

3. Ex-Officio Report

Ms. Hogan said that Mr. Birmingham would be arriving a bit later.

4. Agenda Additions

Ms. Hogan asked if anyone had any other agenda items.
There were none.

5. Approval of January 27, 2010 Minutes

Ms. Hogan called for any changes, additions or deletions to the minutes of January 27, 2010.

****MOTION (1)**

Mr. MacDonald moved to accept the Minutes of the January 27, 2010 Regular Meeting of the Smith-Harris House Commission as presented.

Mr. Lakowsky seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

6. Finance Report

◆ Status Update

Mr. MacDonald reported that they had \$3,169.79 remaining in their budget.

◆ New Reimbursements

There were no new reimbursements.

7. Chairman's Report

◆ Introduction of Jane Dauphinais – Director of Southeastern CT Housing Alliance – Affordable Housing Incentive Zones/Overlays Update

Ms. Hogan introduced Jane Dauphinais, Director SE CT Housing Alliance to present the Incentive Housing Zone program that she has been working on.

Ms. Dauphinais, Director, SECT Housing Alliance explained that the Town applied for a grant for technical assistance in addressing the different types of housing. With the Home CT Program they take a proactive role on where they want to locate Affordable Housing to try to work towards the 10% Affordable Housing level within the Town. The type of housing that they are looking at could be where there are stores on the bottom with living area above; ownership or rental, possibly downtown allowing the Town to revitalize an area that they may already have deemed ready for revitalization.

In studies they have found that as a whole the nation is getting older and that East Lyme specifically is aging at a faster rate as they have embraced the type of living that attracts people to retire to the Town. From 2000 to 2008 home prices in East Lyme went up 141% while incomes have risen 22%. Affordable relates to not more than 80% of the area median income and that not more than 30% of that income is spent on housing. The area median is \$77,000 with 80% of that being around \$61,000. This is not considered low income and a good 25% or more of the current households would fit into this bracket which would include just about all of the municipal workers.

Currently household size and school enrollments are declining. It is a misconception to think that affordable housing burdens the schools as enrollments are still declining and it is not enrollment that drives the school costs as the teachers have to be there anyway, the lights are on and the facility is running so it does not cost more to add a person. What drives the school costs is health insurance, transportation, fuel and supplies as those costs have risen by 50% while enrollment is down by 2.9%.

In discussions on housing, the solution that the study group liked best was the Incentive Housing zones/overlay which is part of the Smart Growth Program. It is a voluntary program and can be mixed use or residential but must be in a village, commercial or growth area with access to transportation. A potential developer would still have to go through all of the reviews if they were to apply under this program. They would be allowed to build six (6) single family homes per acre or ten (10) town homes per acre or 20 multi-family units per acre under the program. If they apply under this program they could not use the 8-30g. The incentive part is for the Town. The program was funded at the State level with \$4M so that the Town(s) who came in under this would get \$2000 per unit when the zone was created and another \$2000 per unit when the project was permitted within the zone. The money would go into the Towns' general fund. The developers would not get any incentive payments as they get the higher densities per acre and a smooth approval process.

The four (4) locations that the study group came up with are: within the Gateway project; the very tired and in need of revitalization Midway Mall; areas within Niantic Village (yet to be determined) and the industrially zoned portion of the Town owned property running behind Industrial Park Road development.

Ms. Dauphinais presented the Commissioners with a map of the area behind the Community Center, Smith Harris House and Industrial Park Road businesses that would be part of the Town owned property so that they could review it and make comments.

Mr. MacDonald pointed out where his house is and said that he frequently walks through the wooded area behind the Smith Harris House to get to his own house rather than driving and that he would not like to see development right outside of his own home. He also noted that there were trails in the area.

Ms. Marelli asked why the Town is interested in acquiring open space land but is so willing to give up this land to development – it did not seem to make sense. She also stated that the property is rather wet and has difficult terrain with ledge.

Mr. Lakowsky said that the property is very wet and that it remains wet throughout the entire season. There is also a pond there and he suggested that they take a walk of the area to see what is actually there and to get a better feel for the area that is being suggested.

Ms. Dauphinais asked that they keep an open mind on this and also asked about the area where the buses are parked as that seemed to be a flat area of land. The Commissioners said that there is not much land there.

Ms. Hogan suggested that they work together to set a time to do a walk of the property. She said that she would get people together from the Commission to go and would email Ms. Dauphinais some suggested dates so that she could decide when she would like to go.

Ms. Dauphinais said that she would coordinate with Mr. Scheer and Mr. Goeschel to come on the site walk also and asked that they give this some thought. She thanked them for having her.

Ms. Hogan thanked Ms. Dauphinais for coming and for the presentation.

8. New Business

◆ Appropriation for Electrical upgrades/materials – Motion/discussion

Mr. Lakowsky said that he has to see if the wiring comes through the pipe from the barn instead of just under the ground. He suggested that they wait on this as he may get the materials that are needed and the work donated to them.

(Note: 8 PM – Mr. Birmingham joined the meeting)

◆ Appropriation for ELMS Historical Education Programs – Motion/discussion

Ms. Medley said that they would have six (6) talks, two presentations with General Lee and that the House pays \$50 and the school pays \$75. She asked if they would be able to pay a little more as the program monies are very tight and the children so enjoy these programs. She noted that General Lee was keeping his price at the \$125 for them although it has risen for others.

Ms. Marelli said that they have \$800 left in programs although they would be running short in other line items and would need to transfer money from the programs line item to the others to make it through their budget year. She said that six (6) programs would run \$300 at the \$50 each. She asked for suggestions.

Mr. Lakowsky suggested that they encumber \$75 for the March 8th, 2010 program.

****MOTION (2)**

Mr. Lakowsky moved that they appropriate \$75 for the March 8th, 2010 historical education program at ELMS.

Ms. Prokop seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

****MOTION (3)**

Mr. Lakowsky moved that they encumber \$75 for the Robert E. Lee programs at ELMS.

Mr. Littlefield seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

****MOTION (4)**

Mr. Lakowsky moved that they encumber up to \$200 for Gene Medley for supplies for the four (4) historical education programs held at ELMS.

Mr. Littlefield seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

◆ **Appropriation for Tool/Garden shed materials – Motion/discussion**

Mr. Littlefield said that he had spoken with some people regarding this project and that he was told that they would have the specifications and materials listing for him in a week or so. He would have it for them for their next meeting.

◆ **Appropriation for Bulk Head replacement material costs – Motion/discussion**

Mr. Littlefield reported that the cost for this should not be over \$1000 but he would get that information and the numbers for them and have it for their next meeting.

◆ **Appropriation for Susan Jerome-Textile Expert-Storage closets – Motion/discussion**

Mr. Littlefield said that Ms. Jerome will come to their next meeting and that she gets \$40 per hour. He said that he asked her to come at 6 PM so that they could work with her on the closet and where it would go and give them specifics on it as she is the expert in this area. She will also come to their meeting and answer any questions they might have on how it can be designed and how things would be stored in it.

****MOTION (5)**

Mr. Littlefield moved that they appropriate up to \$80 for Susan Jerome, Textile Expert.

Mr. Lakowsky seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

◆ **Appropriation for house work cleaning materials/paint – Motion/discussion**

Ms. Marelli said that she has some money already allocated to supplies and that she thought that it might be enough to purchase what they need here. If not, she would let them know at the next meeting of the Commission.

◆ **Appropriation for partial funding for summer programs – Open House/Yankee Brass Band/Just Call Me Lizzie – One Act Play – Motion/discussion**

Ms. Marelli noted that this would cost around \$1200 and that it would be held on July 31, 2010. She said that they would have to get some outside funding for it.

Mr. Lakowsky said that since it is after the Lions Lobsterfest and Art Show that he would see if they could donate something or sponsor some of it.

Ms. Hogan said that she would look into Dominion for a donation/advertising and that she would put this on their next agenda for further discussion.

◆ **Discussion RE: Policy for donations for memorials**

Ms. Hogan said that they would discuss this at their next meeting.

◆ **Discussion – Assessment for 2010 for the Friends**

Ms. Hogan noted that this is an assessment and not door fees. They would send an invoice to the Friends citing the assessment for the use of the House and the associated administrative costs of having them utilize the House. They would come up with an invoice and an amount which would be charged on a yearly basis. She said that if they found that things changed that they could change the assessment amount. She asked that they think about this for their next meeting.

9. Old Business

◆ Summer Programs 2010 – Set date for “Just Call Me Lizzie”

After some discussion, it was decided that Just Call Me Lizzie would be held on Saturday August 21, 2010. They would open the grounds and House an hour earlier for tours and early arrivals. In the event that it rained it would be held in the barn. The program lasts around an hour and it could start at 7 PM.

Mr. Lakowsky suggested that they provide Town Hall with these dates also so that they could go up on Channel 22.

◆ Review of By-Laws – for March Agenda

Ms. Hogan said that they would discuss this at their March meeting.

◆ Finalize Work Projects for April 1 and April 2, 2010

Ms. Hogan said that she would like to clean the basement and the attic.

Ms. Marelli said that she would like to have help on those days as they have the basement, grounds and underbrush and with the inmates helping, anyone who is there by themselves is frequently called out to guide or answer questions that the inmates have regarding the work that they are doing. The inmates would be there from 9 AM to 2:30 PM.

Ms. Hogan said that she would contact Mr. Holyfield for a Town truck to be placed at the House to throw the underbrush and yard clean up materials in to be hauled away.

Ms. Marelli asked that anyone who has any other ideas to please email them to her.

10. Committee Projects / Special Committees

◆ Communications/Marketing of Smith Harris House

Ms. Hogan said that she would speak with Ashley Peterson about this.

◆ New Programs for 2010/2011 – Brainstorming Ideas – preparing for summer displays

Ms. Hogan asked that they think of things that they would like to do so that they could discuss this at their next meeting.

11. Outside Meetings & Events

◆ Five Rivers

Mr. MacDonald said that the Five Rivers Board would like to hold their picnic here during an afternoon (yet to be determined) in June.

The Commissioners said that would be fine and to just let them know the date.

Mr. MacDonald said that he would let them know the date once they decide. He also reported that at the meeting that there was discussion on re-doing the Five Rivers brochure. He said that he would email Ashley Peterson the information so that she could contact them and work with them on this. One member of Five Rivers is a web designer. He said that they also discussed a program for junior docents.

◆ **Historical Society**

Ms. Prokop said that on March 1, 2010 at 7 PM that the Historical Properties Commission would hold a meeting and that they would have the election of officers.

◆ **Other items/events**

Mr. Littlefield reported that they had received a lovely thank you from the Prokop family for the flowers.

Mr. Lakowsky reminded them that he would not be present for the March meeting.

Mr. Birmingham reported that the Board of Selectmen is still working on the budget.

12. Adjournment

****MOTION (6)**

Mr. Littlefield moved to adjourn the Smith-Harris House Commission Regular Meeting of February 24, 1010 at 8:50 PM.

Mr. Lakowsky seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,
Recording Secretary, Pro-Tem