



Town of Franklin Massachusetts
Historical Commission
Meeting Minutes January 4, 2024, 6:30 pm

Commission Members Present: Randy LaRosa, Scott Mason, Mary Olsson, Jan Prentice, Alan Earls, Paul Pisani

Others Present: Kai Olsson, Will Lee; Archivist Rowan Lowell

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - October 11, 2023, December 13, 2023, Jan 4, 2024

All three minutes approved with a unanimous vote.

CITIZENS COMMENTS: None

APPOINTMENTS: None

PRESENTATIONS: None

FFHM REPORT: No members present

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **TREASURER:** Treasurer not present, but \$3,200 remaining
Mary asked for a report from town treasurer, but hasn't received it as of the meeting.
- **ARCHIVIST UPDATE:**
 - Rowan and Alan met with Kate Sjoberg, the town GIS Director, regarding access to the town's GIS data to assist in Historical Property research. The Commission will have access to raw data on properties, including build dates. The town has a StoryMap that shows when developments were made for both monuments and properties. There is potential for creating an interactive display of Franklin's evolution across the years.
 - Rowan is working on a rough outline for an exhibit schedule, for a potential bridal display in spring.
 - Rowan will be meeting with Jamie in February to look over future road map and goals for 2024. There will be a focus on tapping into systems that already exist, such as updating the museum website, the webpage hosted on the town website, and social media to drum up more interest. Mary and Rowan will collaborate.
 - Alan mentioned that we could have a newsletter like the library through the town that people can subscribe to, which Rowan will look into.
 - Scott brought up a QR code at the entrance that visitors could use to sign in when they arrive. Alan also mentioned updating the guest log to add a field for email addresses.
 - Rowan mentioned a list of items that we would like to acquire, such as an iPad to help guests locate items, and a water pump for the basement.
- **SSSS:** Alan suggested bringing in author Jeff Belanger for an afternoon around Halloween. Scott asked about Rob Lawson switching the cemetery tour to October 30th in lieu of the 31st to come back to the museum and have Jeff Belanger present after the tour. Alan and Mary are going to discuss the logistics later.

- CPC: Phyllis was not present, but CPC still has not met to the best of Alan's knowledge.

OLD BUSINESS

- House signs: Alan mentioned that they were doing signs around the bicentennial, Mary brought up that some people currently have signs on their houses. Alan suggested having the Friends look into making signs on a for-profit basis. Alan had found some sign vendors online, and suggested creating signs denoting historic places.
- Vintage House Research: Alan discussed that the MACRIS database is very comprehensive, and that the Commission should be able to contribute to it in a significant way, even though many of the properties on the list have since been demolished. Paul asked about being taught how to use the Dedham Registry of Deeds as a resource. Mary mentioned that the Registrar of Deeds was scheduled as a speaker right before Covid, and is going to look into bringing him back.

NEW BUSINESS

- Alan suggested engaging visitors with an interactive screen at the entrance that gives a quick background on the museum and its contents, or something more in-depth. Many suggestions were given, including QR codes at the entrance, and maybe a projector with images in the front of the museum. There was discussion about reorienting the display cases to open up the museum floor.
- Alan brought up the idea of a history trail, which will probably be designed after we create a historic district. Randy brought up that he knows where the foundation for the original Franklin Meeting House is.
- Alan raised the idea of "Silent Saturdays" and also "Foreign Fridays," showing films to draw in new visitors, with potential launch in February. Paul suggested bringing in Dean students as volunteers. Mary brought up that the third Saturday, March 2nd, would be the town's birthday. Agreed to start Silent Films on Feb 17 and 24.
- As of the new year, Rowan is working full-time as archivist.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:

- Jan recommended name tags for commissioners. Jan also was able to get the Dean students' presentations to be presented at the Senior Center.
- Scott thanked Jan for filling in on Saturday, January 6th amid a 40-person visitor turnout. Scott also mentioned that Jeff Nutting and his brother will be coming to take measurements for crates for the model exhibits, to be stored at the DPW, transported to and from in town vehicles. Jeff Nutting's brother will be donating his time, while the Commission purchases the necessary materials.
- Randy mentioned that the items in the kitchen were supposed to be removed. Rowan responded that Facilities is still looking at architects for quotes.
- Mary received a call from Amy Adams, Adjunct Professor at Dean, to collaborate on an exhibit to house art from an artist who is a community member on April 25th.

The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:09 P.M.