

Ardsley Historical Society Meeting  
via Zoom  
February 22, 2022  
Minutes

**Attendees:** G. Calvi, J. Damascus, B. DeAngelo, P. Fontaine, P. Marcus, R. Pellegrino, B. Preisser, Gary Rappaport, Webmaster Blake Rappaport

The meeting convened at 7:30 pm.

A. Old Business

President Peter Marcus asks for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 18<sup>th</sup> board meeting. Rob makes a motion, seconded by George. All in favor.

Review Action Items- #90 (Peter): Minor changes have been made to the Radomski leather works and it is now located in the Ardsley Middle School

#91 (Peter for Matt): Matt talked with Andy Hambelton: \$850 will get us a team sponsorship (including our name on the players T-shirts), a banner on the McDowell Park fence (their banner not ours), a team picture and a plaque, plus we can participate in the parade. Plus they are happy to start a relationship with us to do joint ventures. Next year if we want to continue to sponsor a team, the cost would be \$700 since they would already have the banner made. A discussion ensued with most board members feeling that this could be a good opportunity for our organization to be exposed to younger families. At the end of the year we can evaluate our impact and determine if it would be worth continuing a sponsorship for next season. People asked some questions (what age group will we be sponsoring, how many letters can fit on the backs of the players T-shirts (we would be willing to use "Ardsley Historical") and what is the size of the outfield banner). In Matt's absence Pete to contact Andy to get answers to these outstanding questions. Board members agreed to pay the \$850 to sponsor a team.

Review Navy Program (January 30): People thought the speakers did an excellent job with their presentations and answering questions from the audience. Peter has received emails from several people who attended and their feedback was very positive. There were 26 people who attended despite a total of 50 people who had registered to attend.

Review Annual Report (February 7): Board members thought the presentation and the report itself were very well done. Peter thanked Barbara, George and Gary for their feedback on the draft report. Their input greatly improved the final report. The mayor was impressed with how many accomplishments we had made during the time of Covid restrictions. She thoroughly enjoyed our walking tours, our banners and our new website.

**B. New Business  
Announcements (Peter)**

The AHS Banner remains on the Village bulletin board since we have not been asked to remove it.

AHS Connect has contained the same entry for the past few weeks. If anyone has some alternate content please let me know before noon on Thursday (when submissions are due each week).

As president of our organization Peter has been interviewed by the local press in recent months. In November Westchester Magazine ran an article (Are Historical Societies History in Westchester County ?) that included quotes from Peter. The Winter, 2022 issue of Bee Local Buzz included an article (Rivertowns Historical Societies) that included a section on the Ardsley Historical Society.

In preparation for the new DPW garage the house across the street from McDowell Park has been torn down. Work will be starting shortly on widening that street (Wildflowers Lane).

On February 24 there will be a Zoom presentation sponsored by America 250 about Jimmy Carter's novel (The Hornet's Nest) about the American Revolution. Peter will email the registration information.

On Monday (February 21) Gary released his latest Timepiece article (Does History take Sides ?).

Steve Wittenburgh reported that one of Ardsley's veterans (Arthur Beckett) passed away recently. His "claim to fame" is that he went through basic training with and was friends with Ted Williams.

**Membership (Peter)**

We currently have received dues from 102 members (9 of whom are new). (5 were new). Total \$3,260 in dues plus another \$498 in donations. Peter has sent emails to all of last year's sponsors encouraging them to renew. Thus far we have received renewals from only 4 businesses: Ardsley Eye care, Ardsley Tire & Auto, Bee Local Buzz, and Savino Brothers. Mima's is a new sponsor this year. Rob volunteered to contact Houlihan Lawrence (Jim Mulvey) and HMH (Maurice Hyacinthe) and Gary volunteered to contact Ardsley Diner (Spiros Asgyros). Peter will send out the complete list of 2021 sponsors to all board members. If any board member patronizes one of these businesses and is willing to personally contact them, please let Peter know.

**Odell House (Peter)**

On February 5 the OHRH issued their latest status report (News for the New Year):

1. Consultant chosen for first phase of landscape planning: the decision was made to start with an archeological study of the grounds around the buildings. The contract for this study is now being prepared by the town and the Friends will provide the funding (via donations they have received).
2. Vision for a 21<sup>st</sup> century museum: Steve Tilly & Associates is working on the final plan for the physical restoration of the building. The first step is a new roof and then the restoration/replacement of the windows and doors. The Friends are reaching out to museum planning firms to discuss a master plan for the OHRH site.
3. OnGoing Projects:

- a. 1781 Exhibit: a committee continues to work on a audio-visual exhibit about the French encampment and life in Westchester during the Revolutionary War. In the meantime the “pop-up museum” of posters and artifacts has been moved from the Greenburgh Public Library to the Greenville Elementary School. The teachers and librarians will incorporate it into their curriculum over the next 6 weeks. They are currently looking for the travelling museum’s next location.
- b. Study of slavery and the Odell Farm: The Westchester County Legislature (courtesy Mary Jane Shimsky) has awarded funding to hire a professional researcher (Emily Yankowitz, PhD candidate from Yale). Other volunteers are studying census data (1790-1850) as well as the effect of the Manumission Laws on the enslaved people and their descendants. It is hoped that this report will be completed by year end.
- c. Native Americans near OHRH: They are beginning to research the native American presence in Greenburgh, especially in the area around OHRH. It appears that the Lenape tribe had members that lived near here.

### **RW250 (Peter)**

Dr Iris de Rode, author and lecturer, earned her doctoral degree in France in 2019 and has done extensive research on the French participation in the American Revolution, based on unpublished French sources. She will be visiting Westchester on March 14-18. The primary event will be a forum that will be held at St. Joseph’s Seminary in Yonkers on March 16 from 4-6 pm. It will be open to the public with limited seating but also via Zoom (pre-registration is required for both venues). During her lecture she will share findings on the Grand Reconnaissance, based on a report of one of its participants (Major General Chastellux). The objective of the reconnaissance was to determine if a successful attack on the British in upper Manhattan was possible. It soon became clear that it was not possible which led to the decision to march together to Yorktown, VA where the combined forces defeated the British under General Lord Cornwallis.

Dr. de Rode was also be making visits to various locations in Westchester, including Ardsley (on March 15 at 9:30 am), Dobbs Ferry and the Odell House. These itineraries will be released in the coming weeks.

### **Walking Tour Video (Pierre)**

Recently Pierre completed some editing of his original video. Both presenters (Rob and Peter) have approved the changes and feel that the revised video is significantly improved. The video is currently residing on YouTube and Blake just needs to activate it on our website (in the “members only” section). Once he activates the video he will send out an email blast to our membership. Regarding some members concerns about people downloading the video, Blake will be monitoring the traffic and he has the ability to prevent access if there appears to be any problems.

### **Old Newsletters (Peter)**

On the afternoons of February 9 and 10 Peter scanned 49 of the old newsletters (that did not have any PDFs) at Staples. Three of the old newsletters were not scanned at this time since they are larger than 8.5x11. Blake can upload those 49 PDFs to our website once Peter copies them to Drop Box.

### **Newsletter (George)**

The spring newsletter is targeted for completion by April 15. George has received input from former fire chiefs James Macri and Patrick Lindsay for another “Fire Chief stories” article. Andy DiJusto promised to submit a story about ASVAC which is celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. George is looking for ideas that he can use to write an article or two.

### **Historical Markers (Peter)**

The plan is to install both markers in the Spring. The ground needs to warm up so a 3 foot deep hole can be dug for each pole. After the installation is complete we will schedule a dedication ceremony at each location.

### **Programs (Gary)**

We need an idea for the program for our annual meeting in May. Gary mentioned that the owner of Riverrun Books (Thomas Lecky) has expressed interest in the past on doing a presentation about collecting books. Rob noted that Patrick Raftery has done several very interesting programs in the past. Pete will check to see if he has any new programs that we have not seen before.

### **Discussion**

Digitization/searchability of our newsletters—Gary is investigating a new company called Advantage Archives which has better features. They use OCR technology to provide search capability and the cost is 20 cents per page. We can view samples from the Saugerties Library website. No hosting cost has yet been determined.

After the meeting Peter will provide Gary with the newsletter page counts. Before starting this project, it would be worthwhile to try and determine the interest of our members in using this search capability. Blake could send out a survey.

### **Miscellaneous items:**

Rob mentioned that Henrietta Toth has expressed interest in including Ardsley in either the “Images of America” series or the “Then and Now” series of Arcadia Publishing. After the meeting Peter will provide Rob with the number of photos that currently reside on Smug Mug and what their resolution is. Rob will then work with Henrietta to try and determine what the costs of each project would be.

Peter asks for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bernie makes the motion to adjourn, Rob seconds it. Meeting was adjourned at 8:32pm.

Next meeting date: March 15, 2022 at 7:30 pm

Respectfully submitted by Peter Marcus

