

## The Friends of Westport Island History & The History Committee\*

August 19, 2021 at the History Center

\*(there were no issues requiring votes by the individual bodies, so the minutes were consolidated)

**Present:** Mary Ellen Barnes, Dedee Greenleaf-Hodgdon, Callie Connor, Joan Mason-Bradford, Jean Wilhelmsen-Exter, Rayne Presby, Jeff Tarbox, Louana Frois, and Gaye Wagner

**Guest:** John Henderson

The meeting convened at 4:07 p.m. at the History Center.

Louana made a motion to approve the July minutes; Jean, 2<sup>nd</sup>; unanimously approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Jeff reported there is currently about \$7,600 in the treasury not including History Center proceeds from this last weekend. Complete financial/membership details were provided in an email.

**Squam Creek History Alive Fundraiser:** Louana reported there are currently 108 RSVPs; not including special guests who are expected but did not RSVP. She turned over \$4,820 in current receipts to Jeff as Treasurer.

- Dennis developed and will manage – with Paul's assistance -- the parking plan;
- Callie and Jean developed an event handout;
- Joan reported that Lincoln County News cannot send a reporter but is requesting information and photographs – John Henderson, as our regular columnist, expressed willingness to take pictures and draft an article;
- The check-in table with name tags will be at the beginning of the driveway (Joan & Connie); the quilt raffle and book sales (Jean & Mary Ellen) will be set up by the bar; the caterer will provide tables;
- Volunteers were asked to arrive around 4 pm;
- Dennis will set up and manage the audio system;
- Dedee suggested that family members of founding families have their "founding family name" on their name tag below their names;
- Program: Mary Ellen will provide an overview of the Friends and the History Committee, turn the mike over to Louana to welcome guests, Louana will introduce Dennis who will speak on the trials and tribulations of early settlers and the cellar hole project, he will then introduce descendants who will speak, and then the reception will begin.

Louana noted there were only 3 responses from the WCA newsletter; the remainder came from the 150 +/- written invitations. She emphasized the value of written invitations or hand-delivered flyers for an event like this.

Jean reviewed plans for a tri-fold stand to go on the sign-in table to outline the Friends, the History Committee, and the Wright Landing Committee/History Committee development of the History Center with pictures and handouts from exhibits and events. Louana will display the 1772 map in conjunction with the display. Once sign-in is completed, the display will be moved to the meadow for viewing.

**Fort McDonough Project:** Mary Ellen introduced John Henderson who lives nearby Fort McDonough and is interested in researching the Fort, which he said still has some interesting visible elements:

- John and Dennis took a field trip to George Rubly's property which was a part of the fort site. Mr. Rubly showed them some nails and brickwork he had collected and two prominent earthen mounds. Walking from one of these mounds back to the North End Road is another well-defined berm towards the western side of the island which would have provided a view to the Back River.
- There should be a well-defined map of the area that would have been created at the time – or near the time – the fort was built. Looking over the Sheepscot, it is clear why it was built where it was.
- John found some cut rock not naturally formed which may have been part of some structure. Across the road towards the Lobster Coop, they found another stone that may have been a step stone.
- Dennis will be asking the Gross's, another property a part of the fort site, to view his property.

- The only map available right now is a hand-drawn map generated in the 1980's showing a possible fort configuration.
- John has been harvesting Google and Boothbay Register archives, and will be reviewing History Committee/Town records; Fort Edgecomb/Edgecomb archives; and Massachusetts archives. Clearly, there were engineers involved in developing the Fort; and he believes there would be something on paper.
- John would like to work with Dennis and the History Committee in pursuing a research project on Fort McDonough. Jeff also volunteered; and Gaye will try to scan History Committee materials and create a digital folder of History Committee materials on Fort McDonough.

On another note: John has also been involved with the colonial site at Pemaquid and befriended archaeologist Neill Depaoli who has offered to do a presentation for the History Committee. Mary Ellen would like to follow up with engaging him for some island archaeological work. Gaye suggested a presentation in conjunction with an "Antiques Roadshow" kind of event where people bring in archaeological artifacts they have found on the island.

**Annual Meeting:** The Annual Meeting will be on Sunday, August 29, 1-3 pm at the History Center to: elect Trustees and Officers, draw a quilt raffle winner; and conduct a short program on goals for the coming year and how to participate. Wine and cheese will be served. Mary Ellen will send an invitation to the Friends. We can have up to 15 Trustees – we currently have 9 and would like to have more. The business meeting will be at 1:30.

**Quilt Raffle:** Mary Ellen will bring the quilt to the Wiscasset Artwalk on Thursday from 5 – 8 pm.

**Catalogit:** Jean said she will be returning to cataloging in the fall with volunteer Ann Springhorn. She requested that we evaluate the History Center computer which is too slow to be productive. We also need to set up the printer for wireless connection and need ink and photo paper to make tasks like exhibit preparation and set up more efficient. Jeff proposed a Catalogit subcommittee meeting in September.

**Nametags:** Jeff proposed ordering permanent nametags for Friends Trustees and those regularly staffing the History Center. Jean will follow up.

**My Island Home:** Gaye thanked the exhibit committee and Dedee for her work at the grand opening; 20-25 attended and Charlotte Boynton did an article for the Lincoln County News. She also advised there are original albums and materials on view, so it is imperative that the shades are not left open because the light will degrade the materials. Open albums on display in the exhibit case and the glass negative slide will need to be covered by the black paper provided when we close public viewing hours and will need to be taken off the items when we open for viewing. Notes from the opening:

- A great granddaughter of Verlie, Leslie Pond, a very enthusiastic visitor, will be meeting with Dedee and Gaye in September about getting her 2-3 boxes of Verlie's glass negatives scanned; she will be donating one of her mother's snowmen made from Verlie's quilt squares, and she may have a videotaped interview between her father, Stephen Greenleaf, and Verlie;
- Jill Cooney recognized the quilt squares from Verlie's bureau scarf on view and realized she had bought the same quilt squares somewhere and made a quilt. She retrieved her quilt and on comparing them, the quilt squares matched – they likely came from Leslie's mother's collection of Verlie's quilting materials.

**History Center Hours:** There was a brief discussion about changing the Sunday hours from 12-2 or 1-3 because people rarely come at 11. Joan suggested holding off any changes until after Labor Day; all agreed.

**Community Newsletter:** John will do a piece on the Fort McDonough project.

Jeff made a motion to adjourn at 5:49 pm; Joan, 2<sup>nd</sup>; unanimously approved. The next meeting will be September 16, at 4 pm, at the History Center.