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Derby, CT Town Clerk's Office

Sterling Opera House Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2025

1. Call to Order - The regular meeting of the Sterling Opera House Commission was called to order at **6:03 p.m.** on **June 9, 2025**,

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

3. Roll Call

Dana Florenza, Brian Coppola, Gino DiGiovanni, Carleigh Paecht

Commission Members Absent:

- Karleen Guluzzy (entered the meeting at 6:04 p.m.)

A quorum was established

4. Public Portion - No public comments were made. The public portion was closed.

5. Update on Tours

The Commission discussed the recent public tours conducted during Derby's 350th Anniversary kickoff celebration.

- Approximately 450 members of the public attended tours of the Sterling Opera House, marking the first time in nearly 20 years that the public accessed the main staircase and open floor.
- Attendees traveled from across the tristate area, including New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts.
- Commission members expressed gratitude to all volunteers and speakers who contributed to the event's success.
- The tours were described as well-organized and effective, providing a strong template for future events.
- Interest was expressed by attendees in accessing City Hall and lower-level areas of the building.
- A proposal was made to create a **virtual or video tour** of City Hall for future fundraising or benefit events.
- All safety, fire marshal, and building security requirements were met.
- The Elizabeth Street entrance was opened and used successfully, with consistent foot traffic.
- The event was promoted through radio and other outreach efforts, and attendee contact information was collected for future communications.
- Discussion included the possibility of hosting additional tour days due to long wait times reported by attendees (up to three hours).

Potential Future Events Discussed:

- A collaborative fall event with local businesses, including dinner and guided tours, possibly around the Halloween season.
- Coordination with the Mayor's office and administration before finalizing dates.

- Consideration of photography workshops and tour events scheduled earlier in the day to maximize natural light.

6. Merchandise Discussion and Possible Action

- The Commission reported all t-shirts sold out, indicating strong public interest.
- Discussion included:
- Reordering t-shirts, particularly in medium, large, and extra-large sizes.
- Updating the t-shirt design to reflect the current appearance of the Opera House, including the cupola.
- Bundling merchandise and printed marketing materials to support cost efficiency.
- Additional merchandise ideas included pens, bracelets, mugs, sunglasses, tumblers, keychains, and prints.
- The Commission reviewed the launch of the Opera House website (sterlingopera.com) as a landing page directing visitors to social media platforms.
- A social media photo contest was proposed, allowing tour participants to submit photos for a chance to win merchandise.

7. Upcoming Events

- St. Mary's Festival:July 10–12, 2025, 5:00–10:00 p.m.
  the Commission will participate on **Friday, July 11, 2025** only.
- **Ansonia Harvest Festival**: Date pending.
- **Seymour Pumpkin Festival**: Application submitted and currently under review.
- Additional local events and holiday fairs were discussed as potential opportunities.
- The **Osbornedale Commission** announced that the Sterling Opera House will be a featured theme in an upcoming exhibit.
  The Commission will loan selected artifacts, images, and historical materials.
  Storage needs for certain artifacts were discussed.
  Coordination with City staff and Osbornedale representatives will continue.

8. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at **6:30 p.m.**

- Motion: Gino DiGiovanni
- Second: Karleen Guluzzy
- Vote: Unanimously approved

was made and seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jennifer Desroches