

June 14, 2021 Historical Advisory Committee Meeting

Members Present: Colin McLain, Monica Zuba, Carolyn Gant, Diane Stockinger,
Kathryn Saxton-Granato, Carol Coulbourn

Members Absent: Joe Darminio, Frank Pfrommer, Joe Bilinski,
Delores Simkins, Henry Kobik
Delores and Henry called in advance of their absence
Mary Petsch-Wilson- and Heather Flaim Twp. Committee Representatives
both absent due to Twp. Committee meeting

Guest Present: none

The June meeting of the Historical Advisory Committee Meeting was held on a picnic table by the Franklinville Lake, across the street from the Community Center. The Community Center was working on a temporary schedule and closed at 5:00 p.m. The Library was having a shortage of workers since the pandemic, and locked up the building early. No meetings were held after the March 2, 2020, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, which closed public buildings, schools, businesses, churches until April 2021 when little by little things started to open again. It was a period of time like no one living today in this country ever experienced. Students attended school from home via Zoom on their computers. Anyone venturing out wore a mask. Finally in June we shed our masks in most situations.

Members discussed the impact of the pandemic and how many people worked from home remotely. People had to wait in line to enter a grocery store due to limitations on the number of people allowed at one time. Everyone had to “social distance” and remain six feet apart. Restrictions were placed on the number of certain items you could purchase, for example meat was limited to two items at one point. Paper towels and toilet tissue vanished off the shelves and you were limited to the amount you could purchase at one time. People were shopping on line and having groceries and other items delivered to their homes. Amazon became a major source of ordering and delivering groceries and other items. Crowds of people stood in long lines to receive their Covid shots. Two shots taken two weeks apart were offered free at numerous locations. People were anxious to receive the shots due to the fact people were dying in large numbers every day. The government sent out “stimulus” checks to people and froze any evictions for renters due to the shut down and so many people were out of work. When things finally started to open again, there was a shortage of workers. Many people were making more money staying home and receiving extra money from the government, so they stayed home. Crazy times!

Mrs. Coulbourn stated she had kept a diary of some of the events that took place during the pandemic and noted today’s events are tomorrow’s history. We never have lived through such a strange period. She also saved some of the newspaper articles and started a file on the pandemic. She noted how Trixie Smith Corson (nee: Norri) often talked about her family being quarantined when she was a child, but it was not an entire country.

Mrs. Coulbourn shared a recent article on Sears’s kit homes. Several of the samples had a strong resemblance to homes located in Franklin Township. They were sold between 1908 and 1940. One model sold for \$191.00, about \$5,500 in today’s times, three rooms, but no bathroom. A more upgraded model sold for \$3,547 in 1922, about \$56,000 in today’s times, it featured 10 rooms and a bathroom and “sleeping porch”. The deluxe model sold for \$6,488 or \$103,000 today. The homes became known as the American dream in a box.

Mrs. Coulbourn informed members of an interesting article she read that posed the question what is the earliest historical moment you remember. Events mentioned were as follows: moon landing, President Kennedy being assassinated, the Russian spacecraft Spud nick, first man landing on the moon, air raid drills at school and hiding under a desk on facing the walls in a highway hiding your face, members laughed that if an atomic bomb hit those actions would be worthless.

Mrs. Coulbourn shared the proposed draft of the Library's construction project, which will take over the lobby area of the Community Center. The Library applied for and received a grant for the project. Two rooms will be created with a hallway back to the History Center and bathrooms. The Coffee Bar will be removed. She noted she attended a meeting held in the Great Room of the Center and the plans were discussed. She showed members the plans and noted she had a hard time figuring it out with a magnifying glass and didn't realize they were planning on taking the Historical Room's entry way and removing the bell and quilt. She stated she sent an email to Mrs. Petsch-Wilson and Dave Deegan, Township Committee representatives, explaining that was part of the History Center, not the foyer. She also noted the entry way displayed the History of the area and should not be removed. Mrs. Petsch-Wilson and Mr. Deegan and both agreed and the area will remain as originally intended when the building was constructed.

Members reviewed the plan and felt it was a shame to lose the lobby area. Some questioned the time line and why it took so long from the application period. Mrs. Coulbourn and Mr. McLain explained that it takes a long time when you apply for a grant. Often by the time a project is drafted, the grant is applied for, reviewed, and environmental studies and construction finally begins it could take 3 or 4 years. For example, a new road project is often outdated before construction begins.

Mrs. Coulbourn noted that we normally don't meet in July and this year July 4th falls on a Sunday, and the Community Center would be closed.

Members agreed to meet on July 12, 2021 due to the fact it had been over a year since we had had meetings. Members enjoyed meeting by the lake, since it was a delightful cool evening. Considering the air conditioning was not working in the History Center, it was nice being outside, however; the sky started to darken and lighting was spotted. The lightening promptly ended our enjoyable evening!

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Coulbourn