



Cass County Historical Commission

Officers: Chair – Bernie Williamson, Vice Chair – Darren Bettinger, Secretary/Treasurer – Jane Bergman, Members-at-Large: Amy Davidhizer, Dianna McGrew, Ann File, Jean Schultz, Nate Robinson, Allen Butchbaker

MEETING AGENDA

CASS COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING
60525 Decatur Road
Cassopolis, Michigan 49031

Thursday, May 11, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.

- A. Call to Order – Chair, Bernie Williamson
- B. Roll Call
- C. Approval of the Agenda
- D. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
- E. April 13, 2023 - Regular Meeting
- F. Financial Report
- G. Bills
 - a. Update: Wright Way
- H. Report from the Chair
- I. Old Business
 - a. Continued Discussion – Collaborative Meeting
 - i. Letter To Historic Groups
 - ii. Venue and Details
 - b. Red Brick School
- J. Update: By-Laws
- K. New Business

- L. Committee Reports
- M. Current/New Committees
- N. Outreach
- O. Newton House
 - a. Lawn Care Options (ACTION ITEM)
 - b. Report on Clean-up
 - c. Fence Repair Discussion
 - d. Upcoming Open House
- P. Privileges of the Floor
- Q. Public Comment
- R. Adjournment

***ZOOM invitation will be e-mailed to Commission Members and supporters currently on the e-mail list. Anyone not on the e-mail list can request the link by contacting Bernie Williamson at 269-445-9100, or by e-mailing CCHistoricalCommission@gmail.com.*

CASS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

Date: April 13, 2023

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Board Members present: Bernie Williamson X, Jane Bergman X, Darren Bettinger X, Allen Butchbaker X, Amy Davidhizar ___, Annie File ___, Dianna McGrew X, Nate Robinson X, Jean Schultz X

Also present: Pat Butchbaker, Zane Lankford.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bernie Williamson at 5:32 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda: A motion was made by Allen Butchbaker to approve the agenda for the April 13, 2023 meeting of the Cass County Historical Commission. Seconded by Nate Robinson and the motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Jane Bergman to approve the minutes of March 9, 2023. Seconded by Jean Schultz and the motion carried.

Financial Report: Chair Williamson noted that the financial report had not been made available until 3:00 p.m. on April 13. In light of this, she made copies available to board members who had not had an opportunity to review the documents. Chair Williamson reiterated that the account balance is diminished in large part because of the ongoing expenses for utilities.

Board members discussed ways to possibly reduce the cost of lawn services, the need for a written contract and for competitive bids. Nate Robinson agreed to contact his son-in-law and Darren Bettinger will try to obtain another bid as well.

Dianna McGrew made a motion to suspend the current arrangement the Historical Commission has with Wrightway Lawn Services while other options are being explored. Darren Bettinger seconded and the motion carried.

A motion was made by Nate Robinson to approve the financial report. Seconded by Dianna McGrew and the motion carried.

Bills: A motion was made by Allen Butchbaker to approve payment of the March bills. Seconded by Jean Schultz and the motion carried.

Report from the Chair:

Chair Williamson announced the Dowagiac Tour of Historic Homes and Gardens to be held June 24, 2023. The organizers are seeking volunteers to serve as docents. She urged anyone interested in volunteering to contact Jessica Shank.

Old Business:

Continued Discussion: Collaborative Meeting.

Board members agreed to pursue Tuesday, June 6th at 5:30 p.m. as the date for the proposed collaborative meeting. Darren Bettinger will contact Holden Green Tavern to reserve the date and get an estimate on the cost of light refreshments. Board members agreed that \$150 would be a reasonable amount to allocate for the event.

Chair Williamson and Darren Bettinger had prepared drafts of an invitation. Darren Bettinger will combine the texts and include a request to RSVP by May 30th.

Bettinger suggested that the focus of this initial meeting be to gather information about what each institution is doing now and what they envision for the future. A brief questionnaire could be useful for this effort.

Committee Reports:

Newton House Update: Nate Robinson reported that a few sections of the fence had been damaged. Jean Schultz will contact Doug Martin about potential repairs.

Robinson mentioned the need for signage directing people who visit the park to the Newton House as well as signage explaining the history of the structure. He also mentioned the need for a workday to attend to the yard. Board members agreed that Saturday, May 6th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. would be a good time.

Chair Williamson reported that she had received assurance that the company that placed the orange pillar in the yard would relocate it at no cost.

Privileges of the Floor:

Jane Bergman requested permission to schedule the opening reception for Blue Dart Art's collection of paintings of the Newton House to coincide with the June 4th open house. The paintings will be on display throughout the summer.

Bergman announced that Blue Dart Art had received a grant to support an event to be held on Sunday August 13th to celebrate Russ Forest. The group is partnering with Cass County Parks and Recreation and the Historical Society for the event which will feature live

painting, music, food, and speakers. Bergman asked for permission to display the paintings produced at the event at the Newton House in September and at the Fall Festival.

Bergman notified board members that she had copies of the films taken in 1931 and 1937 of the Village of Cassopolis. The films will need to be transcribed and edited to include new narration. Bergman will contact Karen Woods to see if she has copies that are in better condition.

Allen Butchbaker inquired about the status of the Red Brick School. Chair Williamson will contact the county commissioners to see what the current status is and Darren Bettinger will determine what the Historical Society's interest in the building might be.

Public Comment:

Zane Lankford reported that she will begin working in the gardens at the Newton House.

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Secretary,

Jane L. Bergman