

CDPA MINUTES FROM JULY 29, 2006 MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Katie MacLaren called the meeting to order at 12:53pm.

Present were Eric Baldwin, Elizabeth Beach, Dick Booth, Jonathan Gibbs, Hillary Carlson Gibbs, Nathan Hadley Gibbs, Emily Gibbs, Scott Gibbs, Bill MacLaren, Ian MacLaren, Katie MacLaren, Martie MacLaren, Morgan MacLaren, Myrtle Morse, Cathy Perry, John Perry, Martha Perry, Pepper Perry, Rob Perry and Joyce Phipps.

Katie MacLaren corrected the minutes from the October 29, 2005 meeting to reflect the gift of the portrait of Catharine Putnam Brinley was, in fact, given by Emily Barclay's mother, Catharine Putnam Hooker Barclay. The portrait was delivered to the Elms through the kind efforts of Emily Barclay and John Hawes.

Bill MacLaren made a motion to accept the minutes, as corrected, and Pepper Perry seconded. The minutes from the October 29, 2005, as corrected, were unanimously accepted .

Financial Report

The financial report was mailed to the membership before the meeting for review. Myrtle Morse moved to accept the financial report. Emily Gibbs seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

TFMI Report

The house and outbuildings continue to require paint and the garage roof will need replacement. TFMI turned on the water in May with a minor problem in the upstairs shower that was repaired by Quiet Corner Plumbing. The grounds are in good shape despite recent violent thunderstorms in the area. Morgan and Ian MacLaren are mulching the bases of elm trees planted six years ago and lawn mowing continues.

Myrtle Morse thanked Morgan and Ian MacLaren for making the grounds look great and Elizabeth Beach reported that even though the weather has been uncooperative the grounds have looked great before events.

After some discussion with local residents and friends of Putnam Elms, TFMI recommends that we not install a permanent sign on the front of the property as this may encourage vandals to inspect the facilities. We now keep the front gate open to support the illusion of permanent occupancy.

Elizabeth Beach Report

Elizabeth Beach (Events Program Director) has made a great effort to design events to reach beyond the regular (& dwindling) museum audience. She analyzed our special events from 2005 and 2006 – and found every one improved in 2006. While fewer people visited compared to last year at this time, we have raised \$161.00 already, not counting tour donations. Last year, for example, we received nothing from our fundraiser because the proceeds went to Quinebaug –Shetucket National Historic Corridor and to Israel Putnam’s church to restore its steeple. The steeple project is proceeding without full funding, that is on faith, because to wait until their coffers are full will mean a more costly project. Our local tobacconists, Moses & Moses, are giving the project a percentage of each sale of their Israel Putnam cigars, which will be a big boost. And they are also helping us, being particularly happy that our exhibit mentions Israel Putnam and Cuba. The Walking Weekend in October will feature a tour of Putnam Elms’s trees.

In addition to the usual places of advertising, such as daily newspapers, we or our events have appeared in the newly expanded, elegant Quinebaug-Shetucket flyers, on the Quinebaug Valley Community College website, as a bookmark in local shopping guides, in a Brooklyn Historical Society mailing, as a calendar page in a school project, in Trinity Parish’s newsletter, on the masthead of a new impressive local weekly newspaper and we have been mentioned in an article in another weekly.

Our network is constantly expanding. We continue to work closely with Quinebaug-Shetucket, Brooklyn Historical Society and were part of the outstanding Tyrone Farm open house in June. I attend all Museums of Northeastern CT events and we made significant connections this year with more local historical societies, businesses and organizations. [End of report from Elizabeth Beach.

There was general discussion around the fact that many area museums, including Old Sturbridge Village, are laying off staff and/or selling property due to decreasing numbers of visitors.

Membership News and New Business

The sign at the Wolf Den is still deteriorating as far as we know and does not seem to be a state priority in terms of repair. It was suggested that the cost of a metal plaque be explored as a replacement. The original sign was presented to the DAR by the CDPA in 1920.

CDPA member Richard Hall died since the last meeting and Emily Gibbs reported that John Hadley Cox died in July of 2005.

New members: Nathan Hadley Gibbs (son of Jon & Hillary Gibbs)
Kieran Joseph Gibbs (son of Eric Gibbs & Sampriti Ganguli)
Tao Putnam Perry (son of Chris and Keiko Sato-Perry)
Hillary Joyce Gibbs (wife of Jon Gibbs)
Joyce Marie Phipps (Associate Member, mother of Hillary Gibbs)
Eric Baldwin (fiancé of Katie MacLaren)

The nominating committee will consist of Bill and Katie MacLaren and will report out at the fall meeting. Bill remarked that it would be great to be able to add some new people to the directors.

2006 is the 100th anniversary of the first CDPA meeting! Myrtle Morse has graciously offered to hostess lunch at the fall meeting to celebrate. She will cook a turkey and asks that people bring potluck elements to go with the turkey. The fall meeting will be on Saturday, November 4th following an 11:00 am service at Old Trinity which is the first weekend following All Saints Day. It is requested that members RSVP before the meeting and indicate (a) whether they will attend the service at Old Trinity and (b) what food they intend to bring. Please call TFMI's office number at (860) 928-3647 to respond.

Dick Booth announced that Old Trinity will be open Wednesdays and Sundays from 2-4pm beginning August 6th and that Evening Prayers occur on Sundays at 4pm. He encouraged people to visit as he enjoys talking about Old Trinity and offered to show people around at alternate times if they get in touch with him and schedule a day/time.

Rob Perry announced that "a business without a sign is a sign of no business" and suggested getting a versatile sign for Putnam Elms that can be changed and moved around as needed. Rob and Bill MacLaren will speak further about possibilities.

Bill MacLaren announced that the last estimate for painting the house and outbuildings was approx. \$22,000. Myrtle Morse emphasized the importance of keeping the house looking good for visitors and made a motion for the house to be painted. Emily Gibbs seconded the motion with a corollary motion by Rob Perry that the process include at least two bids and authorization, pending CDPA Board approval, of \$30,000 for painting and maintenance. The motion and corollary were unanimously approved.

Katie MacLaren suggested that expectations for officers/directors of the organization should be attendance at 50% of the meetings. The question arose as to whether or not the by-laws would have to be amended to make this an official expectation and it was agreed that we would seek Houston Putnam Lowry's advice on this matter.

Emily Gibbs wanted an expression of thanks to member Kay Cox included in the minutes for taking it upon herself to write the CDPA membership asking for help with the Israel Putnam steeple project. Her efforts brought in \$2-3,000. Elizabeth Beach reported that one of the people in charge of the project thanked us profusely for our help.

Emily Gibbs donated the christening dress of her mother to the CDPA who was the last person born at Putnam Elms.

Rob and Kathy Perry donated the 1912 Book of Knowledge and several "four-day" horsehair mattresses (i.e. walked on for four days in the process of manufacture).

Scott and Emily Gibbs donated a framed portrait of General Washington saying farewell to his wartime staff that included General Israel Putnam.

Elizabeth Beach announced that on Thursday, September 14th the Brooklyn Historical Society will have its Harvest Homecoming Dinner at Putnam Elms and Geoff Kaufman, a traditional singer & instrumentalist/festival & recording producer who tours internationally, will be singing songs reflecting the history of Putnam Elms and its families. There will be free admission to the program and it will begin about 7pm. It was requested that this information be posted immediately on the Putnam Elms website.

Elizabeth Beach also reported that she has looked into the possibility of renting the Bradley Theater in Putnam where we could also have some sort of celebration of the 100th anniversary of the CDPA and it is very reasonable to rent.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:31 pm.

Catharine P. MacLaren
Secretary