

# MINUTES

**SESTERCENTENNIAL COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2022  
WILLIAM L. PULLEN MUNICIPAL BUILDING MEETING ROOM  
ONLINE NON-INTERACTIVE ON TOWN HALL STREAMS  
6:30 p.m.**

**Committee members present:** Tracy Weed, Keith Siegel, Argy Nestor, Matt Blazek, Elmer (“Buddy”) Savage, Martha Johnston-Nash

**Others present:** None.

**1. Call Meeting to Order:** at 6:30 p.m.

Lead Chair Argy invited members to introduce themselves and say why they wanted to serve on the committee.

Martha invited viewers to submit Statements of Interest and join the committee.

Keith said the other term is “Semiquincentennial,” so suddenly “Sester” doesn’t sound so hard.

Argy noted people are welcome to join subcommittees. A commitment now to July 2024 sounds like a long time, but perhaps they just want to work on a component, and their commitment wouldn’t be a monthly meeting.

Motion to approve minutes of September 13, 2022 by: Martha Johnston-Nash  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: Buddy Savage  
4-0-2 (Weed, Siegel)

**2. Fair Association:**

Buddy said we’re in pretty good shape. There won’t be anything totally in stone for a little over a year. They’ve got the dates through next year. They do them in three-year blocks; after next year’s fair, they will assign the dates for the following three. They won’t be the same dates as this year, because there’s a conflict with Pittston Fair, and they get licensed dates based on a number of things. There’s a fluke in the calendar that screws it all up. For two years, 2024 and 2025, they’re going to have to go backwards two weeks he believes. Carnival availability being the other issue, they’re almost certain it will be July 10 - 14. So, we’re good with the weekend of Saturday, July 20 being our preferred time: that is available (or whatever number of days we are planning). Argy said great: we talked about doing that weekend of Saturday, July 20, and there will be no conflict with the fair.

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Argy said we had talked about not just one day but perhaps two or three days, depending on what we come up with, what makes sense for the calendar, and the number of volunteers. She thanked Buddy.

### 3. Timeline Discussions:

Argy said Bob set up kind of a shell in Canva, an online tool, and laid out every month or every three months – in chunks of time – and we could start to work on the big pieces. He'll take the information and fill it into that Canva calendar. He was going to invite all committee members.

She said we could start with the big pieces and try to think about the calendar, or we could start with jotting down ideas then talking about those ideas and how that might look. For example, she thinks it would be great to include some artists in the day or the days, and writing a grant to the Maine Arts Commission, or the Maine Humanities Council, or the Betterment Foundation, or one of those that provides funding for art activities – getting that on a calendar and thinking ok, we want to do this: working backwards from there, when do we apply for a grant for that? That's why the calendar's important, the timeline's important for that reason. She would also imagine for connecting with subcommittees knowing that, for example if we decide to have the raft race as happened 50 years ago, who's going to take the lead on that; what kind of time; what would the marketing be, or the promotional information; and those components. She's not sure which comes first, cart or horse: do we come up with the ideas and then create a timeline? Or do big pieces on the timeline? Board consensus was to begin with ideas.

Argy's idea was everybody write the ideas on a sticky. We share those, put them on big graph paper, and people can put a check if they think it's great and nothing if they don't think it's a good idea to do. We could just talk about it, too but more efficient to go to that next step.

Matt said he thinks we're going to have different categories of ideas: ideas for events, and ideas for ways to mark the passing. They may join together, but they also may be separate. Argy said we talked about categories last time; along with that there may be categories for a certain age group. Both those things – the categories and what's needed for the events and other parts of it.

Tracy asked about a flip chart and open dialogue, collect all the ideas, then categorize and process of elimination. Martha suggested writing down the ideas; if on big paper viewers could see and contribute additional ideas.

Keith liked the idea of the 30,000' view: what is this celebration, what do we want to accomplish? Then kind of bring that airplane down, lower it, so we can start to see more details.

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Buddy said we talked about the theme. He said the time capsule was one of the bigger focuses. Keith said that will coincide with the celebration, the opening of that time capsule. Tracy said plus the other bookend of putting in a new time capsule. Buddy said perhaps opening with digging it up and closing with burying the new one.

Tracy suggested making it more than just a weekend event which would get us away from competing for volunteers, and you could spread the love throughout months. In answer to Keith, Tracy said yes it could be like a yearlong celebration – every month would have something new: ice fishing, etc. Keith concurred and said it's like the state was planning on doing with the bicentennial until covid, with a focused sort of culmination event. Argy and Buddy said they did talk about spreading it out a bit and different locations as well.

Keith suggested Come Spring, Come Summer, Come Fall, Come Winter – sort of focus on we're a year-round community, and the different aspects of our community in the different seasons. He asked if it would be a copyright violation. Argy didn't think so; she thinks it's a great idea – they hesitated about that last time due to the number of people it's going to take to plan each event. Someone last time even mentioned the long-term commitment of the committee.

[Martha set up a large tablet on an easel to write ideas on.]

Matt said the fun thing about spreading it out over the entire year is there are other events that already happen in Union, that we could probably work with those organizers to piggy back off of, like Bill Stinson does the Running of the Blackflies Race – he could make it a special 250<sup>th</sup> Sestercentennial Running of the Blackflies event. There are other events. We could get those people involved. While not being part of this, they're doing their own thing that they were doing anyways, but it's now part of the entire celebration. Argy said it was mentioned we should involve him anyway, because he has so much going on over there. Matt said he's been trying to scale back some things.

Off Keith's comment about Come Spring, Come Summer, etc., Tracy brought up having a quarterly hyped-up event, instead of having to do monthly. Could we start end 2023, maybe start ramping up around the Christmas tree lighting? Start getting the momentum going. Then something in the late winter/early spring then finish in the summer.

Martha said we definitely want to have stuff next year: January to July 2024. Buddy said there was a lot of talk about promoting it, including clips on social media. Keith said we should be thinking about how we can really turn it into the whole town's celebration over the next year and a half, getting the town excited, getting everyone involved even if it's in a small way.

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### 4. Brain dump of ideas:

Martha mentioned at the last meeting they mentioned getting the school kids involved by doing a kids' logo, then getting adults involved with some sort of logo. Argy said one could be on a hat, one on a shirt which could be a fundraiser.

Matt said he did a fundraiser through Custom Ink that works very well, because after you sell a certain amount, you keep all the money. Martha said she sold her equipment but has access.

Argy said she reached out to the school, spoke with Scott White, with hopes they can have a teacher who lives in Union be on the committee or be the liaison for the school. She is waiting to hear, noting it's still early in the school year. She also reached out to the high school with hopes of getting one or two students to be on the committee, sophomores or juniors so they would be juniors or seniors at that point; they could also be the liaison for the Union high school students, thinking about that K-12.

Martha brought up reaching out to the schools as well to do interviews. Argy followed up with another email to Scott, saying she'd be glad to have that conversation with the staff. Donovan Roe teaches fourth grade, and she is all about history. Argy is certain the school will participate in some way, and hopefully the interviews as discussed hopefully connecting the older people with younger people. She reached out to Anita Brown and asked if she had a list of people associated with the Aging in Place Committee. She said they could not get a list, but the town office could contact the state so there is a list if we wanted to identify all the people over 90 for example, then we mentioned connecting them with all the youngest people in the community and doing some type of activity that might help them see each other's perspective or conversation or whatever. Anita said she's not head of that aging group.

Martha said they didn't meet for a while, but they did meet a couple weeks ago. Jay is probably the best contact now. She said there are a lot of people who've been around for a long time; maybe we could just come up with a list – if they would do interviews. Matt bet Lanny would do it; he'll talk to anybody. Tracey mentioned Esther Farmer and the Methodist Church senior luncheons.

Tracy said they mentioned t-shirts and hats earlier for marketing. She mentioned postcards – could we possibly do a commemorative postcard? Argy said we know who in town we can talk to about that, great idea.

Argy asked for ideas for activities. She'd love to see building off that interview piece perhaps setting up a kind of a booth on the Common, and just have a question, and people can go in and record themselves answering a question – could be as simple as, "Why do you like Union?" or "What's fun about Union?" or whatever.

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Matt said Story Corps, which works with the Library of Congress, will bring their recording to different locations. We just have to contact them and ask them. If we reached out to them, they might be interested.

Argy said that was the next thing: put together some of those blips, then the longer interviews, and they could go into the archives in the Library of Congress.

Argy suggested going one end to the other and give a suggestion, then keep going back and forth so everybody has a voice.

Tracy had time capsule ideas. When we get closer to the event, have the most recent, newest members of the community putting in a birthday card for them for their 50<sup>th</sup> birthday which kind of incorporates the families for the event now but then 50 years come back, and you're going to be a part of this as we open a capsule the next time.

Argy found the theme: *Looking back to look ahead.*

Keith said we talked about starting like at the beginning of the year, Christmas 2023, and wondered if we could have a town New Year's Eve bash (December 31, 2022), ringing in our Sestercentennial. Martha asked if that would preclude having anything in 2023.

Buddy said he's a little concerned about spreading it out too much. He liked the social media aspects of the interviews, winding people up with it, but thought the actual physical events might get a little bit long if we spread it too far. Argy said you mean Come Spring, Come Summer, etc. Buddy said what season do you start.

Martha thought next year's Founders Day. You could do Come Summer. Founders Day Weekend you're right in the middle of summer. Buddy said you're going to end in the summer, too. Martha said but it's all leading up to it: you'd have that be your summer, then you could do a fall, do a spring, then you're going to get right into the actual events so you wouldn't have another one after that. You'd have your four laid out the year prior.

Matt said the question is do you want to celebrate the calendar year 2024 being that 250<sup>th</sup>, or do you want it to be the year between Founders Days? Buddy said logically the year seems better to him.

Tracy said the other question is if we use these events, if they're pre-July 2024, would we use them as a potential revenue generator to build, for example a kayak race in 2023 to start building some proceeds. Keith said building excitement.

Argy thought we were getting into the timeline a little too much. She brought up creating a mosaic walkway through the Common, and every family brings a plate or a piece of a plate or a broken ceramic from their home, so that every person in the community has contributed somehow.

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Matt suggested revitalizing the map on the Common. There's a company with a storefront in Camden that does laser cut 3d wooden maps. He'll take like a depth chart from a lake, and he'll build these maps so they're 3d. He wondered if we could talk to him how much it would cost to do one. That's why there are grants. Matt is on the advisory committee for the American Association of State and Local History, and they've got money for something like this, too, and he could probably tap into it.

Argy said we talked about the businesses and how they might support. Perhaps somebody might want their name on that map. Martha said they are beautiful maps. Matt said to add on to that, also maybe some sort of new markers for some historic places throughout the town so they're actually marked, so people know where they are. The committee concurred. Matt said almost like a museum in the streets. We might be able to partner with the historical society. His organization will do things like global websites where QR codes would take you to the historical society's website with all the information about the place.

Keith brought up Richie Kahn's collection. Argy reached out to him and his wife. They were very involved in the book.

Buddy suggested a raft race or something like it.

Martha would like to see something go on next Founders Day.

Tracy suggested a donation station like at the Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony or events like that – a way to toss in bottles, etc. Keith said what about all the businesses. Martha said it wouldn't have to be just there, too; she has a couple of donation boxes in the Chamber, and there are more somewhere. Argy said that should go on the timeline, when we put those donation boxes out.

Keith mentioned involving all the current businesses in town. We have some wonderful business, two wineries, Sterlington, somehow involving all the businesses and getting them excited but also at the same time focusing on maybe researching old businesses. What did Union used to have? He doesn't mean just in our lifetimes, but back, like did we have a horse and buggy manufacturer. Tracy said caskets. Martha thought there was a list in the book. Argy said that's that looking back.

Argy would like to have a continuous reading of *Come Spring* over a three-day period in different locations. Keith could be reading at the pub between this time and this time. It would involve all kinds of people, all ages, and it doesn't have to be just Union people. Some could read in the historical society, some in the library, some at TCC, some in the town office. Matt mentioned 24-hour Shakespeare style, where groups do readings of all Shakespeare's plays in 20 different locations within 24 hours. Other books about Union: *Horse and Buggy Days*, *Sibley's*.

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Matt said he knows a large number of reenactors within the community, within the area. It would be interesting not to just do the founding decade of Union, but there are people in this area going back hundreds of years before Union was actually founded. The first outpost in Thomaston was set up in 1630. They explored this area, went off the St. George and things like that, so it might be interesting to have some sort of historical timeline with different reenactors – possibly somewhere where they could set up, and it would be an event people could come and go to.

Martha asked if they did some of that on the tour. Argy said no, they hopped on the bus and went to the site and talked about it.

Matt said if you could get historical interpreters of the right era and go to the different locations that they go to on the Come Spring, and talk about it, that would be amazing. He doesn't know if there's enough people around here that do that era. Martha said there are a number of people that do reenactments. Matt said he's talking about if they do the founding era. Martha said probably more medieval. SCA (Society for Creative Anachronism) was mentioned; Matt said their focus is not accuracy but fun.

Buddy said along the same lines as the business history, agricultural history. Somehow perhaps that's incorporating with the museum: tractor displays or a number of things. Matt asked about getting the museum to have free Union resident weekends. Buddy imagined it would be possible. They don't charge much anyway. That was one of the groups on the list of getting them involved (Irene Hawes).

Martha would like to get the other nonprofits involved. We need to get an email or letter out to people in those different groups and say we're starting this process and how would you like to be involved. Argy said that letter might be sooner rather than later.

Martha also mentioned the founders' descendants: getting some sort of genealogy, updating the descendants of the Robbins for example that were listed in the book before, getting an update on that. This is going to bring in people from out of town who either came from here or they're descended from people here, the founding fathers, and just having people see how many of those people who are still around his area and how many maybe different families. She talked about a lot of local names in her own family timeline. It's all intertwined.

Argy said we definitely need to have a conversation about the book. Maybe that's the connection with the historical society, too.

Tracy asked if we'd do a new book. Argy said that's one of the reasons she wanted to talk to the Kahns, to see how that all came about. Martha said she believed Dave and Suzy Schaub were also involved in the book.

Argy noted it's 25 after. Next time pick up and continue this list. She asked about any tasks between now and next meeting.

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Buddy suggested incorporating this into that timeline, start to piece it together.

Keith, feeling sooner rather than later, brought up doing any type of press. This is happening, start right away to get people excited and make them aware. Argy said it could be just a general thing to *The Courier* and *The Free Press*. A couple people should work on a press release and a letter to the nonprofits and send the committee a draft. Martha said get the communication lines going. Martha noted the letter to nonprofits should establish an email contact list to keep people informed of what's going on; they can send back ideas.

Tracy suggested a way for people to reach out such as a twofold email address link, if somebody in the community wants to share an idea. Argy said we could create an email, or the town could Keith said. Argy got from Jay whatever the committee does they have to take care of. Martha thought Bob was going to set up a Facebook page or webpage or something; Argy confirmed he had said social media. The press release could mention if you have questions or comments or would like to participate or make a financial contribution to support. We can just create one. Argy will set that up, using 250 instead of sestercentennial.

Tracy asked if press releases had to be approved by the select board. Martha said you might ask Jay. Argy said he emailed he did not need to be included in all the communications. Argy will check, Keith said since it's an official town committee.

Argy will draft the press release. Keith will help.

### **5. Set Future Meeting Dates**

Wednesday, November 16, 2022, 6:30 p.m. is the next meeting.

### **6. Other Business: None.**

### **7. Adjourn:**

Motion by: Tracy Weed

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Buddy Savage

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Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo  
Secretary