

MINUTES

Mendham Township Historic Preservation Committee
Wednesday, January 12, 2022

In attendance: Pat Zimmerman, Helen Wall, James Zemaitis, Melissa Saharko, Sam Tolley, Susan Luciano, Jo Ann Alston, Mary Millea, Tom Baio, Diana Orban Brown

We opened the meeting by welcoming our new members Helen Wall and Sam Tolley, and introducing everyone. We voted for officers. Melissa Saharko was elected Chair. James Zemaitis was elected Vice Chair. Helen Wall volunteered to be secretary. We agreed to continue meeting the first Wednesday of each month at 6:45 pm and will continue the hybrid (in person/Zoom) format. We discussed the responsibilities of each officer.

We gave a brief overview of our ongoing projects. We discussed the history of the Seed House and its restoration. We discussed touring the Mosle mansion in the spring to determine if anything can be salvaged and preserved. Tom confirmed that April or May would be a good time to go.

We discussed soliciting a donation from the Hillandale developers who are building on the former Mosle property. We discussed different levels of donation and the benefits offered. We agreed to propose \$1,000, \$5,000, and \$10,000 options. The funds will be put into the Pitney Park fund, specifically earmarked for the Walled Garden, Seed House, and Gazebo. Diana Orban Brown reported that the park maintenance fund currently has \$33,000 and the earmarked amount for the Garden, Seed House, and Gazebo is \$1,800.

We discussed the donation of a postcard collection and some Mendham themed bird houses. Sam, Pat, and Melissa will collect everything on Saturday, January 15th. We will arrange a time to sort through them as a group. The donor wishes us to pull out any postcards related to Bridgewater and that they be returned to her. Pat will speak to the township administrator about possible storage space.

We discussed Mr. Sletteland's proposal of building a museum adjacent to the Seed House. We are impressed with his collection but have concerns about the museum. Chiefly, the Green Acres grant will not allow for such a construction and operation on the site. Also, we are concerned about the town's ability to be responsible for and maintain such a collection. We are interested in some items from the collection and perhaps housing the entire collection in the future. We will communicate these opinions in writing to the Township Committee. We agreed that HPC representatives should meet with Mr. Sletteland before the official response is sent. Helen suggested that Mr. Sletteland consider funding a documentary that features his collection, which we all agreed is an excellent idea.

Finally, we discussed establishing subcommittees. This serves to help us work out the details of our major projects, leaving our main monthly meetings for higher level discussion and decisions. We also would like to keep our monthly meetings to about an hour. We will immediately establish the following subcommittees: Seed House and Fundraising. Sam suggested a subcommittee to research and plan for expanded and permanent space for the HPC. Melissa and Helen will explore a subcommittee for Archives Digitization.