

**WARREN COUNTY BICENTENNIAL  
CULTURAL & HERITAGE ADVISORY BOARD**  
500 Mt. Pisgah Avenue  
Oxford, NJ 07863

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
October 17, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Fineran called the meeting to order at 5:00PM.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:** Laurie Rapisardi, Charles Fineran, Mark Young, Karin White, Jane Primerano (arrived at 5:06pm), Richard Gardner (arrived at 5:10pm)

**Members Absent:** Randy Piazza Sr

**Staff Present:** Gina Rosseland, Kim Barnes, Art Charlton, Commissioner Director Lori Ciesla

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

Mr. Fineran read the opening statement.

**MINUTES**

The September 19, 2023 minutes were reviewed. Mr. Young commented on the wording under the Gala information. He did secure some items for the silent auction, just not any golf items. Ms. Rapisardi made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Young seconded the motion. All in favor, except for Ms. White who abstained. Minutes approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT (agenda items only)**

Patricia Benton represents the Campbell Cultural Heritage House (CCHH) in Washington, NJ and is a great-great granddaughter of Captain James Campbell, a Morris Canal boat captain. Diana Tyson, a CCHH board member was also present. Their mission is to restore the Campbell House so the community can visit and to highlight the African American presence on the Morris Canal and other noteworthy achievements by African Americans. They are interested in hearing what the bicentennial plans are as they would like to do something with veterans, highlighting black soldiers from Warren County as far back as the Civil War.

Ms. Rosseland asked Ms. Benton if she would like to be one of the speakers at Shippen Manor next year and she agreed to. Mr. Young suggested a 2024 Veterans Day event be planned to get their story out. He also suggested the CCHH apply for a Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust grant next year to help fund the restoration of Captain Campbell's house.

Ms. Benton's cousin, Robert Swint, is the Vice President of CCHH and usually attends the local historical events and meetings on their organization's behalf as she lives out of state. However, Ms. Benton is currently in the area to help her mother. She said they are partnering with the National Canal Museum in Easton, PA. The museum currently has an exhibit of black canalers shown on their website.

Ms. Primerano stated there is a plaque honoring the Irish men who dug the canal and thinks we should be doing something to honor the other people who worked on it, too, like boatmen of color. Mr.

Gardner remembers visiting the Campbell house years ago when he was a freeholder and thought it was on the radar to be preserved. Ms. Benton states their two big concerns in the Campbell house are the lead paint in the house and the floors on the first floor level are giving in. She needs a contact for lead abatement. The group has also been taking inventory of the items in the house. Ms. Benton wanted it to be known that they do not have clear title for the property. They have majority ownership as a 501 c3 non-profit, but are looking for a title search company to tell them who else has ownership. Mr. Swint has been in contact with one in Washington. Commissioner Director Ciesla suggested speaking with Corey Tierney if they have questions since he works with a lot of the professionals restoring properties with MCCT grants. Ms. White offered her assistance if they need contacts as she is a realtor. Ms. Benton said they will have a website established by the end of the year. Mr. Young also suggested setting up a Facebook page for the Campbell House.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

none

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **BICENTENNIAL BOOK:**

Ms. Rosseland received chapters from Franklin Twp. and Greenwich Twp. Greenwich is deciding on pictures. Brenda Higgins of the Franklin Twp. historical commission offered to help Washington Borough with their chapter since their historical group will be disbanding by the end of the year. Ms. Higgins will also help Ms. Rosseland with other chapters in the future. Harmony Twp. is working on their chapter and looking up pictures. Ms. Rosseland also heard from Christine Beegle who is working on Blairstown's chapter. Mr. Young suggested again that the board members reach out in person to their individual township historical societies. Mr. Fineran – Allamuchy; Ms. Primerano – Hope, Frelinghuysen, Liberty & Independence; Mr. Gardner will reach out to the Pohatcong Twp. mayor, as will Commissioner Director Ciesla; Mr. Young – Belvidere and White Twp.; Ms. Rapisardi – Hackettstown. It was suggested for Mr. Piazza to reach out to Phillipsburg. Ms. Rosseland said Knowlton is aware of it.

Ms. Rosseland said Ms. Higgins, who has published three books already, gave her pointers for self-publishing. Most publishers do not allow purchase orders and payment is due upfront. Cost will depend on how many pages, how many pictures, color, etc. Ms. Rosseland expects more than half of the towns will not submit chapters. In those instances, Ms. Rosseland may ask a local historian to help and will give them credit in the book. She is only looking for two paragraphs and preferably clear pictures.

#### **WEBSITE:**

Ms. Rosseland took the Gala information off the website and Facebook. She heard from people that the ticket cost was a deterrent. The 2024 Arts Grant is live, as well as the CHPP Grant.

#### **HISTORIC MARKERS:**

Ms. Rosseland reported that Melanie Thiel of the Washington BID spoke with Jim Lee III from the Morris Canal Committee (MCC) and attended the MCC meeting last night. She is going to do a new mock-up of their marker. It is not replacing the crossing sign, but will be an additional marker. It will be a simple sign that states "Washington Borough, Port Washington, 1824-1924, Morris Canal" and the BID logo underneath since they are paying for it along with the \$500 grant. When Ms. Thiel sends Ms. Rosseland the mock-up, Ms. Rosseland will share it with the committee.

Harmony Township is in process after being approved at last month's meeting.

The 2023 signs must be installed before March 2024. The townships can use sign companies local to them.

The Hope sign (from 2022 grant) should be installed soon. Their deadline is December.

### **ROARING TWENTIES FUNDRAISING GALA:**

The Gala on 10/21 has been canceled/postponed. Ms. Rosseland read from Mr. Tierney's notes reporting the refund of tickets. There were two non-BCHAB individuals who purchased two tickets each who were emailed and issued refunds. It was canceled on Event Brite to prevent future sales.

Ms. Primerano said the Charleston dance instructor was notified of the cancellation. Rather than cancel the band completely, Mr. Charleston said the band is going to play at Centenary University's inauguration of the new president. A sign is being made to say the band/entertainment is sponsored by BCHAB.

Commissioner Director Ciesla said fundraising is not a concern, so the ticket price can be lowered. The board can still try to get business/corporate sponsorships. It was agreed that \$50 would be reasonable. Speaking on behalf of the County Commissioners, Commissioner Director Ciesla asked that the location be at Rutherford Hall. Future dates and locations were discussed. Consensus was to hold the gala at David's Country Inn in Hackettstown for liability insurance purposes because most people expect alcohol to be served at a gala, and hold a separate daytime family event at Rutherford Hall as a thank you party. Dates of the events would be determined in part to venue availability. It may need to be held on a Thursday.

For 2024, the event at David's will be a 1920's event with a band and entertainment, and the event at Rutherford Hall will be a concert and picnic during the day in place of the Belvidere park concert. Then in 2025, the big bicentennial event will be in Belvidere.

Ms. Rapisardi made a motion that in light of the cancellation of the 10/21 gala at Bella Giorno, a 1920's event/gala will be held at David's Country Inn in 2024, date pending. Mr. Fineran seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ms. Rapisardi also made a motion to move the 2024 lawn concert location from Belvidere to Rutherford Hall, date pending availability. Ms. Primerano seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

### **OUTREACH EVENTS:**

#### **Alpha Harvest Festival 10/14 2pm-6pm -**

Although the event was rain or shine, it was raining all day and Ms. Rosseland and Mr. Fineran opted not to attend. They look forward to it for next year though.

#### **History Trail 11/4 & 11/5 10am-4pm -**

Ms. Rosseland said fifteen locations will be participating. She has Parks Foundation volunteers helping with parking at Shippen Manor. The church, which used to be the grist mill, will also be open for tours and they will be selling soup and hot dogs. A local Civil War reenactment group from Hackettstown will be positioned on the hill at Shippen. Maps are still being distributed. Ms. Rosseland is giving some to Bread Lock Park and Tom Drake is picking up the rest to distribute. Plane 9 is probably not going to be reopened in time for the History Trail. Millbrook Village has had to refill their maps twice. The Trail includes the northern sites on Saturday 11/4 and the southern sites on Sunday 11/5. Ms. Primerano and Mr. Gardner said they will try to be at Shippen on that Sunday to set up a bicentennial table/tent.

Shippen Manor will also offer Victorian Christmas tours on 12/3 and 12/10. The 11am, 12pm, and 1pm tours are reservation only and will include music (dulcimer) and will be about Victorian Christmas traditions. From 2pm-4pm, walk-ins will be welcome but there will not be music or any specialized tour. Ms. Rosseland will start taking reservations on 11/1.

Ms. Primerano said she is not sure if St. Luke's Church in Hope will be open for the History Trail tour on the 4<sup>th</sup>. They are looking for someone else to be at the Hope Distillery. If they find someone, then she will be at St. Luke's.

Ms. Rosseland said Johnsonburg is a new addition to the History Trail. Johnsonburg was the original county seat of Sussex County (when Warren County was still part of Sussex). She shared that Sussex has reached out to do something together for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Ms. Rosseland asked Sussex if they wanted to do something for Warren's bicentennial.

Ms. Rosseland shared that she created a Power Point presentation on the creation of Warren County for the Blairstown Women's Group if anyone needs her to present it.

Ms. Primerano suggested reaching out to Hunterdon County as well. The schoolhouse on Musconetcong River Rd served students from both counties.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **OUTREACH EVENTS:**

Mr. Charlton stated the Phillipsburg/Easton Halloween Parade is on 10/29 at 3pm (but need to line up by 1pm). The County Commissioners will be walking in the parade. There is still time to register for another couple days if BCHAB would like to also participate and promote the bicentennial and pass out candy. Ms. Rapisardi asked Mr. Charlton to register them for one car and they will put banners on the sides.

Ms. Rosseland suggested the Christmas trees for the towns be discussed at the next meeting. Commission Director Ciesla said each town will be given money to buy a tree locally and be given an ornament. Photos will be taken of each one and then posted online and given fun awards.

### **COUNTY MUSEUMS & CHPP GRANTS:**

Ms. Rosseland reports the 2024 CHPP Grant Application is posted on Warren200.com. She may only offer one round instead of two for 2025. For 2024, it will be \$2,500 for Round One. Round Two is based on how much money is left after the first round and how many groups.

### **COUNTY ARTS PROGRAMS:**

Ms. Rosseland reports the Local Arts Programming (LAP) grants and mini-grants (under \$2,000) information is posted on Warren200.com. For 2024, it will be a one-time ask/grant.

Ms. Rosseland will be reapplying to the state on behalf of Warren County Cultural and Heritage early in 2024 so we can continue the arts grant program.

She notified the League of Historic Societies to post the open position (P/T Program Development Specialist, Cultural and Heritage Affairs).

## **PUBLIC COMMENT** (open)

Commission Director Ciesla thanked the board for their patience with the gala.

**NEXT MEETING**

November 21, 2023

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Ms. Primerano made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:36PM, seconded by Mr. Gardner. All in favor and meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Barnes  
Clerk, Land Preservation Dept.