

Westport Island History Committee

July 2, 2019

Present: Jeff Tarbox, Mary Ellen Barnes, Paul Bonyun, Dennis Dunbar, Callie Connor and Gaye Wagner

Guests: Jean Wilhelmsen-Exter

The meeting convened at 6:33 p.m. at the Town Hall. Paul motioned to approve the June 18 minutes; Dennis, 2nd; unanimously approved.

Discussion began on this summer's History Day Open House to open our historical holdings for viewing, to recruit volunteers and/or members for the Friends of Westport Island History and to invite new donations. The Community Church will also be open. It was agreed that as many items as possible will be exhibited – emphasizing "new acquisitions". What to display and how we present items will be determined at a work session on Sunday, July 21, from 10 am to 2 pm at the Town Hall. Callie, Jeff and Gaye volunteered to work as a committee to organize and prepare for the open house. Sandy and Jill Cooney will be asked to prepare a quilt/textile display. A genealogical table would be valuable– perhaps Bill Cooney and/or Val Lovelace would assist. Dennis volunteered to prepare and staff a tidal mills table. He also suggested a table with a digital screen to showcase Maine Memory Network images to build familiarity with the site. It was agreed to schedule the Open House on Sunday, August 4, from 1 pm to 5 pm.

Discussion turned to the Wright House. Jeff spoke to the Selectmen about opening use of the upper floor to other committees for workspace and to island crafters for sales/workspace. For security reasons, the Selectmen denied use for anyone but the History Committee at this point. The house won't be available for occupancy until late August or early September. Jeff will be assisting with some of the interior renovations and will keep the Committee advised. Displays at the Wright House will focus on secondary materials (reproductions of our original materials) – ideally making use of some of the materials already in display format. During the work session scheduled for July 21, we will keep a Wright House exhibit in mind when reviewing materials.

Gaye provided an overview of expectations for a Westport Island "Contributing Partner" exhibit at the Maine Historical Society (MHS) this fall. The exhibit is targeted for October/November, will be in the Showcase Gallery and will be focused around a theme that our Maine Memory Network (MMN) items can support. MHS will provide curatorial support and will reproduce and frame items to be displayed. After discussion, it was agreed to look at an oral history interview with Verlie Greenleaf conducted by John and Louise Swanton as an organizing framework for "Life on the Island in the Early 20th Century" illustrated with photographs and documents from the Colby-Greenleaf Collection. Gaye will distribute the transcription of the interview for feedback on its suitability for this purpose. Callie and Gaye will try to engage Dedee (Verlie's granddaughter) and work on a proposed outline.

Gaye also reported on attending the Lincoln County Bicentennial Planning Meeting. Her notes were distributed within an email from Jeff on June 20. The next meeting will be Wednesday, August 7, at 6 pm at Lincoln County Regional Planning (if the meeting room is available).

Dennis reminded us that he led tours of the Segerstrom Preserve last year focusing on the earliest settlements on Westport. He suggested this might be something he could revive as part of bicentennial planning/events.

Mary Ellen donated the memorial card from services for Mary E. Stacy at the Community Church/Town Hall. She was related to George Richardson and the Harriman family and spent summers on Westport Island through her young adult years. There may be some items coming to the History Committee memorializing her history here.

Jean Wilhelmsen-Exter was welcomed as a soon-to-be new member of the History Committee. She is a graphic artist and offered her support for upcoming events, design of promotional materials, website development, etc.

Gaye made a motion to adjourn at 8:04 pm; Paul, 2nd; unanimously approved. **The next meeting, Tuesday, August 6, will be more social than business, enjoying a summer evening. More to come on specifics.**