



TOWN OF LEDYARD

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Chairman Ty Lamb

Regular Meeting

Monday, November 18, 2024

7:00 PM

Town Hall Annex -Hybrid Format

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Chairman Lamb at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present Commissioner William Barnes
Commissioner Douglas Kelley
Chairman Ty Lamb
Commissioner Kelly Lamb
Commissioner Ammie Chittim
Excused Alternate Member Vincent Godino
Non-voting Alternate Member Kenneth Geer
Alternate Member Karen Parkinson

Also in attendance was Tom Baudro, who spent 16 years on the Planning Commission

III. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Not needed.

IV. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

Mr. Baudro presented pictures from the Sawmill to the Commission. Chairman Lamb will inventory and then officially present to Commission.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Motion to APPROVE the Special Meeting Minutes from October 28, 2024, as written.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: William Barnes

SECONDER: Ty Lamb

AYE 5 Barnes Kelley Lamb Lamb Chittim

EXCUSED 1 Godino

VI. TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

1. Town Council Liaison - Councilor Tim Ryan.

No report. Tim Ryan, Town Council was not present.

VII. CHAIRMAN REPORT

1. General Report.

Chairman Lamb expressed appreciation to all the work done at Nathan Lester House, thanking Mr. Kelley's efforts.

Transfer of leftover money from ARPA to the Sawmill.

Emergency Situations (up to \$1,000 can be authorized for immediate results by Mr. Kelly and Mr. Barnes, up to \$5000 with Chairman Lamb's authorization). Within the day the full amount must be authorized.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

2. Financial Report.

Chairman Lamb is developing a workbook to keep track of all POS and balances. He asked each Committee to discuss this either as a group or individual. The fiscal year ends on the last day of June.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Correspondence.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Sawmill Committee - Mr. Barnes.

The RFP responses are due on November 21, 2024. To date there is one commitment. Other interests are not as direct. The cost is approximately 30k with the assumption that costs are more than the past calculated amount.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

2. Nathan Lester House - Mr. Kelley.

Now that the museum is closed for the season, efforts at the Lester House have moved to maintenance and planning for the future. Planning includes our long-term partners, the Ledyard Historic Society, the Ledyard Garden Club, Ledyard Public Works, and Avalonia Land Conservancy.

In the absence of resident caretakers, the house is visited at least once daily, with a walk-through of the house, checking on the barns, and assessments of the grounds. Preparations for winter are underway. The continuing drought has been a concern, and the lawns closest to the house and the Great Oak Garden have been watered for the past month. Hopefully the expected rain this

Wednesday night and Thursday will reduce the risk of fire.

Public Works have handled clearing of invasive plants along the stone wall of the exit drive. This, along with our own incremental clearing of the boundaries of the Great Field, and in the North Field and Orchard Field, will help mitigate our fire risk as well as give a more presentable appearance to the property. Regular trail walkers have been very helpful in reporting the state of the miles of trails on the property and giving suggestions.

Assessment of trees on the property which are potentially dangerous has been done. A large portion of an oak tree come down in a windstorm, and the remaining portion is a danger to the parking area. One further oak at the bottom of the parking exit should be removed. At least two and perhaps three other trees are dangers to the entrance drive. The continuing ash blight has killed 10 more trees along the exit drive which are close enough to the drive to warrant removal. Also, in a continuing conversation with the Garden Club, it was agreed that the very large larch in the Great Oak Garden has continued to fail and should be removed before it endangers the ell of the house or the shrub garden. This loss is unfortunate, as it is a specimen tree planted by the Graves family. The hope is that some of this work will be handled by various existing partners rather than fall on the Commission's budget.

The restoration contractor has had a delay in resuming work on the East side of the house, and now expects to resume work on December 9. All windows and rebuilt window trim were completed off site and held in the main barn awaiting installation.

The long-term capital improvement plan is well underway and as well as making needed repairs to the House. This will include proposals to add (amongst others):

- A separate caretaker's cottage (likely sited in the Orchard Field, and using the existing drive next to the barns - extended through the break in the stone wall in back).
- A timber-framed picnic/events pavilion in the Great Field.
- A comfort station (restrooms) along the drive past the barns.
- A garden shed for the use of the Ledyard Garden Club behind the house inside the north field.
- An outdoor kitchen built for hearth cooking demonstrations.
- A community garden (possibly in the North Field).
- A restored orchard of heritage fruit varieties (Orchard Field).

A presentation of all these and other possible improvements will be put together to help support these proposals. The goal is to go far beyond maintenance and presentation of the existing museum house and barns and create a community-supported but self-sustaining historical venue with multiple attractions, all presented as an 18th/early 19th century farm with traditionally crafted or rescued/reclaimed buildings.

The NLH is presently underutilized, need to build on this. Try to make it more interesting like the Sawmill is. Possibly make it more of a destination, making it more commercially viable.

Idea to create a team. Ms. Parkinson said the team should be “friends of the Nathan Lester House”, marketing the concept of being a “friend” of the Nathan Lester House. The idea is to get a core group of at least five dedicated “friends” using social media, Community forum, etc.

Need overall plans plus long term and short term. The Ledyard Garden Club has also mentioned Ms. Parkinson's concept.

3. Research/Preservation - Ms. Chittim.

Chairman Lamb and Ms. Parkinson went to the Land use committee meeting recently. An A2 survey is needed for the 4.4-acre ruins. Land Use does not want to assign an authority until after the survey. The survey could cost 5-6k. Ms. Parkinson has talked to the State Office of Archology regarding grants. She is still trying to gather more information on the specific grant that would be appropriate. The present grant Mr. Parkinson is working on would be a match funding grant.

Tri town trail, mailing from Last Green Valley, and heritage corner. The beginning of the trail is in Preston, who is also part of the Last Green Valley. Ms. Parkinson is asking if there are other groups such as the Cultural Coalition, or CT Humanities or other areas to look for grants.

Ms. Parkinson asked if the Commission wants to begin discussing celebrating America 250? Chairman Lamb agreed that brainstorming should be begin on the future celebration. Mr. Kelley added that the Bicentennial is the reason the Commission has the Sawmill and the Lester House.

Search should begin for Fort Hill collection such as projectiles etc. at the Nathan Lester House. An Art Archeologist went into the attic of the NLH and found items that they had been looking for. Suggestion for the Society to take inventory all these items. There are some things that Mr. Cohen said he had read about and had never seen before. Significant items in a box in the attic. Ms. Chittim asked that she be present when an Archaeologist is on site.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

4. Center School - Mr. Geer.

No new news.

5. Social Media - Ms. Lamb.

The Commissions Facebook followers count is now 162.

Followers love the "around town historic pictures", which are posted on occasion. In the past week there were two posts of newspaper clippings, one of the grand opening of the Ledyard post office and the other one four years later.

Mr. Geer has a box of old one room schoolhouse pictures and Chairman Lamb just was just returned a box of historical pictures he had recently lent out. Ms. Lamb will go through both boxes once she has access.

X. OLD BUSINESS

1. Any Other Old Business to come before the Commission.
None.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Any Other New Business to come before the Commission.
None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to ADJOURN the Regular Meeting at 8:00 p.m.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Ty Lamb

SECONDER: William Barnes

AYE 5 Barnes Kelley Lamb Lamb Chittim

EXCUSED 1 Godino

DISCLAIMER: Although we try to be timely and accurate these are not official records of the Town.