

CDPA Meeting Minutes July 23, 2005

CDPA President Houston Putnam Lowry called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

Houston gave the **Investment update** and reported that Doug Putnam who manages the investments has been doing quite well with the CDPA's money. It's clear that some house painting will likely need to be done soon. Scott Gibbs asked if that money would be taken from the investment principal. Houston said that operating expenses are generally about 5% of the principal, which allows the principal to continue growing.

Bill MacLaren asked if names and contact information for CDPA officers is on the website. Houston said only names and emails addresses are on the web site.

The **House and Grounds report** was given by Bill MacLaren of Tyrone Farm Management Inc. (TFMI).

Martie MacLaren explained the difference between TFMI's role in keeping the grounds mowed and the Master Gardener Program (MGP). CDPA has been certified as a Master Gardener site where individuals can accrue hours towards Master Gardener certification in CT. Martie is a certified Master Gardener and these individuals bring expertise and skill to the planting and arrangement of the gardens. The MGP is separate from TFMI and falls under different authority. Martie suggested that there be two membership work weekends planned each year to take care of weeding and mulching as these tasks do not currently fall under the responsibilities of either TFMI or MGP but need to be done. Alternatively, she suggested that CDPA hire someone to complete these tasks each year.

Bill MacLaren restated that the house is in need of painting. Another grant proposal was submitted to the Quinebaug Shetucket Heritage Corridor this year but was rejected. We will keep trying. Another possible source of funds is the state's Senate Bill 410, an Act Concerning Farmland Preservation, Land Protection, Affordable Housing and Historic Preservation which allocates \$6.5 million to each of the four programs named in the bill's title.

Bill stated the importance of having guests come to Putnam Elms as organizations that fund non-profit projects like to see participation by the public. Elizabeth Beach says she has kept a record of adult visitors. Bill mentioned the problem of uninvited visitors such as a recent incident at Old Trinity in which 10 kids were monkeying around on the property. This raises the possibility of securing the front gate during non-visitor hours. Scott Gibbs said that a locked gate would probably dissuade at least 50% of people who might wander onto PE property and also suggested having some sort of security sign at the front gate. Houston left the issue of locking the gate to TFMI's discretion.

Bill explained that the next marketing endeavor will be the October Walking Weekend event which will be billed as "Colonel Putnam's 'Constitutional'" to trace the route frequently taken by Colonel Daniel Putnam from his home, Putnam Elms, to his church at Old Trinity. Dick Booth will preside at the church and Elizabeth Beach will discuss

Putnam family travels in the 18th century, from Canada to Cuba, at PE. The walk will be offered on two dates, Sunday, Oct. 9 and Sunday, Oct. 16 at 1:00 pm. Bill stated that the walking weekend last year worked out well.

Elizabeth Beach introduced herself as the new Program Director for PE as an employee of TFMI. She would like to focus on presenting a renewed vision for the new century and celebrate the 220th birthday of Putnam Elms. Her mission is to develop engaging and compelling public programs to meet the needs of our audience and to generate revenue.

Elizabeth noted that one of the things that sets this historical family apart from others is the fact that there have been five lay ministers and two Episcopal clergy in the family. Being a lay minister and historian herself she has developed a renewed relationship with the Episcopal church and diocese of CT and suggested a spiritual pilot program (Pilgrim's Rest) to supplement what has been done with the house over the past 70 years.

The idea is to offer a one day spiritual retreat at PE for anyone who's interested. The cost would be \$20 (meals not included) with a maximum of 20 people.

Scott Gibbs inquired as to how this would be presented to the community. Elizabeth said that there is a great history involving the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross, CDPA, and the fact that the property was used as a vacation home for over 11,000 working women at one point thanks to Emily Malbone Morgan. Miss. Morgan played an integral role in expanding the nature of the retreats from church to private properties.

Myrtle Morse expressed concern about not over-emphasizing the Episcopal church and including all religions. Nancy Bell asked that history not be overshadowed by religion. Bill MacLaren said that the CDPA has a renewed association with the Brooklyn Historical Society which makes the CDPA perhaps more robust from a historical point of view.

Houston Putnam Lowry expressed his hopes that this would potentially bring more people to the house. Scott Gibbs pointed out that it seems more a focus on spirituality than a specific religion. Elizabeth Beach said that while museum attendance is dwindling there seems to be a spiritual renaissance in the country. Houston Putnam Lowry asked for a motion to approve pursuing Pilgrim's Rest. Nine voted in favor, two opposed.

TFMI has proposed that funds be allocated for a permanent sign at the end of the PE driveway on the house side of the rock wall indicating what the house is about. Members approved the proposal and Bill will check Brooklyn zoning regulations for any restrictions.

Elizabeth Steiner explained a project she's been working on based on a journal of Daniel Putnam's from July-August of 1814 that she was fortunate to gain access to through Catharine Collins in California. Elizabeth is working on transcribing it and is intent on getting this to the CDPA membership as soon as possible.

Hope Allen reported that Jennifer (Doug Putnam's daughter) and her husband are back from the Ukraine with two kids whom she would like to nominate for membership.

It was noted that James Marlor of Brooklyn died recently. His wife Ginny survives him. He is buried in the Marlor family plot in Brooklyn.

Mary Wilcox Cross will be 100 in Feb. 2006. She is the CDPA's member "most emeritus".

The next meeting will be October, 29, 2005 and will possibly include a service in PE's chapel. The meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.

Katie MacLaren
Secretary