

MINUTES

SESTERCENTENNIAL COMMITTEE TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 WILLIAM L. PULLEN MUNICIPAL BUILDING MEETING ROOM ONLINE NON-INTERACTIVE ON TOWN HALL STREAMS 6:30 p.m.

Committee members present: Bob Winslow, Morgan Winslow, Argy Nestor, Elmer (“Buddy”) Savage, Martha Johnston-Nash (Select Board Rep)

Others present: None.

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

Martha said this is the 250th anniversary of the town’s founding (not incorporation). She added Gail Hawes is interested in this committee and is a member of the Union Historical Society as well. She assumes the celebration would be held around Founders Weekend in 2024. This committee is still looking for members: fill out the interest form for being on committees, and it will go before the select board for approval.

She believes it is important to bring in as many other town groups as possible, including especially the Union Historical Society, the Chamber of Commerce, the Fire Department, 4-H, Scouts, Farmers Market, Union Fair, Aging in Place Committee, Green Space Committee, and Parks and Rec, the Cemetery Director may come in handy with information, Irene Hawes has a lot of information on cemeteries, TMA (or similar if TMA no longer exists), local churches, local businesses including Steel Pro which is very interested in becoming part of the town.

She said finances will be critical. Argy has already talked about some grants. Re: fundraising, some funds are available now but urged the committee to think about making a recommendation for next year’s budget to put more money into those funds, as 2023 will be our last shot. In answer to Argy re: deadline, Martha said it would have to go before the Budget Committee: the town vote would be in June; the Budget Committee meeting is after the first of the year – so February, March at the latest.

Martha added keep in mind it’s not just the heritage and history but everything that makes the town unique: the blueberries, the lakes, there are a lot of things you can do. She was thinking things like boat parade, farm visits, or open houses. It’s going to be a really big event. She will not be chairperson as select board liaison but will work with them and help them all she can.

2. **Election of Chairperson and Vice Chair:**

Matt Blazek and Gail Hawes are also on the committee.

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Being a collaborator Argy would like to see two co-chairs and vice chair. Martha doesn't see a problem, but Jay likes to have one point of contact. Argy imagines subcommittees. Martha said you will probably want a publicity committee, an events committee, etc. Bob said he is willing to help with marketing as that's what he does for a job, in digital space. A webpage and social media will be important.

Bob Winslow and Argy Nestor will serve as co-chairs.

3. Timeline Discussions:

Martha said they will want to set goals.

4. Planning Discussions and Suggestions:

Argy made a diagram, brought food, and said she is all about starting on time and having a one-hour meeting. In her mind this is all about community. In the last five years, 40% of the properties in Union are new people. This is a great opportunity to build community for the people who have been here for awhile and to engage new people in the community in this activity. It could be a real driving force. The TCC is going through all kinds of stuff so a great opportunity to support each other. As Martha said, there are lots of longstanding businesses in the community as well as new ones. It's about the history and the citizens of the community and bringing them together to celebrate what we have here. It's for all ages; engaging K-6 will be a strong vehicle for us. She sees it as a wonderful opportunity to hear and document stories which haven't been documented since 50 years ago when the time capsule was put together. She brought the bicentennial book; in the back is what is in the time capsule. Her younger son who's 32 immediately brought up the time capsule and doing another one.

Bob thinks the time capsule is central to all this. The big event is reburying of new stuff and keeping that legacy pushing through. Argy added, digging this up how do we show everybody everything that's in it, and what's it going to look like. Bob said there should be some production value to that. Martha said it may be the kickoff to the celebrations.

Argy suggested deciding if we want a one-day or multiple-day celebration. Bob was thinking at least a long weekend, maybe kicking off Friday night. You could have nice bookends to the event opening with the time capsule and closing with burying a new one.

Argy would like a big piece of paper and a brain dump of ideas at the next meeting: is it realistic? Can it happen? Attach a cost to it if there's a cost. How much is the town going to contribute? Would we know that or propose a number to the Budget Committee?

Martha said figure in what you're going to fundraise. Argy said it could be grants. Martha concurred and added it could be an event related to the history of the town – next July or next Founders Day have an event that people would either pay for or give donations to.

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Argy brought up looking for partners like the Union Historical Society, then the partner makes a financial contribution. Bob asked if we are able to set up sponsors. The feeling is a lot of local businesses will push in. Martha, addressing Argy, thinks the Chamber would, doesn't know about other groups, would hope the historical society would take a major part. Argy suggested Camden National Bank, and if we do a facebook page, there are ads which would be a way of having partners or sponsors.

Martha said if you have events like next Founders Day, periodically leading up to the event, that keeps it in people's minds.

Argy spoke to one of the new owners of Common Market who was wonderful about wanting to be an integral part of the community. That might be a place to do periodical reminders. Perhaps we do something that's changing (like Green Thumb's funny signs) a year in advance. Buddy agreed.

Argy wondered about utilizing technology for the stories of people we know, the elderly who haven't had their stories told; it could be a partnership with the school with older students doing interviews. Bob said social media will be huge for that: once you establish the presence you just create a rhythm, say hey every Thursday we're going to do a story drop, a 60 or 90 second video of a story, that gets released and you can time it so you can have stuff built out way ahead and then just drop that catalogue in place. That's huge, having a common thread. He knows the theme is 250 years but maybe focusing in on a specific theme or sentence or title that we can use in marketing, that will be huge and drive everything here – kind of a business slogan – we find out what that heartbeat is, and then we just expose it.

He loves the idea of stories, and if we're going to run this for a year, year and a half, you can create a catalogue of stories very quickly. Argy said it would be great to catalogue them in the library; they'd be available for children to learn from or new people in the community. Bob said it could go on a thumb drive and be buried in the next capsule. Martha said as long as those people don't have to write it themselves. Bob said they would come up with a formula and a script. Argy said NPR's StoryCorps is documented in the Library of Congress; these stories also could go there and be a way historically for Union to connect with the country and those voices be heard in other places. Bob said something easy to digest, that will catch you real quick. Creating that pipeline, we have to establish a system by which those stories come in; that's got to be the first push. We want 365 days that we're going to run these stories, maybe we do 52, so we'll want to spend probably that lead-in time creating the funnel saying hey we're looking for stories. Argy brought up random stories or people as well – as on youtube, a booth on the Common and people hit a button and answer a question such as what is it that you love about Union; it could be brief, and you snag those as well. Bob likes the weightier stories and ones that are outright crazy – fun, gives you a different flavor. Argy said it could be set up at Union Fair as well.

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Argy said her background is in visual and performing arts. She knows how the arts can bring people together. She is thinking about writing a grant to the Maine Arts Commission and bringing somebody that would do a community dance on the Common or at TCC or someplace local, then thinking about visual artists and creating some energy and jazz. She does mosaics and was thinking about engaging 100% of the town in something. Everybody in their home could bring a dish or piece of a dish and create a mosaic that's a walkway throughout the Common, and that way everyone's family or home has contributed something to the Town of Union. A mosaic is an organization or a bunch of different stuff together, and we are all unique individuals living in this town; so, everybody's piece becomes part of a whole, and without everybody's piece it's not a whole – so kind of lifting people up whether 8 or 80. The visual and performing arts can be a vehicle to bring people and celebrate community. That could also be part of the parade – families could have a banner, float, or costumes. We could hire an artist to help create family contributions to the town in that way, too.

Martha said think also about the founding families. The book talked about the Robbins family; she is a descendant of David Robbins. Add to that list if you have to. It's not just the people in town now but those who grew up here; there are people in surrounding towns who are interested which may be where subcommittees come in.

Argy suggested an artist who might create a big visual based on family trees of founding people and connections. It might be based at TCC. Bob mentioned a Tolkien quote from *The Hobbit*: Gandalf is asked where he's been. He says, "I went behind." They ask why. He says, "To see ahead." He thinks about the importance of looking at the past to see the future. Martha said he may have the theme right there: *looking back to look ahead*. Bob said it's a fresh view, a new perspective. He said figure out the core three or four things, then offshoots where the committees would come into play. What are the tentpoles? Land one or two big things on each day whether a community movie on the Common or something like that; the big things should be the time capsule. Martha said it would be ceremonial.

Argy asked if we know who our oldest citizen is. Martha wondered who has the cane. Argy suggested considering bringing people over 90 together, and maybe everybody under three or something. Martha said these events don't all have to be that weekend; you can do some of the stuff leading up to it. It was noted Founders Day is in July, close to the middle of the month, closest to the 17th. Bob feels events could be maintained for three or four days without losing the edge. There could be lead-up events. Argy mentioned a triathlon which would attract a very different group of people than a pie-eating contest. Bob said races are huge draws; we have a lot of hills in town, so it's a big challenge for runners – you could do a run through history, theme out every mile. Argy said we had a triathlon for years in town. Lyn Allen was involved in it and the Weimers. Bob said incorporating other spheres is great: athletics, art, dance and/or music, performance art, etc.

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Martha said Founders Day Friday night the chamber usually has a concert on the Common. Argy asked about the bus tour; Martha said it hasn't happened in a couple years.

Morgan mentioned t-shirts for the runners. Martha mentioned selling hats ahead of time; she would be able to do the embroidery. There would be some cost to the hat itself. Argy said that could be one of the fundraisers. Martha will look into t-shirts as well and said we will need a logo. Argy said that may be something the art teacher can do with the kids: come up with a design that can be refined. Bob said you could actually start your social push with that, kind of like they do with Union Fair looking for poster art – great way to get the community involved, and we have wonderful artists in town. Martha asked if they wanted to do schools or open it up. Argy said both. Bob said you could run two designs: a children's design specific to children's events; then one that's kind of the overarching one. You want the best design so he would open up every avenue – the best, most iconic. Argy mentioned google changes; Bob said it could be a series, its own thing. Martha reminded they will need a theme.

Argy asked about a mechanism about gathering community member ideas – the facebook page? In North Union they have a list serve of about 60 people, if a dog is loose, etc. and Heather updates on ambulance committee; Heather and Don are on green space and they communicate about that. Sherry and Bruce Cobb started it about five years ago, and they had a potluck gathering of about 75 people in July. Martha said that's a nice way to communicate.

Bob said it's a good mechanism as long as you're driving it. It's pointed. When you do your story drops, you would also have a rhythm: like every Wednesday, we're running a poll and what would you like to see? Keep it super specific. That way they're engaging but not wide open. You're like a teacher reining it in a little bit. Buddy said you'd need a little bit of wide open at the beginning. Bob said put a time limit on it, keep it super broad; once that's established you put the guard rails on it and have more control.

Martha said to Argy's point how do you get that out to people? Not everybody is on facebook or list serve or... Bob said there are mechanisms. You can pay for ad boosts. Now we use a mechanism called snappy crackin that works in conjunction with facebook. You are basically paying a little money for ad space. You're actually buying zip codes; your info will land on IP addresses tied to those zip codes, so you have reach without having to have followers. Martha said he's talking about electronics; her concern is how to reach people not on social media.

Argy asked when the town sends out info. Martha said there is the list serve, which is electronic. Buddy mentioned tax bills, about the only thing the town sends to everybody. Argy mentioned the January letter last year saying be nice to your neighbor, 40% of the people are new. Buddy said there are mailing lists. Bob and Martha said print is tough and postage costs.

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Bob mentioned radio. Martha felt it used to be more so. Bob said it's also targeting the right demographics; we found we have more engaging on talk radio than on music stations.

Argy will check with Jay to see about piggybacking when mailings go out. She asked about a flyer that comes out from Common Market; they go to every home. Bob said maybe a banner ad across the top. Argy said it could be really simple: this is being planned, something online, or call a number if interested in helping. Buddy mentioned a sign outside the town office. Bob mentioned leveraging the Union Fair next year: a moment to make announcements, potential sponsorship (\$500 or \$1,000) because then your stuff gets printed on all their stuff, a good way to piggyback. Argy said maybe that's the funding that we ask the town for, though last year there wasn't a lot of info on the fair's website early on.

Right before the TCC vote, Argy stood outside Common Market on a Friday afternoon for only one hour and gave out info on the choices. She'd smile, say hello, ask if Union resident and know we get to vote on TCC. She was blown away by how appreciative people were and how many were unaware. Maybe it's taking an hour with a handful of people standing down there. She suggested multiple avenues to be inclusive.

Martha said the Aging in Place might have some info on that.

The committee reiterated wanting to keep meetings to one hour.

Argy will check with Jay on mailing dates and see about piggybacking. She will also ask him who has the cane/who is the oldest citizen. Martha said Aging in Place is not meeting right now and has no chair. Martha read members: Anita Brown, Marcy Corwin, Erik Durbas, Phil Groce, Katie Tarbox, Carol Watier, Dot Williams, Bob Williams. Argy will check with Anita also. Argy said we should set a meeting date, and everybody ask one person to join the committee. Buddy thinks it will be a challenge maintaining the committee over time, so more members is good. If they say no, ask to put their name on a helper list; get phone number and email. Bob suggested figuring out what we're doing then create the smaller groups.

Argy brought up creating a draft timeline before the next meeting. Buddy said by the one-year-out date, next July, we will be in full motion and probably by springtime (March) have a good roadmap. Bob said six to nine months lead time is good.

Argy reiterated we really want to dive into the fair and Founders Day. Bob said back-to-back, so perfect. Buddy said 2024 and 2025 fair dates are not set yet; it backs up from Labor Day/Windsor Fair ending. As the fair firms up their dates, this committee will have to decide where they're going to be. Bob said two long weekends in a row or one really thick... Martha noted the fair needs a lot of volunteers, and so does this. Buddy doesn't think they will know until next year about the following year. Martha said it doesn't get critical until we start publishing. We will have to get it into the tourism books and all

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that. Buddy said it will have to be firmed up by springtime; he will try to find out when they expect to know exactly what that fair date will be.

Argy asked Martha to write up the notes and send them to committee members. She asked Bob to do a google doc; they can go back and forth about a timeline draft.

5. Set Future Meeting Dates – Quarterly? Monthly?

Wednesday, October 12, 2022, 6:30 p.m. is the next meeting. Argy will check with Jay. She will also follow up with Gail and Matt. Everybody bring a friend.

Martha gave Argy info on alumni. Bob mentioned the Matthews Museum.

6. Other Business: None.

7. Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo
Secretary