



Greensboro Historical Society

Meeting Minutes (November 14, 2023)

10:00am @ the GHS and Zoom

Attending: BJ Gray, Erika Karp, Amelia Circosta, Lise Armstrong, Renée Circosta, Nancy Hill, Debbie Kasper, Paula Harmon, Jenny Stoner, Jane Mercaldi (Zoom), Clive Gray, Kyle Gray, Leslie Rowell (Zoom).

To-Do in the Coming Months/Assigned Tasks

- ❖ Everyone
 - Submit assigned newsletter articles and any relevant photos to Jenny ASAP.
 - Think about possible names for the 2024 summer exhibit on railroads (possibility: "From Rail to Trail: _____"). We are also in need of a 2024 summer exhibit committee chair.
 - Review the GHS [ongoing task calendar](#) and add missing tasks (edit directly or send to Renée)
 - Review and add to any [Procedures](#) files that are in process (edit directly or send to Renée).
 - Start tracking in-kind donations by submitting receipts or estimates to Lise.
 - Attend the monthly book cull at Janet Long's, last Monday of the month (11/27)
- ❖ (Lise) Check into moving some money from a checking to savings account or short-term CD to earn some interest. Add quarterly dividends and any other income from Vanguard fund to GHS financial reports. Disaster management plan.
- ❖ (Budget committee) Write and submit the Town Appropriation request for \$7,000.
- ❖ (BJ) Suggest a time to the group for a fall clean-up of the museum space. Tote bag art with Lakeview.
- ❖ (Amelia) VHS Achievement Award application. Process volunteer hour estimates.
- ❖ (Nancy) Winter meeting planning. *Hazen Road Dispatch* next-steps. VHS Achievement Award application. Disaster management plan.
- ❖ (Renée) Policies and Procedures files. Winter meeting planning. Further organize summer exhibit materials. GLT permanent display. Web redesign grants. Check on Acura formatting the HRD for us.
- ❖ (Skip) Clean GHS museum sign. GLT permanent display. Vintage sign acquisitions (including mounting old post office sign in the GHS space). Possible snow guard for Renai air exchange.
- ❖ (Kyle) Hill Family Exhibit Timeline. GLT permanent display. Website redesign (and discuss planning for related grants with Renée).
- ❖ (Leslie) Create draft agreement for tasks and priorities (like a job description). Disaster management plan. Check archives for vintage signs.

President BJ Gray called the meeting to order at 10:05.

Changes to Agenda: Amelia suggested that we add this line item so that if anyone has additions or deletions, or would like to change the order of the agenda, we can do so. It would give us an opportunity to make any unanticipated changes to the agenda. Today, for example, we moved the History Moment back to the beginning as usual and took out the "Membership" discussion item because normally there is nothing on which we need to report.

History Moment: Nancy read a touching account, written by her sister, of fond childhood memories of growing up in Greensboro Bend. We heard stories about sledding, collecting wildflowers, and long walks between the Bend and the Village. Thank you to Nancy and her sister for sharing!

President's Report (BJ):

Thank you: Thank you to Clive and Nancy for handing out treats at the GHS on Halloween.

HRD Research: BJ suggested two possible *Hazen Road Dispatch* research topics: the McIntyre's Garden & Barn and the Bayley Hazen Monument (the latter already had an article written about it, but another opinion or view of its importance could certainly be written).

Committee Chairs: We still need a chairperson for the summer exhibit. Nancy and Renée will take charge of the Winter Meeting plans.

Secretary's Report (Amelia):

Approve Oct. minutes: The October meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

Volunteer hours: Amelia passed around a piece of paper so everyone could write down their volunteer hours for the past month. We will collect volunteer hours monthly going forward. Remember that anything related to GHS counts, and having a good estimate is important for grant applications and other fundraising. (Renée said that a good test to see if something counts would be to ask yourself: "If the GHS didn't exist, would I be doing this?")

Treasurer's Report (Lise): Lise asked if there were any questions about the financial report from last month. Clive asked why we keep so much money in a non-interest-bearing checking account and said maybe it should be moved from checking to a savings account so that we can earn some interest. Renée agreed with this, or moving the extra funds into a CD, and thought we should be able to get 3-5%. She also asked to have descriptions of some of the line items on the financial report--for example, what the Vermont Community Loan Fund involves. It was also discussed why moving extra money in and out of the Vanguard fund is not the best strategy. Renée also asked why the income coming off the Vanguard fund isn't reported anywhere in the financials. She'd like to see the quarterly dividends and any other income flows off the Vanguard fund. Nancy agreed and suggested that every three months we add this information to the financial report. Lise said that she will add this in the future. Last month's financial report was approved.

Follow-up from Previous Meetings

Summer 2024 Exhibit: BJ said that we need a chair for the summer 2024 exhibit committee. Several people have volunteered to work on the project, but we don't have a chair. No one at the meeting volunteered, so it was pushed to next month. Renée showed the group two binders that she put together with an enormous amount of resources (news clippings, book excerpts, photographs, archival research, maps, artwork...) related to the StJ&LC Railroad and the trains that were on it (with a focus on The Bend), as well as a [Google Doc](#) with links to these and other resources, most of which have been digitized. This can serve as the foundation for the exhibit. The group brainstormed possible names for the exhibit. "From Rail to Trail: _____" seemed to be a good start. In terms of content for the exhibit, Renée noted that we probably shouldn't focus on how the railroad changed Greensboro Bend (because this was covered in our 1997 exhibit). Instead, she suggested that we focus more on the history of the line and the locomotives as they relate to Greensboro Bend and the Depot, and tie the past to the future by adding some materials about the Rail Trail.

Fall Wrap-Up and Preparing Museum for Winter: BJ said that the typical things need to be done, such as putting sheets over the books. She will suggest a day to everyone sometime soon when we can all go in and situate the building and exhibit for winter. Renée added that she will come in with Amelia when it fits into their schedule to pack up the displays in the glass cases, take down the easy-to-roll-up posters, etc. She noted that it would be nice to have an emptier exhibit space so that we start with a blank slate when we talk about our 2024 summer exhibit plans, fostering more inspiration and imagination! Leslie noted that she already put in most of the window inserts, and we have all of the new ones from the volunteer work last month.

Docent Handbooks: Renée asked how the questions and requests written in the docent handbooks reach Paula and/or Leslie. Leslie agreed to check the book weekly in season, and she already checks the voicemail on the phone each week. Jane suggested that the GHS phone could be automatically forwarded to another person's phone, but because of forwarding costs and Leslie needing to deal with many of those messages, it didn't seem like that would work.

Renée reported to the group on what she learned from the museum visitor counts throughout the summer and fall and passed around a couple of graphs representing the data. Notably, we had 267 total visitors in total. Saturday was by far the busiest day, Thursdays were popular, and Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays weren't extremely fruitful. She suggested that we could, for example, cancel our Tuesday hours and extend our Saturday hours instead. She did say that the Fall museum hours were definitely worth it and we should plan for that next year. She added that a van of rowers from the Craftsbury Outdoor Center came weekly in the summer to explore Greensboro and asked about the museum, so we might want to look into this and try to align some of our open hours with their visits to town. Renée or Amelia will check with the COC in the spring. Paula noted that the Sunday hours last summer were related to the Land Trust partnership and we were not planning to do that again anyway.

Nancy added that her "coffee and donuts" did not seem to be worth the effort in terms of attracting visitors, so we might not do that next year.

Town Appropriations Request: Someone on the budget committee will submit the request to the Town. The budget committee supports the request of \$7,000 (a \$2,000 increase from what we've requested for several years). We wondered what would happen if the request were denied--would we get nothing? Renée said that the Selectboard will almost certainly allow that request into the Town Report, but that it is a vote from the townspeople that ultimately determines whether we will get that money or not. Erika pointed out that someone could move to adjust the amount up or down at Town Meeting.

Jenny reported that the budget committee recommends raising Leslie's pay to \$25/hr. Renée wanted to clarify whether we are also increasing the budget. Lise said that the archive and technology budget would be increased by \$2,000 to cover Leslie's pay increase. At this point Renée noted that it would be responsible and helpful for us to have agreements specifying the responsibilities and tasks for our contracted employees.

Nancy moved that we increase the Town appropriation request to \$7,000 and that we increase the technology budget from \$12,000 to \$14,000. The motion was seconded. After discussion and attempts to change the structure of the motion, the motion was approved. Renée abstained.

In-kind Donation Tracking: Renée wanted to remind everyone that if people donate materials to the GHS (for example, pop-up tents, tables, printer paper, ice cream social ingredients, etc.), they should send a receipt/value estimate to Lise so that these donations can be counted in total donations. This would NOT include the value of artifacts donated to the GHS. Renée noted that the total donations to the GHS (monetary and in-kind) is another important data point to include in grants, much like the total volunteer hours. It shows dedication and support from those directly involved with the GHS and from the broader community.

Hill Family Exhibit Timeline: Kyle said that there is not anything to report.

VHS Achievement Award: Amelia and Renée are still willing to write the application, although Amelia mentioned that she was worried about a lack of relevant content directly related to the "innovative" nature of the exhibit and what sort of community engagement it generated. Erika pointed out the innovation in partnering and working together with the Greensboro Land Trust. BJ noted that there was also the artwork submitted by members of the community for display in the museum.

Vintage sign acquisitions: Skip took the vintage Post Office sign from the bookshelf to mount it on brackets on the shelves behind the docent desk, near the Grange sign.

Committee Reports:

Building and Maintenance: Most of the new window inserts are in place for the winter. Lise and Leslie have been moving forward with Gordon's Windows on the shades for the back room, but they have not received an estimate on how much that will cost. Leslie and the committee working on a Disaster Plan met with the Fire Chief, David Brochu, to review procedures and protocols.

Archives: Leslie reported that she has been working on accessioning items (there is a backlog) and writing a newsletter article about the Grange, among other things.

Budget: It was agreed to talk about this at the next meeting.

Membership: This line item is coming off of our monthly agendas.

Newsletter: Jenny said that she still needs a lot of the articles. The newsletter will likely be four pages instead of six pages, and that will save about \$250. We are including donation envelopes, because they have made a big difference with donations in the past.

Website and Tech: Kyle said there isn't anything new to report here.

Hazen Road Dispatch: Renée has received a lot of information from Alison about many aspects of handling the distribution of the HRD. She uploaded all the information to the Publications folder in the shared GHS Google Drive. We were happy to hear that Stefanie Cravedi will probably work with Nancy on editing the HRD this year. Kyle will help with formatting and other tech work. Renée mentioned that we might be able to get someone at Acura to do the actual formatting of the journal; she will check into that.

GLT Permanent Display: Figuring out a way to display the panels from the Land Conservation exhibit in a compact way is still in process.

Other Business:

Tote bags: BJ is looking into possibly designing tote bags with a pun relating to toads.

Policies and Procedures: Renée wrote the draft procedures for the Ice Cream Social, Bookstore, and the Annual and Winter Meetings. Two others are in process and more will be drafted this month. These policies and procedures on the GHS Google Drive in the Procedures folder or on paper at the GHS building. All edits and additions are welcome.

President BJ Gray adjourned the meeting at 12:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amelia Circosta (Secretary)

***Holiday potluck, Thurs. Dec. 14 @ 5:00 pm, Nancy and Clive's house
NEXT OFFICIAL MEETING: January 9, 2024 @ 10:00 am, GHS Museum***