

## History Committee

February 23, 2022 at the History Center

**Present:** Joan Mason-Bradford, Jean Wilhelmsen-Exter, Mary Ellen Barnes, Jeff Tarbox, John Henderson, Dennis Dunbar, Dedee Greenleaf-Hodgdon, and Gaye Wagner with Anne Cole-Fairfield via Zoom

**Public Hearing:** The Public Hearing on the Remote Meeting Policy convened at 4:35 p.m. at the History Center. There being no public comment, Jeff made a motion that we adopt the Remote Participation Policy; John, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Absent further discussion, it was unanimously approved and signed by the officers present.

**Minutes:** Jeff made a motion to approve the January Minutes; Dennis, 2<sup>nd</sup>, unanimously approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** There is no Treasurer's Report this month. Jeff asked members to consider what we would like to request for a Town appropriation. It was agreed that we should continue to ask for an appropriation and beyond supplies, perhaps use some funds for the preservation of a set of town records like "Marriage Intentions" that can be used for genealogy research or for a History Committee collection like the Sarah Tarbox Letters.

**Catalogit:** Members are working on creating a common framework for entering data into Catalogit with a cataloging worksheet and a common lexicon for places and locations where items are stored.

**WCA Newsletter:** Dennis submitted a human-interest story from the 1800's told to Rufus Sewell, a local historian, about Capt. Decker and the Widow Blackledge. (from "Ancient Dominions of Maine")

**Fort McDonough Subcommittee:** John did not find anything in his meeting with Town Clerk Julie Casson to review town property/plumbing files for properties on or adjacent to the site of Fort McDonough. He will soon be talking with an Assistant to Archeologist Dr. Bradley who researched the property in the 1980's. John will also follow up with Jim Kochan, a Wiscasset antiques dealer, about connecting with a friend of Dr. Bradley's. Other: John needs to finish researching the Wiscasset Library materials; and he would like to discuss outcomes of his research when completed -- an exhibit or publication? Jeff suggested a publication that could later act as the foundation of an exhibit.

**Gale Collection:** Gaye summarized her effort to organize the Gale documents in archival folders and her thoughts for proceeding with scanning/documentation of invoices/letters involving about 50+/- vendors; sales flyers; postcards; and personal correspondence of the William Heal mill operation. There is information relating to the operations and economics of the Westport lumber industry and the transporting schooners from the late 1860's to the 1880's. She suggested the work will be considerable to properly document the collection and would be good for a grant/intern. Jeff will contact Chris Gale to see if we can keep the collection for work through the summer.

**Island Trails Association:** Dennis reported that the Island Trails Association's is partnering with a UMaine group, "Midden Minders", which engages local volunteers to help preserve shell middens. He will be attending a talk hosted by Island Trails outlining what they are doing to protect the middens. It is believed that there are 12 middens on Westport Island – a window to Native American life on the island. He will report back to see if the Midden Minders is an effort we would like to join.

### The Friends of Westport Island History ("Friends")

**Present:** Same attendance. The meeting convened at 5:37 pm.

**Friends Proposed Budget:** As part of his proposed budget for the coming year, Jeff would like to focus on the engagement of an intern to staff the History Center this summer and do cataloging. Budgetary highlights:

- Membership income will not increase as we are not asking people to renew memberships this year.
- Donations will be targeted to double to \$12,000 +/-.
- A college-age intern is proposed for cataloging/summer staffing -- \$18/hour for about 400 hours (\$9,000 +/-). The Gale Collection may also be an opportunity for an intern or a grant.
- A fundraising effort to fund an intern is proposed.
- The Tarbox Event income is currently targeted for \$6,000 – but operational costs are still needed to project final estimates.
- There is a budget line to get the Friends website designed and online.
- Keeping the History Center open during more hours for the summer with an intern will allow monitoring the impact of increased hours on walk-in donations.
- Electricity is up 30-40% overall; and internet costs will be increasing from the promotional rate.
- Upgraded security costs are included.

Jeff asked that members email him any thoughts, additions, concerns regarding the proposed budget, so that we will be prepared to vote on the budget next month. (Proposed budget attached.)

**Event Committee:** Joan provided the following updates regarding events:

- There is ongoing discussion regarding the start time of the summer fundraiser event;
- Last year, we had a raffle. Do we have an interest in repeating a raffle, e.g., a basket of island products? Do we want sponsors from businesses on the island – money or in-kind donations like food for events?
- Mosquito control for the summer fundraising event is being discussed.
- Ticket sales – Louana suggested we continue with having guests write checks for tickets as opposed to online registering. She feels people like to write checks. There will be paper invitations with a line for email addresses on the RSVP so email contacts are available for ticket confirmations.
- Jean has asked to have all invitation copy and visuals a month in advance of the mailing date to allow for development of the invitation and printing.
- For naming the event, Joan recommended sticking with the same format used last year in “Squam Creek Alive” by referencing the adjacent body of water, e.g., “Picnic at Tarbox Cove (or Lower Hell’s Gate)”. The committee is looking for ways to make naming and format of the annual fundraising events to be consistent from year to year – learning about another family’s history and knowing what to expect.

It was suggested that we coordinate with the Community Association (WCA) if sponsorships are sought, so we don’t conflict with their efforts. Also, maybe another way to enlist the WCA, besides florals for tables, to partner with the Friends on this event might be for them to develop the “Westport Island Raffle Basket.” Joan will approach the WCA about the possibility of creating a raffle basket and partnering with the Friends to sell tickets.

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Clough Point:** Dennis is hoping to conduct the dedication of the Clough Point plaque with the Selectmen on Monday, May 16, in advance of the Selectmen’s Meeting which is at 7 pm.

**Naval Museum Display Walls:** Mary Ellen showed photos of display panels that could be available to us. It was decided that we would respectfully decline because they would be impractical due to size, weight, and storage.

**Facebook:** Jean suggested we do a regular “On This Day / In These Times” on Facebook with a tidbit on Westport Island History. Gaye will send Mary Ellen and Jean some news items for March.

John made a motion to adjourn at 6.43 pm; Jean, 2<sup>nd</sup>; unanimously approved.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 30, at 4:30 pm, at the History Center.