

**Approved - 350th Anniversary Steering Committee Meeting**  
**On May 9, 2023 approved May 23**

Remote Meeting Connection:

Meetings normally held at the Municipal Offices are being held remotely, with adequate, alternative means of public access and, where required, public participation provided, in accordance with Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022 which extended the Governor's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c.30A § 20, until March 31, 2023. Meetings are typically broadcast on Frontier Community Access Television (FCAT).

**Roll Call: Quorum present**

Peter Thomas, chair, present  
Carolyn Ness, voting member, present  
Jay Stryker, voting member, present  
Holly Lankowski, voting member, absent  
Kelly Charest, voting member, absent  
Diane Martin, voting member, present

Telecommunications coordinator: Chris Nolan

Friends of Deerfield: Chris Harris, Stan Adams

Others: Tim Whittaker, Jim Perot (residents)

**Meeting called to order: 6:40 pm**

**Minutes for this meeting:** The Steering Committee is currently without a recording secretary. Peter T. will create draft minutes and submit for posting.

**Call for motion to adopt/modify agenda:** none requested

**AGENDA**

***Old Business***

❖ **Approval of minutes from April 26 meeting.** It was voted unanimously to approve the minutes from April 26.

❖ **Mural Update**

At our last meeting, Judith Inglese, artist from Leverett, asked if Deerfield would like her to create a ceramic mural to be placed on the brick wall of the town hall as part of the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It would likely be 3 x 4 feet in size. Judith is willing to seek grant funding to make the mural. Carolyn N. did not have time to contact Judith, but she did solicit a positive response from the

selectboard as to the proposal of a mural. Further details are needed, particularly the weight of the ceramic mural, whether alternative venues might be considered, whatever additional information can be provided. *Carolyn N. will report back at our next meeting.*

#### ❖ **Post Parade Event Update**

- The town was informed by its insurance agent that the “bouncy houses” planned for the post-parade gathering could not be insured under the blanket town policy. FoD will secure the insurance.
- FoD will also cover the costs of the DJ, hot dogs, hamburgers, and soft drinks.
- Trash collection and disposal still remain to be worked out. FoD is working with Chris Miller of the Highway Department.
- Evening lighting at the Grammar School has yet to be worked out. There may be portable lighting available from FEMA emergency supplies. Finding a solution is currently underway.

#### ❖ **Parade Work Group Update**

- No formal report from the working group is available for discussion.
- Carolyn N. reported that the selectboard has waived the insurance for several entrants to the parade. Also, several state representatives and the Commissioner of Agriculture will be marching in the parade.
- FoD is currently proceeding with the development of a float, particularly as some people may not be able to walk the route.
- FoD has proposed bringing the “Mummers’ String Band” from Philadelphia. This band has won numerous awards. FoD proposes to cover the cost of the band through pooling contributions from multiple sources. **FoD requested that the Steering Committee authorize an additional \$2,500 to the parade appropriation as an incentive for other donors to provide the remaining funds needed to bring the Mummers String Band here. A motion to approve the \$2,500 funding request was made and unanimously approval by the Steering Committee.**

#### ❖ **Working History Group Update**

- **Founders’ Day Weekend – a three-day celebration, May 5-7**

##### Friday

Students at Deerfield Elementary School crafted commemorative bells which were strung adjacent to the library and meeting house on Thursday afternoon by

their teachers. On Friday morning May 5 at 8:45, all grammar school students marched up Pleasant Street and down North Main Street to the library, led by members of the Frontier Marching Band. A brief ceremony was held at the library with a welcome and congratulations by *Diane Martin*, project coordinator and member of the Steering Committee. Students then returned to their school the back way over the bridge across Bloody Brook.

The primary planners in the Deerfield Elementary School bell project are *Catherine Richotte* (art teacher), *Tina Gemme* (DES principal), teachers *Jennifer Smith & Carla Chilton* plus all the other classroom teachers at DES. *Max Sherill*, Frontier High School band director, and his group of musicians led the march to the library.

### Saturday

A COMMUNITY GATHERING was held on the lawn between the old meeting house and Tilton Library on Saturday, May 6, from 1-4 pm. Everyone was invited to come and bring a chair or picnic lunch and enjoy the festivities. Townsfolk came and went throughout the afternoon, while some stayed for the entire event.

- The commemorative garlands of bells made by the grammar school students were on display in front of the library, managing to survive the preceding windy night and light shower.
- The FARLEY STRING BAND provided lively musical entertainment of toe tapping jigs and reels.
- Both young and old were invited to TOLL THE MEETINGHOUSE BELL, with a goal of ringing it 350 times. This goal was far exceeded and the experience of managing the bell rope will be remembered by young and old for many years to come. *Peter Thomas* and *Fred Beckta* acted as assistant bell ringers to help the younger participants.
- Commemorative buttons, made by *Marie Thomas* and sponsored by *Friends of Deerfield* were given to all young bell ringers, who also signed a memory book that will be included in the time capsule for the 350<sup>th</sup>. Ice cream and snacks were given to all bell ringers by *Thomas's Catering*, sponsored by *Friends of Deerfield*.
- FCAT was on site to film the event and *Kevin Murphy* produced a special commemorative segment using a drone and its views of the meetinghouse from the air.
- *Marie Thomas* created a video of the graffiti on the bell tower walls that was then played on a video screen for people to see.
- Several young artists used chalk art to decorate the sidewalk in front of the meetinghouse.

- Many, many smiling faces, and expressions of thanks pronounced this a GREAT EVENT. Numerous photographs and comments can be found on Deerfield Now, facebook.
- A number of individuals deserve recognition for their contributions in preparing the meeting house site for the occasion. *Melissa* and *Jim Perot*, neighbors, installed beautiful plantings of azaleas and other flowering plants in the front yard of the meeting house, *Jason* and *Aaron Clark* cleaned the sign board, installed the lettering, and activated the spotlights to illuminate the meeting house for two hours each night. Safety concerns with people going into the second story of the meeting house were addressed by dropping the pull rope for the bell to the first floor of the meeting house, immediately adjacent to the entrance. Thanks to the *Selectboard*, *Kevin Scarborough*, and two expert carpenters for making this happen.

### Sunday

Two events were held on Sunday afternoon at Frontier Regional auditorium, from 1-4 pm, on May 7.

- A recognition ceremony for students who designed a Pictorial Postmark for the US Post Office was held from 1-2 pm. *Brooke Charest* (Deerfield Station) and *Ainsley Southergill* (South Deerfield Station) were the two winning design artists. *Ayden Novak* and *Charlie Payne* were the runners up in the school-wide contest. All were given certificates and several gifts. *Kelly Charest* and *Marie Thomas* were coordinators for this event.  
Hand cancelled stamped envelopes were given to people attending the event. If residents wish to have other envelopes hand cancelled, they can do so for the next month at both the South Deerfield and Old Deerfield post offices.
- *Gary Sanderson*, son of Deerfield and local historian, shared his extensive research on the life and times of the early South Deerfield neighborhood from 2-3:30 pm. His talk was titled, “Bloody Brook: A New Interpretation”. A large audience kept the questions flowing after the formal talk was over.  
Excellent refreshments, provided by *Thomas’s Catering* and sponsored by *Friends of Deerfield*, were enjoyed by a buzzing crowd seated in the foyer outside the auditorium. Thank you to the custodial staff for their help setting up and taking down. *David Allen* provided a wonderful commemorative poster for the 350<sup>th</sup>, as well as numerous maps of South Deerfield and Mill

River for display after Gary's presentation. *Peter and Marie Thomas* coordinated this event.

❖ **New Business Not Anticipated**

- Diane Martin suggested a future event which would involve a bicycle ride of several miles and a bike safety program from the police department for school-aged kids. The response was positive from the committee. *Diane will pursue discussions with various parties and report out at our next meeting on Tuesday, May 23.*
- The time capsule from 1973 has still not been located. Further efforts will be made and can be reported at our next meeting if successful.

❖ **Schedule for the next meetings :** Tuesdays at 6:30, May 23 and June 6.

❖ **Meeting adjournment:** Motion to adjourn, voted in the affirmative. The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm.