

Thompson's Mills Preservation Society

Annual Meeting Minutes

Feb 25, 2017

Halsey City Hall

Members present: Spencer Lewis, President: Ron VanOrden, Treasurer; Carl Browning, Jim Ballard, Don Ware, Larry Thompson, Board members at large, Rebecca Bond, Albany Visitor's Bureau, Bob McCormack, TMPS member: OPRD Ranger Tom Parsons, special guest speaker from Thompsons Mills and Martin Thompson. Absent was Board Member Don Lyon who had a previous commitment.

The Meeting was called to order at 1:05 PM.

The President welcomed everyone and introduced the Board to all present. Don Ware let the President know the minutes of the last board meeting had an error: Don Lyons name should be listed as Don Lyon, no "s".

OPRD Ranger Tom Parsons spoke of what is going on at the Mill: (The Board previously had requested information as to whether the sprinkler system installation could be done in more affordable modules.) Tom is currently waiting for a response from Nick Artum for a price breakdown of the installation of the various components.

In 2015 there were 8,000+ visitors. Unfortunately, visitor numbers were down last year primarily due to the millrace being drained most of the summer to replace all of the head gates. This year the gates are fully operational and hopefully visits will rise quickly, also. As part of the ongoing work to increase visitor counts, Tom spoke of the importance of the planned trail and biker campsite. The hope is that additional attractions at the Mill will generate more word of mouth and social media buzz, which will generate more traffic to the Mill. He said having a garden or orchard, for example, is not just for the sake of having a those things – it is to attract those people who like gardens or orchards who might not otherwise stop in. More traffic could result in more staff to help with the overwhelming amount of maintenance needed at the Mill. Having things such as the orchard, the garden, and the bike trail and campsite adds value to the Mill visit and will help drive more visits. Since the Mill is already on the Oregon Bike Trail, his view is that not having a bikers' campsite at the Mill leaves a source of increased visitation unrealized. He also mentioned obtaining some relatively inexpensive features such as a little more signage or a small compressor on site which can also help.

Tom's opinion is that the silos at the Mill could someday be iconic of Oregon, that when you open a book or a website about Oregon the silos should be one of the pictures inside that book. We are not there yet, but making the Mill more iconic is one of his goals when encouraging school groups and bike tours to stop by.

There is a person from Lebanon, Jeff Smith, who has volunteered to install a public address system in the Mill. There is another volunteer onsite, a Special Project Host, who is specifically there to work in the archives. She is currently working on cataloging all of the oral history in tape.

A coming project at the Mill is to install grease fittings on the gears on the head gates. Also, attempts are being made to obtain sensors for Walton Slough to assist with water management. Currently in the winter three full time rangers are needed to monitor and control the water flow through the race. It is a 24/7 task to make sure the neighboring farms get optimum drainage from their fields. Technology can help cut staff hours in the winter. Hours that can then be used as summer maintenance hours.

Tom reported some good news about visitation. There were fifty farmers - guests of Betaseed - from Idaho and the Midwest who had a show and tell trip to the Mill. Some members of state and local law enforcement K-9 units have a club and they had a monthly meeting at the Mill which included some training exercises. And six school groups are scheduled for tours within the next 3 months. Meetings are planned with the Dept. of Education in Salem with someone who specializes in getting education programs up and running - getting information from a professional on how to improve our attractiveness to school groups. Tom went on to say, "The school group thing is to create fans of the Mill." If every kid in the area has heard about the Mill, knows about the Mill, and cares about the Mill, then more visits are likely which can lead to more staff which makes it possible to get more maintenance completed.

A discussion ensued about having official state ODOT signs on Interstate-5 promoting the Mill. Tom stated that within the past year they thought there would be signs on the freeway - that it had been okayed. Unfortunately that was not quite true and after repeated futile attempts to make it happen by Julie Whalen and Julie's boss the idea has been dropped. Tom did not have the specifics as to what stopped that from happening.

At this point Tom took time to thank the membership of the Thompson's Mill Preservation Society because places like Thompson's Mills need people who are supportive.

The final news from Tom was that sometime, possibly in June, Thompson's Mills will be featured on KGAL radio, based in Lebanon. They want to come to the Mill to do a hour long program. Tom would love someone from the TMPS to sit in on that program.

The President then read the minutes from the April 2, 2016 Annual Meeting. It was moved, seconded, and approved to accept the minutes as published.

Ron VanOrden then presented the Treasurer's report. He handed out a spreadsheet to the membership for review. We started out the year of 2016 with \$25,008.96. Between membership fees and donations we had an income of \$664.29. Between budgeted expenses, legal filings required by the state, P.O. Box rental, and Website maintenance fees, we spent \$2,249.29. Non-cash assets which consist of folding tables, storage shelves and gift shop inventory (retail value) came to \$4,350.00. As of the end of 2016 undisbursed budget commitments were: \$500.00 for office/printing expenses, \$724.00 for student bus service subsidies, \$1800 to purchase a cider press, and \$7,620.13 of the \$15,000.00 set aside for the fire suppression study – totaling \$10,644.13. The \$7,620.13 was paid to Heritage Protection Group in February, 2017. Net assets were \$17,129.83.

A question was asked about how much of that was dedicated to the investment account. The answer was none – the investment account was closed out in part because it was losing money and all of the funds were moved into the single Chase checking -account. The estimated time of the transfer was July, 2015.

Ron questioned whether the folding tables and storage shelves were still valid items on his report and whether the gift shop inventory valuation should be changed. Tom Parsons confirmed the table and shelves were still there and the president said barring any damage by rodents the inventory should be good. Tom also affirmed that as far as he knew nobody has disturbed the merchandise. A question was asked about how the inventory could be disposed of. Ron answered that technically we would need some record of what there was and how and why we disposed of it. Because it is an asset, it can't just go away.

The question was asked about selling the inventory and the president directed a question to Tom about during a cider pressing event the TMPS could also raise funds by selling merchandise. Tom was unable to answer the question for sure. He said maybe if the merchandise went out on a donation basis. Ron questioned if that meant half would go to Salem and only half to the Park. Tom said he didn't know – but maybe if we had a separate donation box that would not be the case. In relation to the cider pressing events, the president asked Tom Parsons to try to get some clarification as to what would be allowed.

Rebecca Bond asked if the inventory could not be sold on OPRD property would it be useful as promotional material. She suggested local fairs, dog shows, and similar events to help get our name out there. Discussion was had as to the nature of the inventory. The question was raised as to what to do with items such as the old time toys that are not specifically linked to the Mill. One suggestion was seeing if the Montieth House would purchase that part of our inventory. Tom Parsons offered to initiate contact there. Tom said that along with development of the self guided tour he had thought of putting together a scavenger hunt for kids. Prizes could be toys from the inventory, again promotions.

It was moved, seconded, and approved that the Gift Shop inventory be released for use as promotional material, with Tom Parsons agreeing to track the reduction of product and with Rebecca Bond allowed to acquire some inventory for promotional efforts in Albany.

Following that, it was moved, seconded, and approved to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented.

The budget was next on the agenda. Discussion was had about funding a second cider press pending the outcome of two contingencies: 1) the success level of our first season of cider pressing events. 2) whether we are successful with the current pending \$1,000.00 grant request to cover half of the purchase of the first cider press. It was pointed out that the purchase of supplies and auxiliary equipment needed to support cider pressing was not factored into the previous budget.

A question was asked about liability during cider pressing events. Tom Parsons said further information need to be gathered from a OPRD district manager. The president said that as Don Lyon explained the process at a previous board meeting, cleaned apples would be sold to visitors - the pressing of their apples for cider would be a free service. What would actually be sold is an unaltered food product. Tom said that none the less, if something went wrong relating to an event where money is exchanged OPRD would be on the hook so a District Manager will need to sign off on the type of events we would like to hold. As of right now, the OPRD District Manager's position is vacant. Tom reassured the membership the cider pressing events will happen - the only question is will they be fund raising events or strictly promotional events. Due to the current uncertainties surrounding how the cider pressing events will unfold, it was moved, seconded, and approved to set aside \$500.00 for any unforeseen contingencies.

Pending great success with the first cider pressing events, and pending a favorable outcome from our grant application for the purchase of the first cider press, it was moved, seconded, and approved to set aside \$1,000.00 toward the purchase of a second cider press. Said purchase is to be also contingent on obtaining a \$1000.00 grant in support of that purchase.

It was asked if any of those funds allowed for paid advertising. Tom Parsons pointed out this is the first year in a couple of years that water will be at full capacity and that he plans on using whatever resources he has available through OPRD to get the word out. Jim Ballard spoke of how a couple of years ago there was an ad for the Mill running at the Dark Side Theater in Corvallis paid out of Jim's pocket. As he remembered, it cost \$60.00 per month. The type of patron who frequents that theater, in Jim's judgment, could well be the type to have some interest in the Mill - he had heard people talking about visiting Thompson's Mills after seeing the ad. Tom said he felt we should get as many images of the silos out as possible. In support of this, Larry Thompson pointed out that this is the one hundred year anniversary of the silos. After discussion of several other advertising outlets including possible co-advertising with Albany

Visitors Bureau, it was moved, seconded, and approved to budget \$1000.00 for advertising and promotional activities.

It was discussed whether the membership wished to leave the unused balance (about \$7,380.00) of the \$15,000.00 earmarked for the fire suppression system study in place to be used as needed to advance toward the ultimate goal of getting a fire suppression system installed. Part of the study had recommendations to help with fire containment. Tom Parsons said that supervisor, Julie Whalen, has added funding for fire containment modifications into her budget requests for the next fiscal year. The Treasurer requested a list, if possible, of what parts of the study recommendations were covered by Julie's budget request and which weren't. Tom said he will ask for that information – but in his mind he had drawn a line between the smaller projects costing \$3,000.00 - \$5,000.00 to be (hopefully) by OPRD and the sprinkler system itself which will require fund raising outside of OPRD.

It was moved, seconded, and approved to keep set aside the remaining \$7379.87 allocated to the fire suppression system study - the purpose being to further fund our efforts to obtain a complete fire suppression system installation in Thomson's Mills.

Next for discussion were undisbursed funds from the 2016 budget: the sum of \$500.00 allocated for office expenses and printing of a self guided tour handout and the remaining \$724.00 of the \$750.00 allocated for the purpose of co-funding bus expenses for Benton County school student tours. After some discussion of visitation patterns it was moved, seconded, and approved to keep the remaining \$724.00 of the school bus tour fund available for school bus tours, with the amended purpose of serving all counties in Oregon outside of Linn County which has separate grant funds with us to cover their school bus tours.

It was moved, seconded, and approved to keep set aside the \$500.00 for office expenses and development and printing of a self guided tour handout.

This completed the budget for 2017.

Bob McCormack made a presentation of four proposals, formatted as motions, to standardize how membership is handled, including a rule that membership names and contact information be made available to any other members, if requested. He proposed that those wishing to remain anonymous should be encouraged to become donors with no voting privileges. A fifth proposal was to enlist or appoint a "key chairman" for the fire suppression system project

A lengthy discussion ensued weighing the pros and cons of the membership procedure proposals.

After about twenty minutes of discussion a motion was made to create an annual "name only" list of TMPS members to be made available to all society members. Contact information of phone number, email address and city of residence can be included only with the permission of the individual members. The motion was seconded and passed.

The fifth proposal was to enlist or appoint a “key chairman” for the fire suppression system project. Don Ware asked Tom Parsons who would he be comfortable working with – who does he see most often? Tom said he and Jim Ballard and Carl Browning worked together well. Jim said he would be willing to be the key person for the fire suppression system project. Carl promptly volunteered to assist. It was asked if a vote was needed. The President ruled that unless someone objected to their volunteering or didn’t agree that position needed to exist, no vote was needed. No objections were raised.

The Treasurer made a motion to form a membership committee made up of the Treasurer, the President and one other person; and that committee proceed using Bob McCormack’s proposed motion items numbered two, three, and four as a guideline. The motion was seconded and passed.

The terms on the Board of Directors of Don Ware, Ron VanOrden, and Carl Browning were due to end as of this meeting. All three offered to continue their terms. All three were reelected by the membership.

Next was the election of the Board Executives. It was moved and seconded that Spencer Lewis and Ron VanOrden retain their respective positions of President and Treasurer; and that, subject to his agreement to fulfill the duties of that office, Don Lyon fill the Secretary position. The motion passed.

The President set the date of the next TMPS Board meeting for 6 PM, April 18, 2017, at the Shedd Fire Station.

Submitted by Anita Lewis, TMPS Secretary