

**Approved - 350th Anniversary Steering Committee Meeting
On October 30, 2023 [Approved during meeting of November 27]**

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, absent

Holly Lankowski, voting member, present

Kelly Charest, voting member, absent

Diane Martin, voting member, present

Telecommunications coordinator: Pat Kroll

Friends of Deerfield: Chris Harris, Stan Adams, Marie Thomas

Others: Jeanne Sojka (PVMA), Judith Inglese (artist)

Meeting called to order: 6:33 pm

Note: This meeting was held jointly with officers of the Friends of Deerfield who convened concurrently with the Steering Committee so that any issues involving 350th program funding could be addressed and voted without delay.

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: funding request for approved mural

AGENDA

Old Business

- **Approval of minutes from last meeting.** It was voted unanimously to approve the draft minutes of the Steering Committee meeting held on September 25.
- ❖ **Eastern European Heritage Festival on October 14 & 15 - Debrief**
 - Jeanne Sojka provided a summary of the events on both days. Roughly 600 people attended the Saturday and Sunday festivities. A more detailed description is provided below.

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Saturday, October 14 events were held at the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association in Deerfield

The rain held off and the afternoon began with lively polka music by the Eddie Forman Orchestra for visitors' dancing and listening pleasure under the red and white striped tent. A special catered Polish plate lunch was provided by Bernat's Polish Deli. Other refreshments included Polish and Jewish cookies. The Friends of Deerfield, Inc. sold Deerfield 350th celebration hats and mugs, and had a raffle to raise funds for the festival.

Father Charles Jan Dimascola, retired parish priest from Our Lady of Czestochowa Church in Turners Falls, gave a talk about the history of the Polish people in the valley and highlighted their contributions to our shared heritage.

Nearly thirty people learned how to make Kurpie Kwiaty, Polish crepe paper flowers, with Wieslawa Bogdańska. Susan Urban, Polish Craft and Culture specialist, taught visitors the art of Wycinanki, Polish paper cutting.

Indoors, the festively decorated Blue & White Hall was the location of three heritage groups. The *Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts*' board members assisted visitors with research efforts and shared knowledge about family history with their display of maps, reference books, and other genealogical materials. The *Polish Center of Discovery and Learning* in Chicopee displayed cultural items that celebrate the many contributions, both past and present. The *Polish American Foundation of Connecticut* exhibited materials to cultivate and promote Polish culture and our immigrant heritage.

PVMA museum educators hosted children's activities including designing Pysanki eggs, creating Eastern European paper dolls in traditional costumes, and a photo booth option to dress up in period immigrant clothing with a backdrop of Eastern European artifacts.

Displays of Eastern European immigrant photos and artifacts, dolls, pysanki eggs, and a miniature display of a typical Polish-American family celebrating Wigilia, Christmas Eve, were scattered throughout the hall. Memorial Hall Museum was open during the festival and offered a self-guided tour of immigrant items in the museum collection.

Sunday, October 15th Events held at Frontier Regional School in South Deerfield

The afternoon began on Zoom with Dr. James Pula presenting about the Kosciuszko Squadron, its creation after World War I and its role in helping to win the Battle of Britain. Dr. Pula is Professor of History *Emeritus* at Purdue University and the author and editor of more than twenty books on the Polish diaspora and the American Civil War.

Next, the Polish traditional folk-dance group called *Piast* charmed audiences with their energetic numbers. Based out of St. Joseph's Basilica in Webster MA, these dancers, ranging in age from 3 to 18, are proud of their Polish heritage and aspire to keep ongoing Polish traditions alive in our community.

Then the *Zolotyj Promin Ukrainian Dance Ensemble* of Hartford, Connecticut, took the stage and was delighted to perform at Deerfield's 350th Birthday Celebration. The 70 dancers, ranging in age from 9 to 19, dedicated their performance to the memory and sacrifices of the Ukrainian people currently fighting for freedom and democracy. Their uplifting and high energy acrobatic dances amazed the audience and they received a standing ovation at their grand finale of "Hopak."

The weekend concluded with delicious Polish food prepared and served by Kathleen Tomaus Catering.

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- Due to a number of factors, total expenses for the festival exceeded the original \$7,000 budget estimate approved by the Steering Committee on June 25, 2023. Peter T. indicated that he had reviewed the outstanding costs with Jeanne Sojka, PVMA financial manager, and was prepared to approve all associated costs.
The shortfall was \$2,600, after all cash, donations, and in-kind services had been factored in. The Steering Committee (with one abstention) voted to increase the Steering Committee's previous budget limit by \$2,100, i.e., to \$9,100. Friends of Deerfield voted to provide the additional \$500 to cover expenditures. Requests for payment for these unanticipated costs will be submitted to the Chair of the Steering Committee for approval and payment.
- **Time Capsule:** Friends of Deerfield provided the Steering Committee with detailed cost estimates for and descriptions of two styles of inscribed stone markers to identify the location of the time capsule to be buried in the spring

of 2024. Projected costs are in the \$3,000-4,000 range. Alternative solutions for marking the location of the time capsule were suggested, but no immediate consensus was evident. It was decided to table further discussion until the next Steering Committee meeting.

❖ Working History Group Update

- Recent talk:
 - **Kevin Sweeney: "*French and Indian Wars: Writ Large and Small, 1688-1763*" was present on** Sunday, October 22nd, at Frontier Regional High School. It was well received, with approximately 80 people in attendance. A wonderful buffet, sponsored by Friends of Deerfield and provided by Kathleen Tomaus Catering, was much appreciated by the audience afterwards.
- Upcoming talks scheduled
 - **Thomas, Sanderson, and Mathews: "*And That's the Way It Was*" – *A Photo Essay and Reflections about Deerfield's Peoples, Places and Ways of Life*"** This presentation will begin with a Power-point presentation of illustrations and photographs that are designed to provide the audience with a Sense of Place and a Sense of Transformation in years gone by in Deerfield. An open panel and audience discussion will follow to explore topics of audience interest.
 - **Kevin McBride, "*King Philip's War, the Battle of Great Falls/Peskeompskut (May 19, 1676): A Review. Sunday, December 3rd, Frontier Regional High School.*** McBride, Principal Investigator of a ten-year project funded by the National Park Service, will present a fascinating historical and archaeological study of a battlefield that extended over an eight-mile corridor between the Riverside district of Gill and a ford across the Deerfield River north of Pine Hill.
- **350th Anniversary Cake dismantling:**
 - On Saturday morning, October 28, the anniversary cake, located in front of the South Deerfield fire station, was disassembled by a work crew from Deerfield and Leverett. Deerfield members included Fred Beckta, Mike Phillips, Jason and Aaron Clarke, Tim Hilchey, and Peter Thomas. The Leverett team was headed by Silas Ball. Both Silas and Maureen Ippolito of the Leverett Anniversary Committee extended their thanks to the Steering Committee and Town. An e-mail on Sunday indicated that the cake had already been installed in Leverett.

New Business

❖ Update from Friends of Deerfield (FoD) Representative

- Chris H., Stan A., and Marie T. were in attendance on the ZOOM meeting call. Friends of Deerfield indicated their continued support for the upcoming Speaker Series events on November 12 and December 3.
- FoD is working closely with four of the active churches in Deerfield who will hold open house events on December 10 for the entire community to see their interiors and to view or hear presentations about their histories. Peter T. offered to provide supplementary graphic materials about other Deerfield churches that were historically important but are no longer active.
- A more detailed program may be available for the next Steering Committee meeting. All committee members expressed their support for these events.

❖ Website & Social Media Accounts

Kelly Charest indicated to the Committee that she can no longer manage the 350th web and Facebook accounts. Members of the Steering Committee were asked if anyone wished to take on these responsibilities, but none expressed an interest due to lack of skills or other commitments.

Marie T., a member of Friends of Deerfield, volunteered, as she has the requisite skills and is also employed as a videographer by FCAT, the local public access TV station. The Steering Committee was unanimous in their approval of Marie T. assuming this role.

❖ Mural

In July of 2023, Judith Inglese submitted a graphic design for a ceramic mural she was developing in commemoration of Deerfield's 350th. The design was reviewed and roundly approved by both the Steering Committee and the Deerfield Selectboard. At that time, Judith indicated that she intended to solicit funds from various organizations to finance the costs for the creation and installation of the mural.

At today's meeting, she indicated that creation of the mural had begun. However, although she has been promised or has received several donations towards the estimated \$4,000 needed for the project, she has not been successful in securing the full amount. The Steering Committee voted to contribute \$1,000 towards project costs. [Friends of Deerfield, during their concurrent meeting, voted to contribute \$500 for the mural project.]

❖ **Schedule for the next meeting :** *Monday, November 27 at 6:30 pm*, to be held remotely.

❖ **Meeting adjournment:** Motion to adjourn approved at 8:15 pm.