

**Historic Preservation Committee
Town of Westport**

Minutes of the regular monthly meeting of the Commission of April 10, 2014

Members present: Peter Block, Ron Bowen, Rey Mejia and Nancy Schlimgen

Members absent: Dave O'Malley

Others present: Janette Hermanson (liaison with Schumacher Farm)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order.

March 6, Minutes

The minutes were approved unanimously.

Old Business

Public Archeology Day at the Ella Wheeler Wilcox home site – Ron Bowen described the highlights of Rebecca Bernstein's published summary for the Wilcox site. The Committee decided to hold the event May 10th from 10am-4pm. Rey suggested that this would also be a good time to see the Trillium in bloom at Schmidt's Woods School Forest on Patton Street off of Easy Street nearby. Committee members at the meeting offered to attend and voted unanimously to hold the next committee meeting at the Wilcox site event on May 10th at 2pm.

The County will expose the foundation in the last two weeks of April, while removing clay. Peter Block wondered what the effect of taking the clay out would be on the site, and for the day of the dig. Ron said he would look into it. Foundation would potentially be developed as a bench ending in an interpretive kiosk.

Phil Salkin is going to lead research and review public dig artifact finds the day of the public event. Phil's contract will be directly with the Town, Rebecca will also assist. The Town will locate a tent as a rallying point to bring artifacts back and for programs as described by Rebecca. Nancy noted in addition to archaeological talks perhaps a talk and/or Ella Willa Wilcox literature or poems could be read or posted as part of the site interpretative efforts.

Public attending the event would be able to walk up the hillside although the path has yet to be developed. Future path discussed included one that followed the contours of the site along an existing waterway, a more curvilinear design to a hilltop view, with a bench overlook, in addition to the perimeter path. Rey mentioned often hikers enjoy choices of a shorter loop or a longer walk.

Eventually the Historical Marker sign would be moved to this site. Public parking may be a small gravel parking lot off of Hwy I and Easy Street potentially like at the Westport Drumlin. Peter Block offered to share the committee's Wilcox site plans with Tim Kieffer, our County Board Supervisor, prompted by his suggestion according to Janette to house the Wilcox sign and display at Schumacher Farm.

Ron offered to work with Rebecca to finalize the details, pre-flight or talk through the event and then contact local newspapers and schools for publicity.

Informal Interviews – Nancy mentioned that St. Mary’s of the Lake Church was conducting interviews to commemorate the 60 year anniversary of when the church was built and that this may be noteworthy with Rebecca Bernstein’s Siberz research, the church’s architect. In addition, Jeanette mentioned that the larger celebration will be in 2016 in two years when the church celebrates its 150th anniversary. This may be a realistic goal and a forum in which Rebecca’s work on Siberz could be completed and displayed.

Old Military Road Survey – Peter showed a computer overlay of the surveyors map on a contemporary google map, using a sliding scale for transparency that could zoom in to view current streets or satellite views, created by Paul Linqvist at Peter’s request. Sometime was given to orienting the trail by committee members given current landmarks. Ron will talk with Terry Enge, of the Park’s Committee, to see if this trail could be further marked on the ground to identify where the trail crosses existing Westport parkland where trail signage in the future may be appropriate. Ron asked Peter if the trail could be highlighted. Peter offered to check with Paul to see the feasibility of this and then print different scales of the map for review at the next meeting. This would be of value to show the concept at a subsequent Park Committee or Plan Commission meeting.

New Business

Old Town Hall – Any preservation of the building or its materials needed to happen before April 30th with its scheduled demolition for May 1st was described by Nancy, as reviewed in a previous e-mailed report. Janette offered to follow-up to see if Schumacher Farm after supposedly looked over the wood floor or other aspects of the building had any interest in these materials. Otherwise, the Town will offer the materials to Habitat for Humanity or local resident for salvage, having determined that the rest of the building, they are unable to insure its usable condition, if moved from the site. They would allow other interested parties to do so, provide they do so by the given found-breaking deadline for the new building.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for May 10th at 2:00pm at the Wilcox site.

Adjournment

There being no further business brought before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Schlimgen