



Greensboro Historical Society

Meeting Minutes (February 11, 2025)

10:30 am @ the GHS Museum

Attending: BJ Gray, Erika Karp, Paula Harmon, Renée Circosta, Leslie Rowell, Nancy Hill, Jenny Stoner, Lise Armstrong, Kyle Gray, Nan Perron, and Jan Terwiesch; Amelia Circosta, Debbie Kasper, and Janet Long on Zoom.

To-Do in the Coming Months/Assigned Tasks

- ❖ *Everyone/anyone:* Report HRD article ideas to Nancy; volunteer to write the Greensboro section of the Hill Exhibit timeline; bring snacks and refreshments to the Winter Meeting; consider writing Martha Niemi a “happy birthday” note (mailing address below);
- ❖ *Lise:* Provide Renée with raw monthly donations data.
- ❖ *Leslie:* Order dehumidifier as soon as possible; work with Renée to deal with publicity related to UV shades as promised in the grant report.
- ❖ *Amelia:* Work with Renée on Winter Meeting publicity.
- ❖ *Renée:* Continue digitizing the Hill Exhibit timeline; work with Kyle on pamphlet for summer exhibit; work with Amelia on Winter Meeting publicity; work with Jan on Greensboro Association grant application. Make graph of monthly donations data from Lise.
- ❖ *Jane Johns & Erika:* Continue moving forward with 2026 Winter Meeting.
- ❖ *Jan:* Continue work on garage renovation; work with Renée on related Greensboro Association grant application.
- ❖ *Kyle:* Send necessary files to Renée for summer exhibit pamphlet; obtain alcohol wipes for microphone at Winter Meeting

President BJ Gray called the meeting to order at 10:30am.

Changes to Agenda: No changes to the agenda.

History Moment (Erika): Erika shared some interesting information about the history of Greensboro elementary schools from the little booklet *Fetches Up Yankee* by Louis Hill (available for purchase in the GHS bookshop!).

President’s Report (BJ): BJ shared the news in an email from Vermont Historical Society President Jan Albers that there has been significant curtailing of federal funding for historical societies, history museums, etc.. The VHS shared a statement that they will continue doing their work, but that they would appreciate extra donations. This change could trickle down to influence the GHS to the extent state grants are federally funded; we do not typically access federal funds directly. Leslie said that she will archive this email to document what is happening.

BJ also updated the group about Martha Niemi. Her mailing address is as follows: *The Arbors at Shelburne, 687 Harbor Rd., Shelburne, VT 05482. Room 27.* Her birthday is March 9. BJ encouraged members of the GHS group to send her notes.

Secretary's Report (Amelia): The January meeting minutes were approved as submitted. Amelia reported on the responses to her email to the group about one versus two annual newsletter mailings. The number of responses was very limited, but it seemed as though the general consensus was that one newsletter mailing would be sufficient, as long as we find a more economical way to circulate the calendar of summer GHS events to our typical wide audience in the spring.

Treasurer's Report (Lise): Lise changed the 2025 summer exhibit budget to \$400. Renée wondered whether the changes to the budget discussed last week had been made, and it was clarified that those changes would be applied to next year's budget. Lise sent out data relating to the money brought in by each newsletter mailing. Renee did not think that the 6-month chunks in which those data were reported (January-June and July-December) were useful in actually telling us which newsletter brought in the most donations, so she would like the raw data for all 12 months individually. She will make a graph to circulate and report back with observations based on the more detailed data.

Renée also added to the decision-making process by saying that even if we do observe a spike in donations after the Spring newsletter mailing, this might not necessarily disappear if we still just send out a calendar of events with a donations envelope insert.

Follow-Up From Previous Meetings:

Summer Exhibit Overview Pamphlet (Renée & Kyle): Renée said that she can't do much without files from Kyle. Kyle will send Renée the necessary files.

Updates to *Rails to Trails* Exhibit: Thank you to Skip for installing the new bulletin board. Jan also brought in an authentic Greensboro milk can to replace the old one in the exhibit (which was really from Long Island).

2026 Summer Exhibit ideas: The group has previously discussed the ideas of Wildlife in Greensboro, Greensboro Associations, and The Lost Roads of Greensboro. With further discussion, it was noted that we have already done some sort of Greensboro Associations exhibit in the past, which could be updated. Erika thought that it would be useful to find out what other groups in Greensboro are researching and presenting (e.g., the Conservation Commission) before we decide what we do.

Nancy added an idea that was immediately well-received by the group to present an exhibit on *The Homefront in Greensboro*, focusing on what Greensboro did during WWII and how our town became involved in the war effort (e.g., Victory Gardens, enlistees and officers, rationing, and more). The group agreed that this would be an ideal time to put together this exhibit, as there are fewer and fewer people alive with memories from that time period. We could interview David Allen, whose uncle was in WWII. Leslie said that there are plenty of records in the archives that could support a WWII exhibit. If we happen to run low on WWII-related materials though, we could always expand it to include a contrast between WWII and the Civil War homefronts, other wars after WWII, or something of that nature.

Regarding the *Lost Roads of Greensboro* exhibit possibility, Jan said this is an interesting topic but it could make more sense to try to recruit John Stone to write an HRD article on this topic at some point or present at one of our Annual or Winter Meetings. In terms of an entire exhibit on the lost roads of Greensboro, Jenny summed it up as “Trails are interesting to walk but less interesting to talk about.”

Jan went with John Stone to look at a cellar hole near Bayley-Hazen Road. There is an article in the works related to this. Jan thought that this or a related article could expand the concept a bit to discuss the lost roads of Greensboro, of which the Bayley-Hazen Road is just one.

Ultimately, the group decided that *The Homefront in Greensboro* (or an exhibit with a similar title) is our first choice for the 2026 summer exhibit. We eliminated *Wildlife in Greensboro* as an option and are keeping *Greensboro Associations* as a fallback option.

Tom Hurst Bench (BJ): Becky could not attend our meeting but is moving forward with this project. It will be a granite bench with no printing on the top, but rather on the side. Jan brought up needing to design a plaque to accompany the bench and provide more information, and we need to consider the best location for the bench.

Winter Meeting: Greensboro and Greensboro Bend Graduates (Erika & Jane): Erika read a letter to the group that she will send out the Greensboro High School graduates with brief instructions about the Winter Meeting presentation and discussion. The presentation will be relatively free-form, and the ~25 attending graduates will be organized by graduation year and will each have ~3 minutes to talk. BJ will be the moderator, Kyle will video the event and take some pictures, and we will all contribute to bringing some refreshments. Kyle will obtain alcohol wipes for the microphone as it gets passed from speaker to speaker. Amelia and Renée will work on publicity for the Winter Meeting (the usual Front Porch Forum posts, flyers to post around town, etc.).

AASLH handbook for 250th celebrations: Erika provided BJ with a hardcopy. It can also be viewed or downloaded here: <https://aaslh.org/programs/250th/>

Required publicity for Vermont Arts Council grant (Leslie): Leslie is working on this, and Renée will help her. She was going to put some of this publicity in the Spring newsletter, but it seems as though she will need to find an alternative pipeline. Most of the publicity is required to go elsewhere anyway, such as to legislators.

Updates to Hill Exhibit timeline (Renée): This is in process. She noted that we will need to submit a grant report to Greensboro Association soon regarding progress on this project. She will have a project report by the March deadline.

Committee Reports

Building and Maintenance:

Alarm system issues (Lise): The group was very happy to hear that the alarm system is no longer randomly beeping. Thank you, Lise! It is still buzzing, but it seems that we will have to deal with that level of noise.

Bulletin board in museum space (Skip): Skip installed the bulletin board, and it looks great. Thank you, Skip!

Garage renovation (Jan): Jan reported that he has indexed the contents of the garage in a spreadsheet. He said that some townspeople have expressed a desire to donate money to help with garage renovations. Nancy suggested that the Pleasants Fund may also be interested in helping. Renée suggested that this would be a good project for which to request assistance from the Greensboro Association, who tends to help us with projects every year and whose grant report is due March 15. It was suggested that we need to have a special town appropriation for the town to help with repairs and that this would have to wait until next year. Renée said no, that these kinds of expenses should come out of the fund related to maintenance on town-owned buildings and we do not have to wait until next year. She further specified that it would only be appropriate to ask the town to cover exterior or structural repairs and maintenance but nothing related to the interior or exhibit displays. The latter would have to be paid for by the GHS, grants, or other donations. Lise said that she would talk to Kim; Renée recommended talking directly to the Selectboard instead as they are in charge of the funds. It was agreed that, in any case, we will need exact cost estimates in order to make a proposal to the town, and Jan agreed that he would put together the necessary paperwork.

Archives (Leslie & Willie)

Dehumidifier for upstairs (Leslie): Leslie has not yet ordered one but hopefully will soon.

Review of items in the garage (Leslie + Jan): Leslie provided a print-out of the archiving and indexing done to record the items that are or were in the garage. We can use this as a basis for deciding on longer-term storage, display, or disposal.

Newsletter (Jenny):

Jenny said that she could go either way with one versus two newsletter mailings. Someone brought up whether the fall newsletter would greatly expand in length in the absence of a Spring newsletter, incurring additional costs.

Jan discussed a plaque he saw near Jennifer Ranz's barn related to preschool classes held in the "Sunday School Barn." Community members used to do a fundraiser for the school by making and selling walking canes. David Allen still has one of these canes, which he recently showed to Jan and told him the backstory. It was agreed that this would make an interesting piece for the next GHS newsletter, and Jan agreed that he could write it.

Website and Tech (Kyle): The clip-on microphone is coming this week.

Hazen Road Dispatch (Nancy):

Dan Penrice meeting: The HRD Advisory Board has already had two meetings with Dan Penrice, which have gone very well. He seems very well-organized, capable, and enthusiastic about being the editor this year. Thank you to Dan!

Fundraising for editor: A stipend for the HRD editor seems appropriate, given the large amount of work involved. The HRD Advisory Board members originally offered \$2,000 as a proposal, but Nancy thinks that this could be raised to \$5,000. The Pleasants Fund might be able to help with this, but it could also be difficult, as this will likely be an ongoing expense. Dan Penrice is keeping track of his hours spent on HRD-related work to give the group an accurate assessment of the time commitment.

Note on possible article: Jan went with John Stone to look at a cellar hole near Bayley-Hazen Road. There is an article in the works related to this. Jan thought that this or a related article could expand the concept a bit to discuss the lost roads of Greensboro, of which the Bayley-Hazen Road is just one.

Other Business: Renée mentioned that the Greensboro Association grant application deadline is March 15. She said again that we might want to submit this application as part of our fundraising efforts for the garage renovation. Renée and Jan will work together on the application.

President BJ Gray adjourned the meeting at 12:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amelia Circosta (Secretary)

NEXT OFFICIAL MEETING: Tuesday, March 11 @ 10:30am at the GHS Museum and on Zoom