



-APPROVED-
Thomas Darling House Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 5, 2020 at 3 pm via WebEx

Meeting Video:

<https://woodbridgect.webex.com/recording/service/sites/woodbridgect/recording/play/3033ea1586464437b4d0f4d5e78cdb3c>

Video Password: nTPb6Jtr

Present - Committee Members: Richard Blackwell, Donald Menzies, Leland Torrence, Stephanie Ciarleglio; Excused - Chris Sorensen

BOS Liaison: Sandra Stein

Preservation Architect: Richard Wies

Town Counsel: Attorney Gerald Weiner

First Selectman Beth Heller

1. **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 3:10 pm.

a. Remarks from First Selectman and Town Counsel

First Selectman Beth Heller welcomed everyone at the meeting and thanked members for serving on the Thomas Darling House Advisory Committee (Committee). The Committee charge was read into the record by First Selectman Heller (noted below).

Attorney Weiner advised that after a period of negotiating with the AWHS, it was agreed to move forward using the contract terms that have been in place for several years. It was noted that the contract will be signed by the First Selectman and will extend through 2030.

**CHARGE TO THE THOMAS DARLING HOUSE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

- 1) The purpose of the Thomas Darling House Advisory Committee (aka the Committee) is to advise and assist the Town of Woodbridge in the maintenance, care, preservation, improvement, and usage of the historic outbuildings, their surroundings, and the farming fields of the Thomas Darling National Register Historic Site.

- 2) The Committee is specifically charged with:
 - a) ensuring that the buildings and grounds are well maintained and preserved;
 - b) ensuring that preservation is prioritized so that any proposed uses of the property will be in the public interest and the historical integrity be maintained for future generations;
 - c) developing an overall strategy for stabilization, repairs, development, priorities, timetables and budgets;
 - d) developing specific grounds keeping duties and responsibilities of the caretaker in order to maintain the property surrounding the Darling House.
- 3) The Committee will significantly encourage community volunteerism while enhancing the entire Property for use by all visitors to the Museum.
- 4) The Committee will be made up of five members appointed by the First Selectman. There will be a Board of Selectmen liaison and any advisory member to the Committee, from time to time, as deemed appropriate by the First Selectman.
- 5) The Committee will appoint their own Chair, and meet as often as they deem necessary to accomplish their charge.
- 6) The Committee will provide a written report to the Board of Selectmen (the Board) updating the Board on their progress and seek input from the Board as appropriate.
- 7) All meetings of the Committee will be in compliance with the State of Connecticut Freedom of Information rules and regulations.

2. **Introduction of Committee Members:** Members were familiar with one another.
3. **Motion to Appoint Chair:** Leland Torrence motioned to appoint Richard Blackwell as Committee Chairman; Stephanie Ciarleglio seconded the motion. Motion passed
Vote: Yes - Leland Torrence,
Yes - Stephanie Ciarleglio
Yes - Richard Blackwell
Abstain - Donald Menzies
4. **Establish Meeting Dates:** Meeting dates will be scheduled at a future meeting once projects are identified. The next meeting is scheduled for **3 pm on Thursday, August 13, 2020 at the Thomas Darling House**. The Committee will walk through the house, outbuildings, and grounds to identify necessary projects.

5. **Committee Charge:** Discussion took place involving the extent of the farming operation that took place on the Thomas Darling House property during the 18th century. It was suggested that this topic be addressed as a separate agenda item at a future Committee meeting.

6. **First Items of Business Relating to Property**

- a. **Security, Temperature Control Alarm and Fire Suppression:**

Discussions took place regarding an Inspection Report prepared by the Town Fire Marshal and Building Official. It was uncertain as to whether a follow-up inspection took place. First Selectman Heller will reach out to the Town officials to obtain a letter from both relating to the inspection update.

Regarding fire suppression, this project is planned to be covered under a grant available to the AWHs.

To address security and alarm repairs needed in the caretaker portion of the Thomas Darling House and the barns, estimates were received by Advanced Alarms (existing vendor). As an added security measure, the use of solar-powered HD cameras for exterior video surveillance was suggested. In addition to Advanced Alarms, estimates for the project will be obtained from two other vendors. Don Menzies will bring information to the AWHs Board of Directors. The Committee will recommend the best option to the Board of Selectmen.

Donald Menzies brought up the point that repairs to the existing alarm system is under the purview of the Amity Woodbridge Historical Society as per the agreement with the Town of Woodbridge.

- b. **Begin recommendations for caretaker/tenant duties:**

It was reported the caretaker/tenant unit is move in ready as the AWHs have completed unit improvements. Safety issues involving the upstairs windows and the beehive fireplace were discussed along with the matter of sign-offs from the Fire Marshal and Building Official for these items. Confirmation of safety and security issues will need to be resolved before a caretaker/tenant can take occupancy.

Rental price and caretaker responsibilities were discussed. The general responsibilities of the caretaker are to include: lawn mowing, snow shoveling, and house/property walk-throughs for the purpose of reporting any anomalies to the AWHs. More significant ground keeping work would not be the responsibility of the caretaker/tenant. The extent ground keeping work needs yet to be assessed. The Town will address the fair market value for the property rent.

Once it is agreed that the caretaker/tenant position can be advertised, the AWHs chosen candidate will be presented to the Board of Selectmen for approval.

- c. **Recommendations to Board of Selectmen:**

At the next Thomas Darling House Advisory Committee Meeting set for August 13 at 3pm, the Committee will prepare a project list and work toward

prioritizing the projects and develop strategies for completion. Recommendations are to be made by the Committee to the Board of Selectmen.

The topic of the Old School House located in one of the Thomas Darling House property barns was addressed. Leland Torrence motioned to recommend in a letter to the Board of Selectmen that the Old School House be removed from the barn; Donald Menzies seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Vote: Yes - Leland Torrence,
Yes - Stephanie Ciarleglio
Yes - Richard Blackwell
Yes - Donald Menzies

A similar recommendation letter from the AWHS will be obtained from Donald Menzies.

Discussion ensued regarding a structural review of the barn. It was suggested that a structural review by an engineer may be in place as a part of a grant being applied for by the AWHS. First Selectman Heller will discuss this matter with SHPO Representative Todd Levine

7. Meeting was adjourned at 4:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted: *Toni Belenski*