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Derby, CT Town Clerk's Office

Sterling Opera House Commission
Regular Meeting
Minutes

Date: May 12, 2025 **Time:** 6:01 PM

1. Call to Order - Chair Dana Florenza called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance - The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Roll Call

Dana Florenza, Brian Coppolo, Gino DiGiovanni, Carleigh Paecht, Karleen Guluzzy.
All five members were present. A quorum was established.

4. Public Portion

Linda Hooper – (Old Ripton Garden Club) 61 East Village Road, Shelton, Connecticut, spoke on behalf of the Old Ripton Garden Club of Shelton. She stated that the club will be decorating a room at the **Osborne Homestead Museum** as part of Derby's 350th anniversary celebrations. Their assigned theme is the **Sterling Opera House**, and she requested guidance and possible access to marketing materials, artifacts, or historical items.

There being no further public comment, the public portion was closed.

Commission Response:

- Mr. DiGiovanni offered to serve as the primary contact and provided his email address for follow-up.
- The Commission indicated it has marketing materials and potential artifacts that may be loaned for the display.
- Ms. Hooper stated the exhibit will be installed before Thanksgiving and open from the day after Thanksgiving through Christmas.

There were no additional public comments. The public portion was closed.

5. Committee Updates

5.1 Artifacts, Signage, and Storage

Discussion was held regarding historic signage, carvings, and display cabinets created by retired Fire Chief Andy Cota. These items are currently in his possession and are being offered back to the Commission for Preservation.

Key points discussed:

- The importance of retaining all existing Sterling Opera House artifacts.
- Potential storage options, including a climate-controlled room in the basement of City Hall.
- The need to coordinate with the Mayor's Office regarding storage and future display.
- Preservation considerations, including proper temperature control.

5.2 Derby 350th Anniversary Celebration

The Commission discussed participating as a vendor during the Derby 350th Anniversary Celebration scheduled for **May 30 – June 1, 2025**.
After discussion, the Commission agreed to participate on **Saturday, May 31, 2025**, from **12:00 PM to 9:00 PM**, with setup beginning at 10:30 AM.

Planned activities and materials include:

- Information table and banner
- Pamphlets and marketing materials
- Framed historic photo prints
- Potentiel merchandise (prints, ornements, key chains, etc.)

A **motion** was made to authorize submission of the vendor application for the Derby 350th Anniversary Celebration and allow the sale of merchandise at the event.

- **Motion:** Gino DiGiovanni
- **Second:** Brian Coppolo
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved

6. Festivals and Community Outreach

Additional festivals and events were discussed for potential participation:

- **St. Mary's Church Festival** – July 10–12, 2025
- **Ansonia Harvest Festival** (September – date TBD)
- **Seymour Pumpkin Festival**
- **Ansonia Winter Market** (December)

Consensus was reached to continue planning participation and to coordinate marketing materials accordingly.

7. Marketing and Public Communications

- Discussion on leveraging social media and public outreach to function as an information hub for Sterling Opera House updates.
- The possibility of posting recorded interviews and radio segments concerning the project.
- Ideas for future fundraising events, including guided walking tours, lectures, and entertainment-based fundraisers.

8. Incorporation and Legal Update

David Condon reported that **Sterling Opera House Restoration, Inc.**, has been officially incorporated.

Key highlights:

- A 501(c)(3) application is in progress to establish a fundraising arm.
- All current contributions of professional services are being treated as in-kind donations.
- Discussion of future fundraising structure, governance, and financial flow between the nonprofit entity and the City.

- The need for a future executive session to formalize financial and operational procedures.

9. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:52 p.m.

- **Motion by: Gino DiGiovanni**
- **Second by: Dana Florenza**
- **Vote: Unanimous in favor**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jennifer Desroches