

## *The Manchester Historical Society*

Letter from the President

February 2019

I personally want to thank all our society members for being the keepers of Manchester's history. Through your membership, donations of time and or money, we preserve and educate the public about the rich heritage of our town. Your support has helped to make us a great organization.

We recently held our Membership meeting for the fiscal year 2017-2018. To help our members plan ahead, the Board is establishing the third Sunday of September of every year as the Society's Annual Membership meeting. Therefore, our next Annual Membership meeting will be 1:00 p.m., September 22, 2019. It will be held at the History Center, 175 Pine Street, Manchester.

During our February 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, Society members spoke candidly about how they feel about the Board and Society's performance. The Board will continue to strive to be the best Board it can be. Listening to comments from the members, the Board will be instituting several major changes. We will establish a Nominating sub-committee consisting of Board and non-board members. The purpose of the sub-committee will be to provide a slate of candidates for Board of Directors and officers to be voted upon at each Annual Membership meeting.

Members expressed the desire to have financial information on a more regular basis. For the past two years the financial reports provided to members were of audited high-level results. These results have shown that the society is in good financial shape. They do not, however, show much detail of the Society and its properties. The Finance Committee will change this by providing additional detailed accounting information. The Society has always had the policy that any member can request an appointment to view the finances and committee meeting minutes. For questions and concerns, members may contact the Society by calling 860-647-9983 or through the Society's emails listed on the "Contact Us" webpage on our website [www.manchesterhistory.org](http://www.manchesterhistory.org), or email me directly at [President@manchesterhistory.org](mailto:President@manchesterhistory.org).

A topic that has been addressed at several Board meetings is the revision of the current Society's bylaws. The Board's intent is to revise the bylaws to be more succinct, concise and understandable. At the Membership meeting on February 3, several members expressed the same sentiments. A sub-committee will be established by the Board to rewrite the bylaws. This sub-committee will consist of Board and non-board members. If you are interested, email me at [President@manchesterhistory.org](mailto:President@manchesterhistory.org).

During the meeting two topics concerning the Woodbridge Farmstead were discussed, the establishment of the property as a museum and the rental of the apartment on the top floor of the house. The eighteenth-century barn has been restored and is open as the beginning of our farming museum, displaying early farming tools and other items belonging to the family. As to incorporating part of the house as a museum, the Woodbridge sub-committee will be exploring possible options this year. Concerning the rental of the apartment, we reviewed both Mrs. Woodbridge's will and deed; neither document stipulates that the apartment cannot be rented. The deed stipulated that Mrs. Woodbridge would have life use of the premises and house and any rent and profits would be hers until her passing.

The Woodbridge Farmstead, as well as the Cheney Homestead, will continue to have tenants. An outside source will be engaged to help us acquire the best tenants for our properties. Background checks will continue to be done and reviewed to assess each applicant's qualifications for their worthiness to live in our historical properties, being respectful and appreciative of what we have. We want the tenants to have a sense of ownership and pride in our history just as our members do.

I would like to thank the membership for re-affirming the current Board through an overwhelming vote of confidence. Through renewed enthusiasm and open communication by all, I look forward to the continued growth of the Society.

In conclusion I ask of you, how are you going to make us a destination, make us more professional, and how are you going to help educate our community about our wonderful properties and heritage of Manchester? Get involved, that's how. It is easy to sit back and say, "We should have." Remember this is your society, be active by attending our wonderful events, volunteer in the many activities available, get involved to see and better understand the workings of the Society. Help make a difference.

Sincerely, *Jack Prior*, President

***Our Mission...***

*The Manchester Historical Society educates the public about the history of Manchester, Connecticut; collects, preserves, interprets, and exhibits information and artifacts about the town and its diverse population, and advocates for the preservation of significant historic resources.*