

History & Culture Committee Minutes, August 15, 2018

Attending: Jane Fidacaro, Jim Fidacaro, Karen Eastlund, Zach Bray, Joyce Tronolone, Al Capetta, Marie Lombardy, Tim Rack.

Excused: Christine Torres, Ed Ruzbarsky

Public Attendee: Ned Lombardy

The meeting was opened with the pledge of allegiance.

Minutes: Since there was no meeting in July, Jim recapped the minutes of the June meeting. Al moved that the minutes be accepted, and Jane seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Jane reported that we have \$715 in our trust fund and \$700 in our yearly budget.

Old Business:

Then and Now Book – no progress until September

Regional Center Grant – Mrs. Knowles said it was almost guaranteed that we would get the entire \$15,000 grant. The Regional Center would give us \$7500 to get the art wrapped bench project started, and \$7500 when the project is finished. But, they still need to make the final decision on how they will apportion the money.

The Washington School Monument is completed. The plaque on the back reads:

Site of Washington School

1935-2018

"Through the looking window of the past, present, and future."

It served the Bridgewater Raritan School district from 1936 to 1979, then was a Somerset County satellite office and Senior Wellness Center from 1980-2017.

This monument was constructed with components from the original building.

A ceremony is planned for the end of September.

Marie mentioned that Washington School was built by WPA workers.

Marie asked about walking tour booklets. She would like to sell them at her upcoming reunion. Jim thought we have about 20 each, but will check further.

New Business:

River Fest – Linda Schulte informed Jim that River Fest will be October 14 from noon to 4pm and will include both the duck race and the river fest. It falls on the same day that the county will hold its historical tour. Zach said that there are about

30 organizations currently signed up to participate. There was no interest from our committee members to participate at this time.

New Artifacts: Jim received: a Francino's dairy bottle, a Basilone bobblehead, a beer bottle from Mr. Vetter. The bottle was discovered in Somerville by Paul Fiedler. Two paintings, one from the library of the historic firehouse on Anderson St., and one from Jon Hlafter, a painting of Washington School.

Jim sent letters of thank you to Josephine Sorace and Paul Fiedler. Jim and Al met with Mr. Hlafter, thanked him personally for the picture and gave him 2 Walking Tour booklets of Raritan.

Firehouse Update: On hold for the time being.

Karen shared the **1918 military blanket** that was woven in the Raritan Woolen Mills. Jim addressed guidelines for purchasing such items, stating that we should have a vote by email before spending committee funds. Also, we can ask the town to increase our budget so that we can earmark monies for purchasing artifacts. Upon request, a motion was made and seconded that we use committee funds for the purchase of the blanket at the total of \$132.37. The motion passed unanimously. We discussed where to store artifacts since our current storage area is very difficult to access. Jane suggested we ask for a room in Borough Hall once the police move to the new location. The mayor had suggested that we work together with the library to secure historic artifacts but the library board voted it down.

Karen shared a letter from Linda Barth about a **WWI program and pop up museum** coming up on Sunday, Nov 11 at 2pm at Heritage Trail.

Karen and Jane put **new displays** in Borough Hall and the library. The Borough Hall display features information about 1948 since that was the year that Raritan became a borough. The Library display focuses on the Raritan Woolen Mills and will feature the newly received 1918 blanket.

We discussed a **theme for the art** that we will solicit from Raritan artists to put on the benches along Somerset St. We would like it to focus on our history and suggested "Raritan through the Ages." We plan to have a meeting with the artists once they have been chosen so we can talk together about town events that might be highlighted. To be included: a visit by Joe DiMaggio, the Rh factor discovered by Ortho, the packages and letters from Orlando's bar, etc.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Eastlund, Secretary