

PENFIELD REEF LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, November 17, 2011

Sullivan Independence Hall

725 Old Post Road

Fairfield, CT 06824

Final Minutes

Members Present: Sandye Mann, Jennifer Carpenter, Pat Conley,
Deanna Hoffman, Sherri Steeneck, Mary Jo Cornell, Paige Herman,
Dr. Evan Tilley, Steve Elworthy, Linda Cote Crowley

Members Absent: Vice-Chair Dave Peck, David Agonis, Bill Sapone, Mike Jehle

Others Present: Town Attorney Eileen Kennelly, Artist Craig Smith,
Fairfield Minuteman Reporter Meg Learson Grosso
RTM David Becker

I. Call to Order

Chair S. Mann called the Meeting to Order at 4:07 PM in the Second Floor Conference Room, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Approval of the Minutes

D. Hoffman made a Motion to Approve the November 10, 2011 PRLPC Minutes.

P. Herman Seconded. Unanimous. Chair Mann thanked L. Crowley for excellent minutes.

III. Correspondence and Communications

J. Carpenter reported that Town Attorney E. Kennelly will put together information for a Quit-Claim Deed, and standards for historic preservation. Chair S. Mann discussed the November 10th e-mail regarding the light directed to Sherri from Victoria Mastelli on behalf of interested bidder Arthur Lenius from Wisconsin which Sherri shared with the PRLPC Committee. For the record, Chair S. Mann stated that private e-mails with direct commentary on them are not to occur. First, all communication regarding the light are to contact the Chair directly by telephone. The Chair will then forward the information for review to the PRLPC Committee before placing any comments or replies to the sender.

IV. Old Business

Chair S. Mann requested and S. Steeneck made the Motion to place Agenda Item B ahead of Item A. E. Tilley Seconded. Unanimous.

B. Discussion of Board of Selectmen Meeting

Chair S. Mann was pleased to report that the updated presentation she made at the Board of Selectman Meeting yesterday, Wednesday, November 16th, was well received. Their request for more information has not been a simple process. Following the November 3rd committee vote, Chair S. Mann requested GSA Representatives Sara Massarello and Kevin LeGare if there was any documentation in any of the files regarding an approach from the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service to the Town of Fairfield in terms of a review of the granting of stewardship of the light to Beacon Preservation at the original time of the granted application. S. Massarello sent two letters to Chair S. Mann which she distributed to the Board of Selectmen and the PRLPC Committee, which previously were not made aware. The July 23, 2008 letter from the NPS Assistant Director of Cultural Services Janet Snyder Matthews, Phd. to former First Selectman Kenneth Flatto, that within fifteen days from the date of this letter, a letter of request to petition for a review of the granted application of the Penfield Light may be sent to the Connecticut Department of Culture and Tourism and NPS. The August 5, 2008 letter from former First Selectman K. Flatto to NPS J. Snyder Matthews responded that the town chose not to petition for review of their decision. Chair S. Mann pointed out that this information was never brought to the prior committee who were never offered the opportunity to go back to the NPS and announce that our committee **does** want the Penfield Reef Lighthouse. Treasurer P. Conley asked Chair S. Mann how can she be sure that it was never brought back to the committee. Chair S. Mann replied that she was at the meeting held immediately after Beacon was awarded the light and, Beacon Preservation, Inc. President Casey Jordan asked only for Fairfield's funds raised for maintaining the light for their use.

Treasurer P. Conley stated that the amount of actual funds raised which was reported in the news media was to remain private. Chair S. Mann said the BOS wanted and needed to know. Chair S. Mann apologized to Treasurer P. Conley for revealing the amount of funds On Hand. Since the bidding process had already started and, unless there is an offer to partner the bid, there is almost no opportunity for the committee to be involved in owning the light.

A. Discussion of GSA Auction

The Soft Closing Date for the GSA Auction of the Penfield Reef Lighthouse is Monday, December 12, 2011, unless extended via TBA (to be announced).

IV. Old Business

C. Discussion of Committee Work and Status

In order to prepare the required detailed information for next Wednesday's December 7, 2011 Board of Selectmen's Meeting, two Special Meetings will be held on Monday, November 21 at 8:00 AM in the basement conference room of Sullivan Independence Hall, as well as on Monday, November 28 at 8:00 AM in the basement conference room, Sullivan Indy Hall. The Committee will work with Town of Fairfield Building Supervisor Ed McCourt and Town Engineer Jim Girardi with Item 4 of the five items needed for the updated presentation:

1. E. Kennelly will put together the documentation to acquire the bottomlands under the lighthouse structure, and find out whether the bottomlands can be deeded or leased.
2. Chair S. Mann and E. Kennelly proceed in exploratory conversation with interested light bidder Michael Henaberry to work out an arrangement to combine the committee funds with his funds in bidding on the light to preserve it.
3. The BOS were quiet in reaction to interested light bidder Arthur Lenius' e-mail in requesting the Town's help in bidding the light to occupy it.
4. Compile a list of Maintenance Costs and a Five Year Plan for annual funding of repairs.
5. E. Kennelly will review the Light Purchaser's Contract and the Quit Claim Deed.

Chair S. Mann had a telephone conversation with State of Connecticut DEP David Blatt, who also talked with A. Lenius, that occupancy of the light is only on a daily visitation basis, but not to live there. Emphasis is for preservation of the current light's good condition.

Chair S. Mann had a telephone conversation with State of Connecticut Culture and Tourism Historical Group Representative Mary Donahue, who confirmed that the town could seal the interior of the building in order to secure it during the first phase, we have our own timeline during the second phase to renovate the interior – if at all. M. Donahue replied that the State of Connecticut reviews any repairs made to the exterior of the structure in order to ensure that the materials are historically correct and meets the state's historical guidelines. Once the exterior of the restoration of the light is completed and the outside is sealed weather tight, the interior of the structure does not have to be touched as long as there is no public access inside. The State of Connecticut will not require us to restore the interior of the light environmentally. The exterior must be safe and secure, in good condition, monitor maintenance and upkeep and preserve its authentic structural character according to the detailed photo of that time period. E. Tilley remarked that the same holds true for other interested bidders who must make it their responsibility of due diligence.

V. New Business
None

VI. Public Comment
E. Kennelly will begin work on the BOS requests.
D. Becker was in support of the Town in obtaining ownership of the bottomlands under Penfield Reef Light in order to secure its preservation in perpetuity.

VII. Adjournment

S. Steeneck made a Motion to Adjourn. P. Conley Seconded. Unanimous. The Meeting Adjourned at 5:25 PM. The next Meeting will be held in the Second Floor Conference Room, Sullivan Independence Hall, on Wednesday, November 30, 2011 at 4:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Cote Crowley
Secretary