

MINUTES
ST. LOUIS PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
April 7, 2015

In attendance: President Ted Ekkers; Vice President Bonnie Burton; Trustees Jeanne Andersen, Paul Linnee, Jeff Liss, John Olson, Jim Robbins, and Sue Ainsworth; Members Mark Toretzky, Don Schimmel, and Lucille Thornsjo.

President Ted called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ted moved and Jim seconded a motion to approve the February 2015 minutes; motion passed. Paul moved and Bonnie seconded a motion to approve the March 2015 minutes; motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

In Henry's absence, Bonnie presented this month's financial report. Ted moved and Bonnie seconded a motion to accept the report; motion passed.

MEMBERSHIP

Bonnie sent reminder letters to past members with great success.

VISION UPDATE

Ted handed out notes from the Board's Visioning Workshop of March 18, 2015. At that session the Board discussed the many facets of the St. Louis Park History Center that we hope to create. Ted also distributed a draft Vision Statement for the Board to read and discuss at a future meeting.

FUNDRAISING FEASIBILITY STUDY

Paul proposed that we conduct a survey to find out whether there is support in the community for a History Center before we embark on a capital campaign. He moved that the Board approve of a staged plan to study the feasibility of and consider engaging in a capital fundraising campaign that will move the Society deliberately towards a set of defined objectives:

1. Perform basic research and a scoping and visioning process as it relates to a capital fund drive. This step is already underway and scheduled for completion by June 1, 2015.
2. Conduct a formal feasibility study to assess the likelihood of successfully conducting a campaign within the scope identified in Stage 1 above. Completion of the study and report would be submitted to the Board by September 30, 2015.
3. An amount not to exceed \$1,000 from the Society's treasury would be allocated to fund this effort on a preliminary basis, with the understanding that as the process develops, requests for further funding may be appropriate and may merit Board consideration and/or actions.

Ted moved and Bonnie seconded the motion to approve of Paul's proposal; the motion passed.

STREET SIGN FUNDRAISER

Jeanne presented a draft memo that would be sent to Jeff Stevens, Public Works/Operations Manager for the City, outlining the proposed program (copy attached). Since the City would lose some recycling money, he would need to present it to the City Council. Ted moved and Jeff seconded a motion to allow Jeanne to send the memo; motion passed.

PROGRAMMING UPDATES

Ted gave a PowerPoint presentation at the Rotary Club on March 30 and it was well received.

Mary Wickersham will give a talk on researching family history at our office on April 11 at 2:00pm.

Sue, Jeanne, and Joan Brinkman have been working on Park's Antique Parade. The school district has graciously given us use of the high school cafeteria for free. John McHugh of Community TV will record the event for playback on our local channels. Letters have gone out to potential donors of refreshments. Discover St. Louis Park has agreed to co-sponsor the event and provide monetary assistance. On April 13 fliers will start to be posted and a press release will go out. Lucille has offered to keep track of registrations.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The Parktacular Parade will be on June 20. We generally like to get antique cars, but it may be difficult because it is also the weekend of the massive Back to the Fifties car show. Jeff volunteered to try to round up a car or two and his daughter and her friends may be able to march in the parade with us. We will also participate in the Promote Yourself Tradeshaw that afternoon in Wolfe Park, which runs from 2:00 to 6:00 pm.

The organizers of the St. Louis Park Ambassadors program has asked for our help with a treasure hunt for 2015 Ambassador candidates. Ted volunteered to work with them.

Steve Steuck suggested that we participate in a fundraiser by the yogurt shop by the high school, which provides nonprofits with a percentage of their profits for a day. Jeff will look into this.

The Westwood Lutheran Church's Men's Group has requested a talk on St. Louis Park history; Ted will get in touch with them.

COLLECTIONS

Jeanne left her report on the printer at home, but it is attached to these minutes.

LOGO

Ted presented the latest version of the logo that Mark Toretzky has been working on, and will continue to work with Mark to finalize the design.

WEBSITE

Ted has spent many hours transferring pages from our old site to the new one, working with volunteer Tony Notermann. The new site is up and running; there are some bugs but in general it is operational. Ted drew our attention to the Gift Shop, where people could use PayPay to buy notecards and *Something in the Water* books.

Ted also described an Authors and Artists Shop: a page on our website that curates products for sale featuring notable local authors, musicians, and other artist. The intent is to highlight the breadth and depth of talent our city has produced as well as provide some nominal income for the Society based on Amazon.com affiliate sales. This would be set up with the following guidelines:

- We will be very clear on this page that this is not an endorsement for these products, and that we receive a commission from any sales made through our website.
- This page will be kept separate from other merchandise that we sell that is solely for the Society.
- We will not make reference or link to products within the rest of the website to ensure we are not overtly endorsing the work or soliciting sales.
- We will not include any products that could be construed as offensive to our members.
- We should always include a brief biography of the author/artist to explain the reason for including the products.

Paul moved and Jeanne seconded the motion to approve this proposal; motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm. The next regular Board meeting will be on May 5, 2015, at 7:00 pm at the Society's office.

BOARD REPORT

Jeanne Andersen

April 7, 2015

RESEARCH:

- T.B. WALKER: Have continued to read accounts of the life of T.B. Walker, who was so influential in the development of the Park in the 1890s. Have written a 36 page (and counting) review of his activities to be posted to the Internet, in part because our website is now being used as a source of information, and I want to make sure that sources are documented and information, if not necessarily correct, is at least attributed. Am also corresponding with a writer who has concentrated on Walker's life in California.

DONATIONS:

- Water bottle from Bennett's Bike Shop from Dick Sigurdson. This prompted Emory Anderson to find a newsletter from 1987 published by Bennett, and I have found Bennett on Facebook! Tracked him down and conducted a phone interview.
- Three cookbooks, published by Citizens' Bank, Union Congregational Church, and the American Legion Post 282. The latter is from the 1960s and has wonderful ads that I will scan and post to the website. The books were found in the office and we don't know who the donor is.
- Kathy and Doug Johnson donated funds to fix a clock that had been donated by the Jorvig family and is displayed in the Depot.
- Dave Wiest donated a white and red tile from the original McDonald's on Lake Street that he received from Ken Darula, an owner of the business. Dave also donated a brick from Park Knoll School, which was demolished in 1978.
- Margaret Fornell Maunder is a 1937 graduate of Park High! She is 97 years old and a cousin to our Trustees Bob Jorvig and Paul Linnee. She had an exciting career as a journalist, interviewing Franklin Delano Roosevelt, working as a foreign correspondent, and winning a Peabody Award. She has also been a loyal member of the St. Louis Park Historical Society. Out of the blue she sent us seven 8x10 photographs and seven negatives of places in the Park taken from the 1930s to the 1950s. The photos show just how undeveloped the Village was before World War II. I will be putting up a page on Ms. Maunder on our website once it is up and running. I put up one of her photos on Flashbacks and the crowd went wild!
- Judy Bloom came in with a bunch of old class photos that were in her father's belongings, but she didn't know what year they were from. Rick Sewall looked through our yearbooks, but couldn't find them (their last names were on the back of the photos). Finally he found them as juniors in the 1932 yearbook – *And There Wasn't a 1933 Echowan!* So now we have the missing photos of the Class of 1933!! They are from many well-known families from pre-war St. Louis Park, too!

PLAT MAPS, AERIALS, ETC:

- The plat maps and aerials donated by the City have been inventoried and placed in drawers in the flat files, also donated by the City.
- Have inventoried similar documents in the possession of the Historical Society and placed them in the appropriate drawers also.
- Documents found in our collection that do not pertain to SLP have been given to Golden Valley, Minnetonka, and the Borchart Map Library at the U of M.
- Sent an inquiry to the Hennepin County Surveyor's office as to the names and tenures of the surveyors through the years in order to help date some plat maps. Received a list with short bios and pictures! Will talk to the current surveyor soon to get permission to post to our website.
- Sorting through oversized documents and photos to be placed in the flat files that are at the Depot. Will place glassine between documents to protect them from each other, as advised by the Minnesota Art Conservation experts.

OFFICE HOURS:

Traffic is up on Saturday afternoons, with people saying they read about us in the *StarTribune* article. Two visitors wanted to learn about their neighborhoods and were delighted to see the aerials we have just acquired from the City!

MICROFILM SCANNER AND REELS:

The grant application for the microfilm reels was submitted on March 6. The application for the scanner and computer was submitted on March 28. The deadline is April 10. We will need to come up with \$255 to cover the remaining cost of the computer; sponsorship funds were requested in the *Re-Echo*.

SUN-SAILOR:

I wrote a letter to the Editor asking people to stop taking pieces of Treasure/Monkey Island, a stone structure at the former Minnetonka Blvd. roadside park, as it was going to be preserved by Mn/DOT. We had received many calls and emails about people taking souvenirs, not knowing that it would not be destroyed by the construction. Mn/DOT was apprised of the situation but took a long time to secure the area. There is a fence around it now.

STRIB ARTICLE:

StarTribune reporter Tim Harlow contacted the Society to find out about the history of the bridges that are about to be replaced over Highway 100. I shared information received from Mn/DOT about how the plaques on the Minnetonka bridge would be saved and incorporated into the new waysides that would be created. I also told him about Treasure/Monkey Island and how that was to be preserved. The article had a couple of facts wrong (I did not watch the bridges being built in the 1930s), which resulted in hilarious comments on Facebook.

MISS ST. LOUIS PARK:

- Assisting Marla Destache-Macdonald in locating all former SLP Royalty for the 75th Anniversary of the Miss St. Louis Park/Ambassadors Program. There will be a special program at the coronation on June 20 at the High School.
- Mark Toretsky has also provided photos he took of previous related events.
- Got permission from the *SLP Magazine* to change the schedule so the June issue could have a Miss SLP-related photo and story.

SCHOOL PHOTO SCANNING PROJECT

David Kopperl has finished scanning all of the school photos in our collection! We contacted Susan Lindgren School, and they are allowing us to borrow their photos for scanning. David is now working on five of those books. This is a tremendous volunteer effort! There was a request for a photo of a teacher on Facebook and I was able to immediately post one of the photos that David had scanned.

PHOTO SALES

We sold one photo of the Ambassador Hotel pool for inclusion in a book, and five photos pertaining to Highway 100 for inclusion in the AAA *Far and Away* magazine. At \$30 each for commercial use (MHS's rate), this is an excellent source of income!



3700 Monterey Drive, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

DATE: April 8, 2015

TO: Jeff Stevens, Public Works/Operations Manager, City of St. Louis Park

FROM: Jeanne Andersen, St. Louis Park Historical Society

RE: Proposed Street Signs Fundraiser

SUMMARY: The St. Louis Park Historical Society (SLPHS) would like to initiate a fundraiser whereby we would sell used and replaced street signs as provided by the City.

CONCEPT: The Golden Valley Historical Society (GVHS) has had great success selling their City's old street signs, which they are getting because of the state law that all street signs will have to be reflectorized within the next 10 years. In Golden Valley, instead of sending the replaced signs for recycling, the City brings them to the Historical Society's building, where they store, sort, and inventory them. We understand that St. Louis Park is replacing 800 to 1,000 per year depending on time available by the city crews. They are stacked on a pallet at the Municipal Service Center, and when it is full it is sent for recycling. We are interested in residential street signs only; no STOP signs or other directional signs would be sold.

PUBLICITY: GVHS advertises the availability of their signs in their newsletter and on the GV High School Alumni website. Often signs are bought for siblings as presents. The SLPHS would advertise in its newsletter, on its website, on its Facebook page, and on the "Flashbacks of St. Louis Park" Facebook page, which has almost 7,000 members.

COST AND DISTRIBUTION: GVHS sells their signs for a tax-deductible donation of \$25, postage included. Orders within GV are hand delivered. Otherwise they are wrapped in heavy brown paper and mailed parcel post for about \$3. SLPHS contemplates following the same procedures.

MARKET: A two-day poll was conducted on the "Flashbacks of St. Louis Park" Facebook page, where respondents were asked to indicate whether they would be willing to pay \$25 for a sign by hitting "like." It was made clear and reiterated that this was an exploratory question only, and the SLPHS was not committed to the project, nor did we know what was currently available. Nonetheless, in addition to the 217 "likes," there were 101 specific requests for 65 specific streets (out of a total of the 215 streets in the Park). This would indicate a definite market for these signs. The GVHS has sold about 300 signs, making close to \$8,000 in three years.

LOGISTICS: Since the SLPHS has no appropriate space where the signs could be stored, sorted, etc., we contacted John and Charlie McCain, owners of the Beltline Industrial Park, asking whether they had any appropriate space that they could donate for our use. They responded positively, saying that they may have a spot for us, pending more details on how often pallets would be delivered, how much space we would need, etc. We understand that you have one pallet now at the MSC, and are done replacing signs for the season.

NEED: For 13 years, the SLPHS received free office space at the Lenox Community Center. With recent reconstruction, we had to find alternate space and pay rent for the first time. We were fortunate to find very reasonably priced space as provided by one of our members, but since our only income has been from memberships, it is crucial that we raise additional funds. Our rent will double next year and triple the year after that, so we must explore all alternatives in raising funds.

BENEFITS: In addition to the obvious benefits of raising revenue, we feel that this project will generate a great deal of goodwill between the City, the SLPHS, and the thousands of people who fondly remember St. Louis Park as their home town. Providing this kind of service is part of our mission, and fits in well with our goal of bringing a sense of history and community to the people who live in the Park and to those who grew up here but have moved away. The successes we have seen in communicating with present and past Parkites shows that this is a program that can succeed.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at jeanneandersen@comcast.net or 612-396-6292.