

CDPA MEETING OF MEMBERS MINUTES
NOVEMBER 4, 2006

Houston Putnam Lowry, President, called the meeting to order at 1:11 pm.

Present: Hope Allen, Elaine Arts, Eric Baldwin, Elizabeth Beach, David Bell, Nancy Bell, Tori Beninate, Emily Gibbs, Hillary Gibbs, Jonathan Gibbs, Nathan Hadley Gibbs, Scott Gibbs, Bob Houghtaling, Houston Putnam Lowry, Catharine MacLaren, Ian MacLaren, Martie MacLaren, Morgan MacLaren, William MacLaren, Myrtle Morse, Joyce Phipps, Charlie West, Connor West, Georgia West and Liz West.

Financial Report

Houston Putnam Lowry reported the financial report had just been sent out to members and should be received shortly. The church fund stands at about \$40,000 and the regular fund at around \$770,000 for approximately \$806,000 total.

Nominating Committee Report

Bill MacLaren reported the nominating committee recommended that the current officers be elected for another term. Current officers are Houston Putnam Lowry as President and Treasurer, Doug Putnam as Vice President, Catharine MacLaren as Secretary, Scott Gibbs as Assistant Secretary and Hope Allen as an Honorary Director without being an officer. Houston Lowry Putnam pointed out that all officers are also automatically on the Board of Directors.

Myrtle Morse motioned to accept the nominating committee's report. Nancy Bell seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval of re-election of the current officers/directors.

Tyrone Farm Management Inc. (TFMI) Report

Bill MacLaren stated the fundraising drive of the CDPA membership spearheaded by Kay Cox Jones for a new steeple at the Unitarian church in Brooklyn resulted in contributions by 16 members for a total of about \$2800. Kudos to Kay!

Buildings and Grounds: A number of brick courses on the center and rear chimneys were rebuilt and repointed in September. Both have new bluestone caps for weather protection. They will be re-inspected by the insurance company.

Clearing brush and trees around the garage continues in preparation for a new roof. Weather permitting; the construction will be completed before Thanksgiving and then move on to other outbuildings in need of repair next season.

From Elizabeth Beach (Program Chairman of PE):

EVENTS: Since the July CDPA Meeting, we have had two special events in addition to the weekly tours. The first was on Thursday, September 14, when Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) members assembled at The Elms for their annual Harvest Homecoming Potluck Dinner, followed by a business meeting and public program. Geoff Kaufman, a traditional musician who continues to do stellar work as a performer and producer, put together "Singing the Family - the Story of Putnam Elms in Song." It was a tremendous amount of work for him and the Program Director but we think it was worth it. The BHS President said the evening was "perfect" and the BHS Program Chairman (CDPA's Nancy Bell) wrote us a lovely and enthusiastic thank-you. Geoff was so inspired by the experience that he composed "A Ballad for Putnam Elms" and recorded it as part of his application to the CT Commission on Culture & Tourism (CCT) for the appointment of State Troubadour.

The second special event was on Sunday, October 8 - it was our contribution to the Quinebaug - Shetucket National Heritage Corridor's Walking Weekends. John Christian from Nature's Edge Farm in Canterbury, with no little help from Myrtle Morse, took 68 guests and several dogs from three states on a tour of our grounds, telling the stories of 25 of our trees and shrubs, some of which are unusual. Botany and history were blended superbly. John had even gone to the trouble, despite an injury, to collect specimens of berries from similar trees on the UConn campus because our hungry wildlife had eaten ours. So, at some stops on the route there were additional displays. We were unable to videotape the lecture. Ken Brink, another volunteer from Nature's Edge Farm, and Elizabeth Beach provided necessary support. Afterwards almost half the crowd stayed for a packed house tour.

IN THE NEWS: The September event resulted in long detailed articles in two weekly newspapers. Thanks to Keith Knowlton, there's a superb new photograph of the house that the BHS used for publicity. In October ours was the only Walk to be covered on the holiday weekend by one of our weeklies; it was an extensive article, too. The publicity done by the Historic Corridor and our paragraph in their flyer reached thousands as well. In addition, the owner of WINY (AM 1350 in Putnam) requested submissions from us after a conversation we had at the local community college about local resources.

NETWORKING: We came to the attention of the CT Commission on Culture &

Tourism (CCT) in two ways - the ballad project and an important meeting. The CCT now has four divisions: Art/Music/Film/History, so it was proposed locally that a new regional organization (for 10 towns) be formed to mirror the CCT sections. We were fortunate to be able to meet in a select gathering with the CCT Community Development Coordinator; there were only two historical organizations present. This connection is of prime importance to us and could not be made through regular channels because they do not seem to want to have anything to do with a museum unless it can be open at least 15 hours a week through the season. Their lengthy publicity forms were sent to us by the BHS but could not be submitted because of the 15-hour rule. So, it was a very good feeling to tell the assembly that "A Ballad for Putnam Elms" is 7½ minutes long, which proves we have a lot of history to share! Also, our local tourist agency, based in Mystic, though challenged in keeping up with events in The Quiet Corner, has given us a nice listing on its website.

We are connecting with the D.A.R. (Daughters of the American Revolution), too. They own the Governor Jonathan Trumbull House in Lebanon and a house near the Brooklyn Common. The Board Chairman from Trumbull House invited us to the local chapter meeting, which we attended in October and we have been invited to return. (They want Elizabeth Beach to join and she wanted to collaborate with them on an event if possible.)

We attended a brilliant free event at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center - a Local History Fair. Tables of displays from historical societies, museums, historians, state historical agencies, and our hosts created a convivial atmosphere in which to converse. (The representative from the State Library is descended from Israel Putnam's cousin, so Elizabeth Beach suggested he might be interested in joining the CDPA).

Even in the midst of this electronic age, there still seems to be no substitute for making a connection via a personal conversation at some sort of meeting.

VISITORS THIS SEASON: 207 (145 attended special events). Total income was \$301.00.

Myrtle Morse stated she and John Christian of Nature's Edge Farm discussed the utility of putting signs up to indicate important and rare plant life on the property including a pear tree brought over by the Puritans. She also said that if she can get some help from volunteers she would like to focus on reviving the gardens at PE.

Jonathan Gibbs asked if the song by Geoff Kaufman might be available on line at some point. Houston Putnam Lowry suggested that we make it available on the Putnam Elms web site when it is published.

New Members

Hope Allen nominated Andrew John Lane and Joshua Lane (born June, 2006) as new members. They were admitted by acclamation.

Stories

As an aid to the general education of members, Houston Putnam Lowry told the story of Israel Putnam and the wolf den.

Scott Gibbs and Houston Putnam Lowry recounted the stories of the onion keg and when Old Put was captured by the Indians and saved by a French officer.

Elizabeth Beach spoke about Israel Putnam's exploration in parts south with his son Daniel which resulted in the first tobacco plants being brought to this region.

New Business

Those gathered gave a heartfelt "thank you" to Myrtle Morse for providing the delicious main courses of the meal before the meeting and to the members of Killingly Grange 112 who were kind enough to help with set up and clean up of the meal.

Scott Gibbs gave the CDPA a book he put together including many documents and photos from PE and CDPA history to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the CDPA. He read a poem once read by Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt entitled *Death and General Putnam*.

Houston Putnam Lowry announced that the next meeting will be in July (date to be determined) and Myrtle Morse volunteered to bring liquid refreshments to supplement the robust picnic lunches brought by members to the summer meeting.

The meeting was adjourned by Houston Putnam Lowry at 2:06 pm.

Katie Maclaren
Secretary