

Heritage Farm Commission
Special Meeting - Bolton Town Hall
March 13, 2023

The Bolton Heritage Farm Commission held a special meeting on March 13, 2023 at 11:30AM at Town Hall in person and via Zoom. Members in attendance were chair Arlene Fiano, vice chair Beth Harney, Rhea Klein, Cara Wraight, Leslie Shea, Paula Lynn and Ann Maulucci. Bolton Historic Commission alternate Bonnie Massey and town staff representatives Jim Rupert [town administrator], Patrice Carson [Director of Community Development] (Zoom) and Wes Sargeant [sitting in for John Butrymovich, Supervisor, Building and Grounds]. Kevin Drake, who was asked to assist with advertising the event, also attended, and Patrick Carroll, from Regiment Bourbonnais, attended via Zoom.

1. Call to order

Arlene called the meeting to order at 11:30 AM.

2. Initial Planning for the Living History Weekend October 6-8, 2023

Patrick informed the team that this was an 'invitation only' event so that all unit attendees would be properly vetted by Regiment Bourbonnais. Those invitations were sent out 2/19/23 to 11 infantry units, 3 artillery units and 1 horse unit. Responses are due by the end of April, after all units set their seasonal calendars. Arlene confirmed that the majority of invitees will be units of French soldiers as this weekend is intended to reflect the French Connection as outlined in the three interpretive signs recently installed on the property. A dedication ceremony will be part of the event.

Organizers for each unit would be onsite early on October 6th before participants arrive to layout camp areas, tents, kitchen, livestock areas, etc. with wooden stakes and twine. On Friday afternoon re-enactors begin to arrive and will be directed where to set up. Registration includes submission of insurance certificates for each group. Typically individuals drive their personal vehicles to the site, unload, then drive off-site to designated parking areas, and are shuttled back to the site. Jim reminded all that this plan was weather and conditions permitting, and that a plan B would need to be developed, in case of mud, rain, etc. such as a tractor with trailer. Stragglers arriving on Saturday morning would be directed to do so prior to public hours; no cars in camp while public is on site: Saturday - 10:00 AM - 6:30 PM and Sunday - 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

Number of participants is currently limited to 100, including families of re-enactors, sutlers, etc. Patrick will confirm numbers as soon as available, initially by early May and final count by early August, as this determines the amounts of wood, food, shuttles and port-o-lets the town needs to provide.

Patrick, Ian Graves [field commander, Régiment Bourbonnais] and Arlene along with any town staff available will plan a site visit in late April/ early May while fields are still wet to create a layout plan to share with the town. Public safety details were discussed, such as EMTs on site during the event, proper storage and use of firearms and black powder, fire pits, etc. Patrick welcomes fire marshal inspections and suggestions. As this is not a battle but simply a drill event, there will be very scripted drills and demonstrations among soldiers practicing for combat only.

Patrick discussed the need for crowd control measures implemented by the town to provide for public safety as demonstrations occur throughout the day - cordoned off areas for weapons practice, etc. The public is welcome to walk through the camp areas at any time during public hours, but must be segregated from drill areas. Arlene suggested that the stone walls create a natural viewing partition either up or down the hill, and can be reinforced to provide safed off areas. Patrick and Arlene suggested we recruit boy scouts or high school students looking for community service to assist with crowd control.

The budget was previously approved by the town - Jim will get a copy to Arlene but they both thought it was about \$11,000. This includes previously mentioned items plus distribution of food for participants for the weekend, and fees/ stipends for personalities that will appear at the event. On Saturday and Sunday mornings the Bolton Fire Dept Women's Auxiliary offered to prepare a continental breakfast for the participants. There was discussion of a fundraising event to be held on Saturday evening if the participants would be willing - a dinner and dance at Chandler Hall if a caller was available. Patrick agreed to float the idea to the organizers, who are accustomed to holding a non-public tavern evening when re-enactors can relax outside public view. Jim reminded the team that there was no public consumption of alcohol permitted at the event without permission in advance and the proper insurance.

Advertising to the public for the event will be web based and done via social media; Kevin Drake was at the meeting to assist in coordinating that piece. Patrice indicated that a group she is involved with - Connecticut's Countryside - is willing to print advertising if she can get access to pictures. Patrick agreed that photos from their website - www.regtbourbonnais.com were available for reproduction. Any questions can be directed to info@regtbourbonnais.com.

Arlene mentioned that CVC will video the activities at the event. Patrick also mentioned that publication of the dos/ don'ts for the weekend might be helpful.

Arlene also confirmed that the Digging Into History archaeology program scheduled for July 10-24 is going forward as planned if smaller in scope. More details will be shared as they become available in case Patrick and his team want to participate as an advance advertisement for the event in October.

All participants agreed that monthly check in meetings after the initial site visit in late April/ early May would be helpful. Arlene and Patrick will coordinate. The Heritage Farm Commission has broken out tasks for commission members to take on, and town staff is prepared to assist in whatever way needed. Jim confirmed that the well project to bring potable water to the site is planned for April of this year so that will be available on site. Firewood has been cut and stacked and more will be made available.

Rhea moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:20 PM; Leslie seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Harney, vice-chair
Bolton Heritage Farm Commission.