



Friends of Dennis Township Old School House Museum

MEETING MINUTES: FEBRUARY 8, 2017

Ray Rebmann and Al DiCicco started the meeting with brief introductions and explanation of the mission of the new organization, stressing its separateness from the township government and absence of political party affiliation. Attendees introduced themselves and Rebmann circulated a sign-in sheet to be used for future electronic communications.

There was additional discussion about using the museum as a meeting place, Chairman DiCicco noting that since the museum is a public building, it is a permitted site to hold meetings. Vice-Chairman Rebmann added that he had “cleared” the venue in advance with Township Committee liaison Lisa Salimbene (who was present at the meeting).

Regarding its mission specifically, the “Friends’ will at least initially, 1) raise funds to help pay for repairs/paint for the exterior of Old School House Museum; 2) explore possible uses for Ludlam School and costs for restoring that building; 3) support and encourage the study and preservation of local history, with emphasis on Dennis Township but inclusive of other areas of interest in Cape May County as well.

Regarding #3, Tom Laughlin suggested involvement with small museums group that meets monthly and that avenue will be explored. Connolly added that he has contact information (Pary Tell) that he will share with Rebmann.

Sarah Matthews mentioned an upcoming NJ Heritage seminar that might be informative in the area of grant application. Rebmann and DiCicco will explore the possibility of attending. Matthews also shared a number of useful websites for organizations she has found helpful in her work for the South Dennis located ARC.

Rebmann circulated a rough draft of by-laws he’d written and asked for any suggestions and improvements. Jack Connolly suggested having any final document reviewed by an attorney. DiCicco will handle that. Connolly, experienced in such matters with DHHOA, listed a number of reports and legal filings the Friends will be required to perform.

One change agreed upon was to increase the number of board officers from three to five. DiCicco will serve during the first year as chairman, Gooch as treasurer, Rebmann as Vice-Chairman Matthews, Bevin O'Grady, and Laughlin were listed as alternates. Rebmann will keep the meeting minutes.

Don Gooch asked about insurance for the museum building. Committeeman Don Tozer indicated in the affirmative. Gooch also suggested prioritizing specific projects the Friends will pursue with specific funding goals that can be advertised to the public. Bob Penrose agreed, adding that specifying projects and funding needs is mandatory for most grant applications as well.

Regarding the first priority, exterior paint and related repairs for Old School House, attendees agreed that having professionals perform the work is preferable to enlisting volunteers. Gooch pointed out that there would need to be close contact with the governing body regarding any work done to township owned buildings (both former school houses).

Rev. Fred Marz suggested that local contractors might be amenable to performing the exterior work for free or at reduced cost as an act of goodwill and to get publicity for their business. Rebmann advised that he had drafted a letter which he will send out to township contractors to generate interest.

Laughlin indicated that interior work on the Old School House should be performed to upgrade electrical so as to allow for implementation of computer technology. Tozer suggested that the township can apply for grants for such work. Salimbene is the contact person in that regard. Gooch observed that the existence of an organization like the Friends may encourage the township to allocate funding for the museum

There was extended discussion about social media. Laughlin, who has volunteered his expertise at the museum, discussed the benefits of an independent website as well as the costs of developing such a site. The group agreed to pursue this avenue while temporarily it will ask for assistance from the township via its existing web presence until the group has sufficient funding to pursue its own site.

Rebmann will develop a Facebook site. O'Grady will work on developing a logo and letterhead for the new organization. Rebmann had already created a temporary logo using a vintage photo of the school house. For the sake of logo, promotion and brevity, members agreed to shorten the "user" name of the organization to "Dennis Museum Friends".

Salimbene asked about membership cards. Rebmann indicated that the idea will be pursued.

Rebmann distributed samples of "donation" forms that anyone wishing to contribute to the organization can use. Salimbene asked if she can make the form available at the local school and members agreed that she will do this after Rebmann and DiCicco meet with the bank to establish accounts for the Friends. Rebmann has also drafted a "receipt" for tax purposes to be provided to anyone making a donation to the group.

Attendees agreed to approach Sturdy Bank for this purpose.

Currently, Rebmann's home address is listed for mailing purposes. Connolly suggested, and it was agreed to acquire a post office box once funds become available.

Barring any conflicts with other meeting dates, attendees agreed to meet monthly on the second Thursday of the month at 5 pm. At the Old school House Museum. The meeting then closed.

