

ELIOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Minutes of the Meeting – January 8, 2018

President Paul Johnson welcomed members and guests at approximately 7 p.m. and announced that we would hear the evening's program first followed by the normal business meeting of the Historical Society.

Program

More than 70 citizens listened to the presentation of the findings of the *York River Study Committee*. Jennifer Hunter, coordinator for the study, was joined by archeologist Gemma Hudgell and Steve Scharoun from Northeast Archaeology Research Center, and Scott Stevens from Groundroot Preservation Group, to present the findings of the study. A copy of the entire study was given to the Eliot Historical Society. Based on their findings, the committee will be recommending that the York River be designated as a Wild and Scenic River. The town will need to vote on whether we want the designation, which has its own set of requirements and advantages. The Partnership encourages local river management and public participation in developing goals for its protection and us, so the next step is to propose a local stewardship plan and they are seeking input from the public. Once completed, this document will be given to the town for its use as it develops its own plans.

The first part of the presentation came from Scott Stevens who spoke about the architectural aspects of this region, i.e. buildings and structures above ground. He and Steve Scharoun noted that of particular interest and importance were Punkintown, the Colonel John Frost Garrison and other places on Frost Hill; however, due to development, these have lost much of their historical context, especially when you consider that at one time it was so open that one could see the York River from these places. Steve pointed out ways that the town could protect historical structures in general so that they can retain their historical context and not disappear over time.

The archeological findings were described by Gemma Hudgell. She gathered an enthusiastic group of volunteers to join the limited archeological staff and they used their brief time to pinpoint the mostly likely places to find artifacts and start digging. Their success rate was impressive, having dug up over 400 items, including an arrowhead dating back to at least 3000 B.C. Items included fragments of daily life and were found both on Eliot public land as well as on private land. The protocol is that these belong to the property owners. Most of the items belonged to or were given to the town of Eliot to determine where best to keep and display them. Based on the productivity of the dig in such a short time, Gemma concluded that the area is likely very rich archeologically and worth further study.

The entire report is available in the Eliot Historical Society archives and can also be accessed on-line at the York River Study Committee's website: www.yorkrivermaine.org/study-documents. Look for the archeology report by the Northeast Archaeology Research Center and the architectural history report by Groundroot Preservation Group. The January 2018 newsletter of the Eliot Historical Society contains an article that goes into greater detail about the presentation.

Following a break for refreshments the business portion of the meeting began at 8:35 p.m.

Grants/Fundraising – Paul Johnson began by announcing that during the month of January the Eliot Historical Society will be one of the 3 beneficiaries of all the profits from sales that month at The Fabulous Find, a high-end thrift shop in Kittery, Maine. This non-profit group has distributed over \$1 million to over 150 non-profit organizations throughout the seacoast region. He urged members to get the word out to friends, neighbors, and anyone they know because to be successful The Fabulous Find needs donations of gently used items and clothing, as well as shoppers. This has the potential to be a major fundraiser for our group.

Secretary's Report - The minutes of the December meeting were read and accepted with one correction noted.

Treasurer's Report - Pam Ashley provided the December 2017 financial report, which showed a building fund total of \$40,291.88 from the savings account and CD, and a checking account balance of \$7575.88. There was \$712 in income reported from a number of fundraisers, \$5.92 earned in bank interest, and \$222.69 in expenses. The report was approved as presented and is attached.

Membership – Sylvia Moynahan pointed out that since it is January of a new year, it is time to renew memberships and she reviewed the costs of each category of membership.

Programs – Carolyn Bogh announced that in February the speaker will be Dominique Metreud who will talk about the trolley depot building that was moved recently to Green Acre from Rosemary Hill. In March, Eric Christian will speak about the bay lands of the Piscataqua. Carolyn welcomes any new ideas for future presentations.

Publicity – Carolyn Bogh acknowledged and applauded the fine job Rosanne Fisher is doing with spreading the word about our activities and related ones that we support.

Fundraisers – Paul Johnson reiterated the need to optimize the opportunity we have with The Fabulous Find in January. He mentioned that the next fundraiser will be the pasta dinner in March.

Old Business – We had a lively discussion about what to recommend for the disposition of the artifacts from the York River Study. The town manager has asked us to decide. We discussed the pros and cons of keeping these in an out-of-town museum. We could also keep these elsewhere but on loan until we had a place for them. Eric Christian suggested a display case in the town hall. Carolyn Bogh has a hand-crafted display box that is secure that could be put somewhere. Polly McDonough pointed out that there is not enough space in the town hall for displays and the lack of space for us to display our collection is an ongoing issue. Among places suggested besides the town hall were the library, the bank, the post office, the Grange, the Fogg Homestead, and others to be determined. Carolyn Bogh made a motion to keep the artifacts in Eliot and to have a committee make recommendations. This was seconded by Zip Zamarchi and overwhelmingly approved. A committee was appointed to work on this, consisting of Carolyn Bogh, Ruth Drake and Polly McDonough. Paul Johnson will write to the town manager informing him of our decision.

Julie Johnson asked if we have selected an auditor for the 2017 financials who will present findings at the March meeting. Julie was appointed to do this.

New Business – We needed people to volunteer to provide refreshments in March and April. Sophia Dennis volunteered for March and Ruth Hirst for April.

Helen Goransson asked for a volunteer to be recording secretary at the February meeting, as she will be away. Polly McDonough graciously accepted the task.

We thanked Julie Johnson for the evening's refreshments which turned out to be a more challenging task due to the crowd of people who came for the York River Study presentation. Next month, refreshments will be provided by Helen Sullivan, Jan Cerabona and Nancy Cultrera.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Goransson, Secretary