

Morris County Heritage Commission Minutes Meeting of April 12, 2011

Present: Commissioners Larry Fast, Epsey Farrell, Tracy Kinsel, Dave Bogert, Kathy Fisher, Virginia Vogt, James Woodruff, Daniel Beards; Archivist Peg Shultz, Freeholder Margaret Nordstrom

Absent: Commissioner Henry Kafel

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at the County Cultural Center at 9:40 a.m. The Open Meeting statement was read.

Minutes: March minutes were read and approved, with two abstentions.

Financial report: The Commission's 2011 budget has been approved: A total of \$93,450 was appropriated, which includes a \$20,225 operating budget for 2011. After dispersals and encumbrances, there is \$18,816.36 remaining. (Additional expenses have been submitted but not yet paid.)

Freeholder report: Freeholder Nordstrom shared a recent study prepared by Grace Hanlon of NJ Travel and Tourism that indicated many municipalities are essentially "doing their own thing" as regards economic development via tourism. There is a need for a pilot project that can direct tourism inquiries from the state level back to Morris County. Some MCHC members feel that some of the communication media that could help turn tourism interest into larger scale economic development may already be in place. Commissioner Beards pointed out that the Yahoo travel site currently directs inquiries to the county tourism site. Commissioner Bogert stated a need for someone to be responsible for building and funding a general framework for handling development opportunities as they arise. Freeholder Nordstrom suggested that Leslie Bensley of the Morris County Tourism Bureau may be the logical candidate for that task. Commissioners Bogert and Farrell recommended that Ms. Bensley be invited to a MCHC meeting in the near future to discuss the issue.

Chairman's report: Chairman Fast assisted Ms. Shultz in the day-to-day running of the MCHC office. Trenton's SAGE computer software apparently lacks the flexibility to allow for a sufficient range of user response, which required time-consuming workarounds in the electronic filing of MCHC's 2011 NJHC grant request. He also reviewed the progress of the Commission's two-part spring program and the spring newsletter. Chairman Fast mentioned the recent death of former MCHC member Dorothy Brahney, whom many Commissioners remember as a helpful and friendly colleague with a dedication to history, particularly that of Washington Township.

Archivist/acting administrator report: Ms. Shultz reported spending the majority of her time on grants and public programs (see subcommittee reports). She successfully filed the NJHC grant request and newly required ADA documentation despite difficulties with Trenton's software.

Outreach and partnerships:

- Ms. Shultz attended the April 6 MCAT meeting. MCAT reports a successful St. Patrick's Parade and commented it would like to see more local history representation next year.
- MCAT's free museum visitation program, *Be Our Guest*, is scheduled for May 15, with shuttles provided between the nine venues. Food donations will go to the community food bank and monetary contributions to *Front Line Morris*, which assists county military families.
- The Morris County Tourism Bureau-National Park Service-sponsored Revolutionary Times Weekend is April 15-17.
- Jill Hawk, superintendent of the Morristown NPS, and Leslie Bensley, executive director of the MCTB, are co-sponsoring "Rally for Tourism: Destination Morris County" on May 12 at Washington's Headquarters to showcase the charms of Morris County during National Tourism Week. Freeholders and mayors will rub elbows with major east-coast media, and Ms. Shultz will attend in period costume. Commissioner Fisher will supply talking points on behalf of the MCHC.
- Plans for an art and history fair during the Morristown Fall Festival, sponsored by the MCTB, continue.
- Ms. Shultz assisted Picatinny Arsenal with text for five historic markers.

Committee reports

Archives: Larry Fast, Chair

Commissioner Bogert will work with Archivist Shultz to set up workspace at Morris View. He suggested that any remaining funds at year's end be used to upgrade shelving.

Grants/Re-grants: Dave Bogert, Chair

Ms. Shultz will conduct visits with grant recipients in May. (Interim reports are due at end of May.) Visit schedule will be forwarded to all commissioners at Mr. Bogert's request.

Exhibits/Programs: Virginia Vogt, Chair

The Commission's two-part March program, *Burial Customs, Traditions and Preservation*, took place on March 23 and March 30 at the Cultural Center. Advance registration was over 100 for each section, with 75 participants showing up on March 23 despite hail, thunder, lightning, snow and ice. Sixty participants attended on March 30, when a tractor-trailer accident closed down Route 287 near show time. Commissioners Fast, Vogt, Woodruff, Bogert, Farrell and Fisher assisted with food, check-in, programs, seating and cleanup. Ms. Shultz arranged for refreshments and introduced the speakers. David Breslauer also volunteered his help both evenings. Ms. Shultz wrote gracious thank-you notes to Veit, Nonestied and Breslauer.

Long-Range Plan: Virginia Vogt, Chair

Nothing to report. The long range plan is in effect.

Personnel: Henry Kafel, Chair

Ms. Shultz's new job description has been given to Commissioner Kafel. He will forward it to county attorney Alison Stapleton for classification. Also, last year's summer intern will not be able to work as an unpaid volunteer in 2011. The search for qualified volunteer assistance for Ms. Shultz continues.

Publications: Virginia Vogt and Epsy Farrell, Co-chairs

Commissioner Fast reported that the MCHC web address has been "unplugged" without prior warning and with no redirect information. In addition, the old address is now for sale. Freeholder Nordstrom will investigate.

Commissioners Farrell, Woodruff, Vogt and Fast will meet with Ms. Shultz in a special editorial working session following the Commission's regular meeting. Certain frequently occurring editorial and style questions will be decided and added to David Mitros's manual by Ms. Vogt. It is hoped that clarifying style issues will improve initial input and streamline editing. Also to be discussed: the need to begin creative work earlier to allow for sufficient editing and production time.

Marker program: Kathy Fisher, Chair

The Montville Dutch outkitchen marker will be installed as soon as weather allows. A summer maintenance and repainting schedule will be determined. Freeholder Nordstrom requested a list of missing markers, and Commissioner Fisher will comply.

Communications: Secretary Vogt

The Commission received invitations to museum events throughout the area, many newsletters, and several Section 106 notifications including planned rehabilitation projects at the Morris Plains and Lincoln Park railroad stations. We also received a thank you note from former Commissioner Karen Kurlander for the orchid that Commissioners sent on the death of her father.

Old Business:

Chairman Fast asked for clarification on the Commission's participation in the Morris County Trust's *Ten Most Endangered* list. After some discussion, all Commissioners and Freeholder Nordstrom voted unanimously to sever our former support for the yearly project.

New Business: Commissioner Bogert asked Ms. Shultz to notify him of meetings, museum openings and other events of interest on an ongoing basis. Ms. Shultz currently forwards many such notices and will attempt to intensify her efforts on Mr. Bogert's behalf.

Adjournment: 11:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Virginia Vogt, Secretary

The next Commission meeting will be held on **Tuesday, May 10, at 9:30 a.m.**
Please inform Ms. Shultz if you are unable to attend.