

Morris County Heritage Commission Minutes Meeting of March 13, 2012

Present: Commissioners Larry Fast, Epsey Farrell Virginia Vogt, James Woodruff, Henry Kafel, Dan Beards, Miriam Morris; Archivist/Acting Director Peg Shultz

Absent: Commissioner Tracey Kinsel

Call to order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Fast at the County Cultural Center at 9:34 a.m. The Open Meeting Statement was read.

Minutes: February minutes were read and approved.

Financial report: Treasurer not present. Commission temporary O/E budget is \$9,000 until final county budget is settled.

Freeholder report: None

Chairman's report:

- Chairman Fast has spoken with Freeholder Chegwidde about two of the Commission's current plans: reprinting of various Commission publications and returning at least part of the County archives to the Cultural Center (details under Committee Reports).
- He requested that Freeholder Chegwidde help the Commission obtain remediation to ceiling and wall problems at the Cultural Center; he also requested guidance on obtaining necessary repairs to the vault door.
- He requested that Freeholders finalize status determination regarding the currently suspended Heritage Commissioner and that the county courthouse preservation plan working group confirm the existing concept plan for establishing appropriate guidelines for repairs and/or renovation of the historic building.
- He informed Freeholder Chegwidde about the Morris County Heritage Commission/Morris County Park Commission joint outreach to the National Park Service to create a "cross-tourism" initiative that would link two major chapters in the story of the development of telecommunications: Alfred Vail at Speedwell and Thomas Edison in West Orange. Single-issue tickets for both sites and joint bus tours are envisioned.
- On March 8 Chairman Fast and Archivist/Acting Director Shultz attended a meeting with key Park Commission and Speedwell personnel on the above initiative. A follow-up meeting will put Leslie Bensley at Morris County Tourism Bureau in the picture.
- He attended, with other Commissioners, a meeting with Herman Baron of Diane Publishing to discuss book reprints on March 6.
- Preservation NJ held its annual gala with the Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund among the honorees. The Heritage Commission was represented by Mr. Fast, and Ms. Shultz and Ms. Vogt.

Archivist/acting director's report: Archivist/Acting Administrator Shultz reports the following activities in addition to her work in various committee areas:

Meetings:

- MCAT meeting on March 7
- A photo opportunity at Picatinny Arsenal to announce its historic district markers, created with Ms. Shultz's assistance
- Meeting at Morristown Bethel AME Church to discuss historical signage
- Preservation NJ gala
- Cross-tourism meeting with Parks Commission (see above).
- Diane Publishing meeting.

Building and Grounds:

- Ms. Shultz reports that the large step ladder remains missing at Morris View and that work on ceiling repairs continues.
- Wire shelving has been installed in the A room. More new shelving is in storage awaiting assistance shifting materials off old shelving.

Interns:

- Intern Hefferan continues working with the Greystone blueprint collection.
- Intern Avci is working on veteran internment cards.

Committee reports:

Archives: James Woodruff, Chair

Chairman Fast has received the approval of Freeholder Chegwidde to make plans to remove county archives from Morris View. Mr. Fast also requested help in making the move if none is forthcoming from Buildings & Grounds. Intern Hefferan reported highlights of the Greystone collection of 350 blueprints. These are being organized by building and indexed by drawer.

Commissioner Woodruff will inspect repairs to archival area after the meeting.

Grants/Re-grants: Virginia Vogt, Chair

Ms. Shultz reports that she will begin scheduling site visits will begin in late April.

Exhibits/Programs: Jim Woodruff, Chair

Commissioner Woodruff discussed ongoing plans for a program on historic one-room schoolhouses. Several commissioners provided possible sources of speakers.

Long-Range Plan: Virginia Vogt, Chair

Commissioner Vogt led a brief long-range plan discussion to assure that first-year initiatives are on track. All agreed that bylaws and mission statements should be examined with an eye toward possible revision.

Personnel: Henry Kafel

Commissioner Kafel reported that additional part-time employment continues to be problematical.

Publications: Virginia Vogt and Epsy Farrell, Co-chairs

Members of the publications committee, Chairman Fast, and Acting Administrator Shultz met with author David Mitros and Mr. Herman Baron of Diane Publishing on March 6 to discuss the reprinting of Heritage Commission publications. Following a preliminary luncheon hosted by Commissioner Farrell at the Morristown Club, a working meeting took place at the Cultural Center. Mr. Baron described his company's capabilities, business model, and contract structure. Reprinting of author David Mitros's Civil War book, *Gone To Wear the Victor's Crown*, was discussed, and it was determined that no barriers to reprinting by Diane Publishing were apparent. Revisions and cover design were discussed. Chairman Fast has gotten preliminary approval to "monetize" this book on behalf of the county (and perhaps other publications), and will pursue necessary county legal permissions.

Ms. Shultz reported that she is working on content for the Winter/Spring *Heritage Review*.

Markers: Dan Beards, Chair

Ms. Shultz reported that the county road department has installed the Museum of Early Trades & Crafts marker. She thanked Commissioner Beards for photography.

Chairman Beards reported that the Rockaway Borough Historical Preservation Committee has requested a historic marker for its Morris Canal site. Mr. Beards will meet with the mayor and/or other pertinent parties soon.

Members of the marker committee and Ms. Shultz attended a meeting with Gwen Taylor and Reverend Williams of the Bethel African Methodist Church of Morristown to advise on informational signage for this important cultural institution. After viewing an example, AME representatives decided that an interpretive panel would best suit their needs, and they were instructed how to apply for a Morris County Heritage Commission re-grant for help in funding.

Communications: Secretary Vogt

Various newsletters and announcements were received and noted.

Old Business: Commissioner Farrell has heard of a demolition permit being requested for Lyndhurst, next to Glen Alpin in Harding Township.

New Business: Commissioner Vogt reported seeing historian John Cunningham at a recent concert at St. Elizabeth's Dolan Performing Center. Although he was in a wheelchair and attended by a medical assistant, he greeted Ms. Vogt with a strong handshake and remained for the entire event.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Virginia Vogt, Secretary

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