

Raritan Historic & Cultural Committee

May 17, 2017

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting of May 17, 2017 was called to order at 7:00pm.
Minutes for the Meeting of May 17, 2017 are below.

MEMBERS PRESENT AT MEETING:

Jim Fidacaro, President; Jane Fidacaro, Vice President; Tim Rack, Secretary; Ed Ruzbarsky; Marie Lombardy; Joyce Tronolone; Jim Foohey

PUBLIC ATTENDEES:

None

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer reported that we currently have \$595.15 in the Committee's trust fund and \$750 from the Borough budget. We paid \$250 for the Alexander Hamilton presentation.

Old Business:

Walking Tour – The walking tour requested by the Heritage Trail Association of Somerset County is tentatively scheduled for September 16; we are waiting to hear back from Linda Berth for confirmation. Jane and Karen have agreed to conduct the tour. An additional 50 tour books have been printed for each tour.

Veterans of War Park – Plans for the park have been finalized. The tentative schedule is for bids to be received by June 1, the contract awarded sometime between June 13th and 27th, construction to begin by July 1, and a tentative completion date of September 1. Two memorial stones will be moved from the Borough Hall. The County plans on adding lighting and electrical outlets as well.

Speakers Bureau – The Library and the Historic Committee sponsored Alexander Hamilton from the American History Theater on April 22 at the Library. The presentation was well received and Joyce Tronolone will investigate future presentations.

Cataloging of Historic Items – All materials have been moved from our former office in the old school to the upper floor of the firehouse. It still needs to be sorting and cataloged.

Slide Presentation – The Committee is creating Powerpoint slide presentation of Raritan's history to be presented to schools and Senior Citizen groups. Tim Rack created the slides and Jim Fidacaro, Jane Fidacaro, and Marie Lombardy are in the process of creating captions. Marie expressed some reservations about the presentation, but it was proposed that we complete it and then present it during the July Committee meeting for editing.

Washington School Artifacts – No new status report. Jim Fidacaro met with Matt Loper of Somerset County regarding preserving some items from Washington School when it is demolished. A monument has been designed and will be installed along First Avenue after the school has been demolished. Demolition is slated to start sometime in April, with a July completion date.

Picture Book – Marie Lombardy volunteered to create a Then and Now book of old and new pictures of Raritan for publication. There is no progress reported yet.

History of Fire Department – An announcement will appear in the Breeze newspaper regarding the availability at the Library of the Committee's historic interviews. Jim Fidacaro and Al Capetta recorded an interview with Carl Memoli on March 11. Carl is very knowledgeable about the history of the Raritan Fire Department and presented first hand information. The interview is available in the Library.

Elevator for Fire House – Jim Fidacaro met with Don Esposito on January 25 regarding funding for the installment of an elevator to the second floor of the Anderson Street Fire House. One of original grants from the Somerset County Historical Commission was to refurbish the 2nd floor into a meeting room. There was some discussion among the Committee as to whether an elevator was needed if the firehouse becomes a museum. Further discussion will occur when we get additional information.

2017 Goals – The Committee would like to complete the following goals for 2017:

- Complete the PowerPoint presentation
- Write and publish the Then and Now book
- See to the completion of Veterans Park and the Washington School Memorial
- Connect with the League of Historical Societies of NJ
- Identify veterans from earlier wars from Raritan so they can be honored
- Expand displays of historical artifacts by utilizing the new library addition
- Broaden involvement of other people into the Committee

Library Displays – The Committee created a display of artifacts in one of the new Library display cases. We plan on doing different themes throughout the year. Karen Eastlund suggested we create a display of old lunch boxes near the beginning of the school year. To that end, Karen asked the Committee to loan her any old lunch boxes they may have. An appeal for old lunchboxes will be put in the Breeze newspaper in July.

Historic Fire House Directors - The Mayor has asked the Historic and Cultural Committee to oversee work being done on the historic firehouse. The plan is to

ensure that only work specified in the grant is completed and not extra or alternate construction.

Vacancy – There is still an opening on the Committee. Jim Fidacaro asked the members to put forth anyone that may be interested.

New Business:

Scrapbook - Ed Ruzbarsky has been collecting articles and information about the Historic & Cultural Committee into a scrapbook. Ed asked members to send him any information they get.

BRHS West Materials – Bruce Doorly said he has a box of Bridgewater Raritan West High School memorabilia to donate to the Committee. The Committee asked Bruce to hold onto the material until we have a place to store/display it.

2017 Meeting Dates - 2017 meetings of the Historic and Cultural Committee will be held on the following dates:

July 19

August 16

September 20

October 18

November 15

December 20

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Motion was approved and meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Rack, Secretary