

America 250

Planning Meeting #3 February 22nd, 2024 6:30-8pm Jonathan Trumbull Library Community Room

Agenda

Brief Introductions for Attendees-

- Donna Baron Lebanon Historical Society Museum Director (LHS) facilitator
- Julie Garceau Lebanon Historical Society Community Outreach Coordinator
- Sal Tarantino Sheldon's Horse (SH)
- (Iza)Bella Garceau Youth Committee Member
- Shomriel Sherman Jonathan Trumbull Library (JTL) Youth Services
- Sarah Schultz Committee Member
- Robert Letchie & Rob Cashmerine both Lebanon Militia (LM)
- Dave Packard Son of American Revolution (SAR)
- Ed Tytor Ye CT Gun Guild and American Legion Post 180 (AL180)
- Kevin Cwikla current first selectman town of Lebanon (Town)
- Dan Moore Cemetery Commission (CC)
- Linda Wallace First Congregational Church of Lebanon (FCC)

Donna Baron Facilitator- brief description to new attendees. Explained that America 250 is a nationwide collaborative effort to celebrate revolutions that shaped America and by planning events. There may be grant funding available for well developed plans to participate in the 2025-2026 year. Our goal is to create a subcommittee to drive the planning for Lebanon's America 250 participation.

Julie Garceau to take meeting minutes.

Kevin Cwikla- Town Committee Members – *Kevin* reports at the recent Board of Selectman's meeting there was a unanimous vote to form a subcommittee for America 250 planning (250 Committee) that the next steps are to elect a chair and secretary to move forward. Once meeting minutes are established, then ads can be created to generate public interest and involvement. There may be stipend funds within the budget depending on the 250 subcommittee needs.

Donna added that grants through the Last Green Valley (TLGV), CT Humanities, and State of CT funding may be available. Funds are allocated through an application process and LHS offers its assistance in applying for these grants once a plan is developed by the 250 Committee. The more organizations involved the more opportunities for grant funding.

Kevin responded the first step is to develop a fledgling 250 committee to establish a chair and secretary for communication moving forward. *Donna* asked if the 250 committee members must be from Lebanon? Answer No. That we should break the 250 Committee into parts and to involve schools. *Julie* mentioned that Rick Barnes (T58) has spoken to history teachers at

Lebanon Middle School (LMS) and Donna mentioned she reached out to Lebanon Elementary School teachers (LES)

Community Groups- brief updates- *Julie* pointed out the community groups that have already expressed interest or can be requested to participate from January meeting. They are

- Lebanon Lions
- American Legion Post 180
- Scouts- cub scouts, Troop 58 & Girl Scouts
- LES, LMS, & Lyman
- Local Churches
- DAR – Daughters of American Revolution
- SAR- Sons of American Revolution
- JTL- Jonathan Trumbull Library
- SH- Sheldon's Light Horse
- Lebanon Militia

Open Discussion-

Ed mentioned that AL180 recently held an oratorical contest that focused on presenting an improvised piece on the Constitution and that the winner from Lebanon should be invited to participate in America 250.

DAR, FCC, and CC have expressed interest in participating as well. *Julie* asked meeting members that if there are any persons or organizations missing from list that attendees feel would be interested in participating please reach out and ask them and communicate their contact info with me at community@historyoflebanon.org

Bella If direct participation not possible within the schools, we can use social media as a way to bring awareness and tease out involvement.

Sal asked Is there a 250 committee coordinator within the schools? *Julie* mentioned that we should contact both Superintendent Andrew Gonzalez and Rita Quiles Glover Curriculum Specialist for all 3 schools. *Kevin* suggested we address participation interest at a Board of Education (BOE) meeting as a public attendee.

Sarah asked is this event 1 day or more? *Donna* answered we are not sure yet and that it's up to the 250 Committee to decide. *Sarah* asked what did Lebanon do for the Bicentennial celebration? *Donna* answered that it took a large national focus on Revolutionary War events and that we are developing programs around the American Revolution but its important to include all revolutions i.e. Agricultural, Social, or Immigrational.

Ed Challenged attendees to read a book Common Sense by Thomas Payne which speaks to religious, government and different revolutions and that we can use this book as a basis. He also asked Lebanon Militia if they have contacts for the Governor's footguard for an encampment? *Rob* answered that they have invited veterans and asked if we have any reenactment contacts information? He also asked if the 250 committee is planning a 1 day event? Weekend? Or longer? *Donna* Answer We don't yet. We don't yet have a 250 Community organizer that this role was filled by a volunteer organizer for the bicentennial. We want to look at what the community is already doing and add to that to build a series of activities. The 250th

kicks off in a few years and runs from 2025-2031. Community can choose to be different. That Lebanon gets to choose what they want to do.

Sal mentions that NJ and NY are planning different events throughout the 8 years and to be aware that Lebanon is a landing pad for important influence to the beginning of the American Revolution and we should consider visitors may expect more from Lebanon. Visitors may be drawn to Lebanon community events because we are close to the facts, elements such as Women in the Revolution provided War efforts and that CT dared to be the provisioners of CT militia and they were seen as the best soldiers for lack of suffering (they wore shoes) Lebanon is a primary influence and we cannot ignore that importance especially with our farming history and provisions sent to troops.

Donna Lebanon has changed over time thanks to the farming, immigration and agriculture influences. As an example, Willimantic is focusing their 250 celebrations around both the American and Industrial revolutions. That every community should offer unique events. That each event needs marketing to showcase all the important revolutions and roles of diverse groups of people and that Women's history is critically important.

Bella suggests that we as a committee should plan how these events fall. That it could start with a soft opening or passive events first to gauge public interest in revolutions we focus on.

Julie references the posted January meeting notes that the themes and events discussed at the January meeting moved through time as a Revolution to Evolution theme with topics of Changes through the Eras, Agricultural influence, immigration influence, personal and women's influence, and modern revolution were highlighted as repeatedly discussed themes.

Donna states that Lebanon had the ability to be as creative as we want to be and to do as little or as much as we want. At this time the SAR calendar of events was presented among attendees. She also points out that it may be difficult to pull off events this year (2024) but the 250 celebration is still a year plus off so we have time to develop a calendar of events.

Ed points out that events should be interactive to attract youth and that adults may be attracted by literature but that all events planned should attract family participation.

Sarah suggests we do historical facts around the green walk.

Lyndsey (JTL) mentions that JTL has done a story walk in the past as a collaborative Eagle Scout project. That we should have a podium built as a starting point and move to a finish line. That the Lebanon Green is known as "The Historic Mile" And we could ask Lyman's woodshop to help build. That facts should be double checked and that a story walk would be easy to pull off and attractive to the public. That we can solicit participation from community groups – scouts, schools, and that if we develop early it can remain up for the entire 8 years if we want. LHS offered to be a source of info and fact checking with input taken from historic groups.

Sal offered an example of how during the bicentennial celebration programs in Stamford created a Town History Weekend where a park was filled with organizations with a small town festival feel and that people could travel through time by moving to different vendors and demonstrators. That community groups can be represented and adjusted year after year to get returning families and adjust the topics presented.

Bella suggested the Lions fairgrounds or the Green. Maybe a hayride and to be sure to involve all community groups and highlight each importance. That a "Lebanon Community Day" be developed and to involve all groups especially under represented groups such as women,

indigenous, people of color... This reaching out to all can develop a personal revolutions documentary story.

Dan asked how do we get kids involved? How do we share the info? That we need to work closely with schools to gain kids insight and interests. We should include Donna's research project Witness Stones that documents service of unknown peoples stories.

Ed says the ride to Gettysburg could invite students to research a prominent person's contributions to revolutions.

Julie suggests that we remember students are required to complete senior projects and community service and if we compile a list of projects to participate that they should be presented to students during their junior year to adopt for senior projects. *Harold* agrees we should have a compiled list of projects and that this tactic has worked in the past for scout and senior projects involving AL180.

Julie suggests that we piggyback off the 2025 Lebanon Dance fest considering it is the one time of year that most of Lebanon is at the Green for an extended period of time (Kevin clarified at 12pm families start to picnic on the green- fireworks off at 9pm) The Dancefest would offer an opportunity for families to follow the historic mile story walk as a way to travel through time with American Revolution focus on the top side of the green, moving to vendors and demonstrators for Agricultural, Immigrational, Women's Rights, Personal Stories, and Modern revolutions (at Baptist church end of the green) being demonstrated by different community groups. The idea is to follow the green path to travel through time from American Revolution to Modern Day revolutions and back again. We can include the passport to Lebanon idea presented by *Lyndsey* at the January meeting and try to arrange for the historic buildings to be open at this Lebanon Community Dancefest Day.

Kevin suggests that although we are generating a lot of great ideas we need to hone our efforts to first establishing a 250 Committee to develop workable ideas. That any interested individuals can contact Kevin.

Ed reminded us that the Memorial Day parade in 2025 can include veterans from all wars.

Donna reviewed the schedule of LHS, JTL, DAR, and SAR and that the historic buildings around the green rely on volunteers.

Harold stated that we need to create a list of critical questions, list of missing persons, list of current events i.e. flag day, veteran's day ceremony, LHS Antique Show, AL180 Tag Sale fundraisers and to expand list of events in addition to what's already in place.

Lyndsey cautions to keep in mind the hours and staffing abilities for town wide events can be challenging.

Julie offered to devise two separate emails. One email to go to 250 committee members who have expressed interest in involvement with the planning. They are Greg, Bella, Julie, Tom, Kevin, Harold, Ed, Sal, Sarah, Dan. This email will include minutes, next scheduled date of meeting and any relevant plans or changes made since the last meeting. Any interested persons wanting to serve on the 250 committee can submit their email of interest to join to Julie at Community@historyoflebanon.org

Julie offered and was elected to remain the 250 Committee secretary. A 250 Chair position remains open. If you have a name in mind, ask them and share to the above email.

Once the 250 committee has developed decisions on events, calendars, and community groups *Julie* will send an email to expressed interest community groups as a solicitation of participation.

Lyndsey suggests that if a mixture of town wide events are presented than participation should be easy.

Dave notes that since there is no more Lebanon Life newspaper publication that the Community Calendar and Town of Lebanon website could give a quarterly report of progress of planning. It was mentioned by *Donna and Lyndsey* that both Hebron and Columbia have a digital calendar in place that is working.

Talking Points -Revolution to Evolution

Story walk of "The Historic Mile"

Podium to be built located at Town Hall

Passport to Lebanon Move to Historic Buildings- FCC, Governor Trumbull House, Wadsworth Stable, War Office, Trumbull Jr. House, Beaumont House, Pastors' Library, Community Center Jonathan Trumbull Library and Town Hall .

- American Revolution War office & LHS
- Agricultural Revolution Mid Green
- Immigration Revolution After Catholic Church
- Personal Revolutions ¾ down Green
- Modern Revolutions- Baptist Church end
- Story walk of facts leading back to JTL
- LHS exhibits
- Vendors and Demonstrations from Community Groups peppered throughout the Green according to timeline - Lions, Scouts, AL180, Church groups, etc. to modern day revolutions through personal stories, Art show, modern day vendors of Lebanon made products.

Next Meeting is scheduled **Thursday March 21st, 2024 from 6:30-7:30.** We feel one hour is plenty of time to develop ideas and be cognizant of 250 committee members volunteer time.

Donna reminds us to encourage student participation highlight community service opportunities.

Bella suggests to advertise involvement through social media, alert to schools, and town hall notice board.

Julie to send minutes and reminder emails to 250 committee members and invite to participate to community groups and interested parties contact list.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.