**Stoddard 250 Anniversary Committee**

Notes from meeting July 13, 2023

* Ruth Medlock, treasurer, reported that we have received $10,000 of our allocation from the town. After merchandise sales from Old Home Days, we now have approximately $11,600 in our account, with an invoice of $7,071.50 coming due for our bulk merchandise purchase. Our account is live, working, and linked to credit cards.
* Merchandise sales at Old Home Days were excellent, with all our products well received.
* After discussing how we might do online sales throughout the year, we hope to be able to take orders (and accept payment via credit card) through the website, with merchandise packaged for pickup at the Library. Linda Stevenson agreed to package the orders and deliver them. The Library trustees have agreed, as long as there are no sales there and that we minimize any extra work for the librarian. Don is to follow up with Inga to work out the specifics. Final step is for Jason to set up a “Shop and Support” section to take orders, process payment, and get orders to Linda for fulfillment.
* Dates for Concerts were set for May 18 or 19, June 15, the Saturday of Old Home Days concurrent with the barbeque at the Fire House and Sept 14. Terri LaRoche will follow up to lock down the locations.
* David Ferner, for the Program Committee, proposed a format for the January kickoff, which was enthusiastically accepted. At the first meeting of the Select Board in 2024, a resolution will be introduced proclaiming the anniversary. Alan will read the original charter. The committee will be introduced and thanked. As many people as possible will be in some form of period costume. Refreshments that would be typical in 1784 will be served. We will seek maximum media coverage (not necessarily maximum attendance, though all will be welcome at a regular public meeting.)
* We also discussed how to get people to attend a variety of events throughout the year, and move people around the town. We will adopt a Stoddard Passport, where an attendee will receive a stamp for each event they attend, with a prize or incentive for achieving a certain number.
* The Program Committee also recommended that we create a video of Stoddard Stories, interviewing long-time residents for their recollections. These would be posted on the website and compiled into a video presented at the final event, the Pig Roast in November, and permanently available on utube. There is a skilled part time staff member at the Historical Society of Cheshire County whom we can engage to do this. We voted to put approximately $2000-2500 in the budget for this activity. Interviews should begin before people starting leaving after the summer.
* Joyce reported on comments received at our table at Old Home Days. No one was aware that the 250th anniversary was coming up. In addition to Old Home Day, concerts and hikes seemed to generate the most interest. One new area was a suggestion that we do something with the businesses and entrepreneurs in Stoddard. Barbara Cleveland volunteered to interview several, and come back to us with ideas for something not in the summer that would profile them, perhaps an expo at the school and/or a directory on the website.
* Terri LaRoche reported on her progress with booking bands; she is checking options and pricing. She’s also had conversations with owners of potential sites for concerts. A general one is insurance. She explored making us an official town organization so we can be covered under the town’s policy, but we all felt there are drawbacks to operating that way and that we should seek our own umbrella policy for the year. Terri will investigate and report back.
* Another concern from the Hidden Lake Association, where we would very much like to have an event e.g. a concert to get others in the town to visit there, is parking. We will need to budget shuttles for HLA and for the Little Big Forest tours connected with the Highland Lake summer event, and perhaps others.
* Now that we have a general schedule of events, we need to develop a detailed budget for this fiscal year in particular and carrying over into the next, including spending on banners, anticipated merchandise sales, general administrative costs like printing and insurance, and costs specific to events such as refreshments, parking shuttles and sanitation. Terri mentioned the possibility of asking for a grant from the Select Board from the Recreation Fund for specific purposes, such as paying bands, if we need it. The budget will be discussed at the next meeting.
* Randy is to do a survey of how many banner installations and where to put them. He will also contact Jaffrey to see if we can save money by using the ones they bought for their anniversary in 2023. Don will design the banners and find a wholesale supplier to print them. Randy will install them.
* Banners should be up before the end of the year. Publicity needs to start well ahead of January, to build maximum awareness.