

Starksboro Historical Society

December 16, 2021

Attendance: Mike Blakeslee, Dan Baker, Elsa Gilbertson, Cynthia Kling, Olive Hanson, Kevin Hanson, Pete Antos-Ketcham, Catherine Goldsmith, Ryan Sleeper . Susan Thompson arrives at 8:10

Mike - Opens the meeting saying he is glad to be meeting again and revitalizing the SHS.

Mike presents the Treasurer's Report. Sarah

Elsa - The SHS is a formal 501C3. She thinks that the late re-filing will be renewed without having to re-do it.

At the last meeting Robert Stokes was made President Emeritus and Mike Blakeslee President.

Elections of 2022 Starksboro Historical Society Officers:

President

Dan nominates, Cynthia seconds. Vote is 9-0 in favor, 0 opposed

Vice-President

Mike nominates Olive, Dan 2nds. Vote is unanimous.

Secretary & Treasurer

Elsa makes the motion and Olive 2nds. Motion is unanimous in favor

Mike moved and Dan 2nded - At Large Members - Cynthia Kling, Elsa Gilbertson & Pete Antos-Ketcham

Goals for 2022:

First item is care and repair of our cemeteries. Our village and town cemeteries are falling into disrepair.

Pete - just elected at the last town meeting. Norm, Larry Shepard and Peter. They have not yet met.

This meeting is a great opportunity to bring information back to the Cemetery Commission.

Elsa - Many years ago, we talked about Green Mountain Cemetery. Robert Stokes was distressed that the old maples were cut down. We talked about planting back two trees.

Mike talked to Norm Cota who thought it was a good idea but was concerned that the trees if replanted in the same place would be in the town right of way. Mike would like to talk with the Selectboard.

Discussion about options for planting in the same place or some other place outside the town right of way.

Mike - Used to be the Elementary School would put up flags. The veterans markers were taken away. He ordered some from Gettysburg and found all the graves and remarked them with the particular wars the veterans served in.

Kevin - There are state laws about what the towns are responsible for. But it's limited.

Mike - There are groups that will teach you how to repair gravestones. Maybe in the Spring there

Kevin - Jason Stouffle

Cynthia - Myron Mead is buried in a single grave cemetery off Big Hollow near Letha's house from the Meade's in Hinesburg. He was not allowed to be buried in the village because he's been in an epidemic of some sort.

Mike asks if this is something the Historical Society would like to take on this year? Vote affirm their agreement.

Cynthia, Olive and Emma Lou Craig went to every cemetery in town.

Mike - with the 250 anniversary of the revolutionary war we could identify and research the revolutionary war vets would be a good way to celebrate the anniversary.

Kevin - re. the cemetery database is intact. He entered the data with Emma Lou. The database is intact - the issue is the front end of the website is broken.

Elsa - All the information that was collected in physical form (papers, etc) is in the room in the Town Office. The plan for the Village Cemetery has been preserved and is the town vault.

Catherine - Every summer the geneologists come to the Library looking for information.

Kevin - They started a database started documenting the inventory of collections.

Cynthia - The Brown Hill history was given to Robert Stokes.

Catherine - The library has a certain number of VCR tapes digitized and her plan is to put the links to the digitized presentations on-line.

Dan - asks about the Meeting House website and whether they want to continue to maintain it.

Kevin - The Historical Society is piggy-backing on the Meeting House website. When the web hosting service changed its platform it lost the databases. He's not sure when he could get it back up and running. The hosting service he uses is GoDaddy.

Elsa says that Kevin has volunteered and enormous amount of time building the website. Mike says kudos to Kevin for all his volunteer work.

Kevin says that he's involved in many volunteer activities and he's not sure he has time to do all the work required to bring it back up.

Catherine notes that there are books in the library that are marked Starksboro Historical Society. Elsa says that some books were given to the town and should be managed by the Library. Mike agrees.

Pete - suggests making the website more static. Kevin says that if its static he could maintain it.

Dan asks Kevin if the Library can help in any way. Kevin says if it's static may not have a lot of need.

Catherine - says the Library has a Wordpress website. She has a volunteer who may be able to help.

Dan - Process - we'll approve minutes at the next meeting then send to Kevin to post. Before them Kevin will update officers

Library:

Catherine - \$3,000 grant they got is to promote a series of community conversations. First will be Sunday Jan 29th. SHS wrote a letter of support. The first event will be focused on the old Town Hall. For a "Community Conversation" they recommend no more than 15 people. They want to invite people who might have knowledge of the Town Hall to share. Library used to collaborate more with the SHS and they are looking for more. If the SHS wanted the Library to host documents they could do that.

Elsa - Bertha and Elsa did a presentation on the Town Hall a long time ago, maybe in the 80's. Bertha would tell about when they had dances you could see the building sway. Catherine might have that video.

Catherine - Now with town receiving ARPA money it seems like a good time to talk about the town hall.

The library is out of Bertha's Book for sale. Olive has copies and will bring some to the Library.

Susan - They have the American Library Association grant to have a discussion about the history of the town hall and the future of the town hall.

There are three new library trustees (she is one) and one thing they want to do going forward is to develop a plan for the library and bringing together the different town groups and talk about potential for collaborations. What are all the groups doing, their priorities and look for opportunities for collaboration.

Mike - thinks that's a great idea and one that the SHS would be interested in engaging in. One issue is space and connectivity. He didn't realize we could have meetings in the library in the evening. The SHS as the resource of history are a good partner for the Library. The SHS, the Meeting House and the Library are great resources. The Jerusalem School House is another group (Sarah had been a member of both the SHS and the JSH).

Ideas for revitalizing the SHS:

- Mike: Increase the number of times the SHS meets and make it more regular.
- Susan: Clarify the goals and focus of the SHS. We can coordinate with the Library, which is doing the same. The Library is also going to start publishing a monthly newsletter
- Pete, Dan: Focus on the town cemeteries: learning their history, organizing field days to repair stones and spruce up the sites.

- Elsa: Increase the number of presentations the SHS puts on or let's members know about in nearby towns. Some ideas for SHS presentations were:
 - Cynthia: Have a focus for the meeting. E.g. Bushnell/Holcomb meeting.
 - Pete: Focus on particular historical houses and people. People are particularly interested in the history around their particular house.
 - Dan: Create a presentations on dating buildings by artifacts

Setting of Dues for 2022:

Mike moves to keep dues the same in 2022. Dan 2nds. Unanimous

The meeting ended at 9:00