

The Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission

Annual Report for 2015



Baron von Steuben returns to his Jersey Estate at the Steuben House, Historic New Bridge Landing State Park, for Baronfest 2015.

**Respectfully submitted to the Governor and Legislature of New Jersey
December 2015**





B. Spencer Newman's painting depicts the darkest hour of the American Revolution, when General George Washington led the outnumbered Continental garrison of Fort Lee across the Hackensack River at New Bridge on November 20, 1776. Doubtful to the last moment, this crossing preserved American hopes in the face of invasion by an army of Europe's finest troops. Eyewitness-to-history Thomas Paine stands in the left foreground.

Literally occupying the Crossroads of the American Revolution, the Zabriskie-Steuben House—the only extant house along the route of the retreat in Bergen County—went on to survive more of the war than any other home in America. The State of NJ acquired this landmark dwelling in 1928 as a perpetual memorial to the “times that try men’s souls.”

Dear Governor Chris Christie and Legislators:

Pursuant to our responsibilities under Public Law 2009, chapter 45, the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission submits this annual report for 2015.

2015 has been another banner year for Historic New Bridge Landing. The key to our success is consistently exciting and innovative programming that not only attracts new audiences, but repeat visitors as well. We succeed because we understand quality programming depends not only upon having an interesting and engaging story to tell, but also on coordinating the talents of highly motivated and well educated volunteers from a variety of professions, who generously share their enthusiasm with guests, and, most importantly, who create a pervasive culture of hospitality, respect for the lessons of our history and a commitment to stewardship over a significant American Revolutionary War battleground that gave life to our nation.

The Bergen County Historical Society presently creates, funds and staffs all programming at Historic New Bridge Landing, both on its own property and on adjacent state parkland, including at the landmark Steuben House. The Historical Society, an all-volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) historical association, founded in 1902, does not apply for or receive public operating support or other governmental grants, funding the maintenance of its own property at Historic New Bridge Landing and its various activities and operations through membership dues, donations, fundraising and event income. The requested line-item appropriation is only for the administration, upkeep and operation of the state-owned historic park.

We continue to believe the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission is a potential model for a more effective and efficient operation of state assets as well as a more economical expenditure of state funds. Since the commission is not subject to civil service regulations, it can employ local persons and contract with local businesses without adding to the growing public burden of pensions and benefits. The park commissioners not only represent local stakeholders—representation on the commission reflecting their respective land holdings within the park—, who know what is best for their communities, but they also provide private professional oversight without compensation from the state treasury. This is a win-win situation that continues to be ignored. The state-owned portion of Historic New Bridge Landing remains the only unfunded state historic site and state park in New Jersey, even though it embodies the only state parkland in Bergen County, the state's most populous county.

We further believe there is great potential to strengthen the regional economy through heritage tourism, if only we could overcome the backwardness in funding this virtually unrecognized and untapped opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

James Smith,
Chairman,
Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission

The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission

December 2015

Larry Bauer (Teaneck)

James Bellis (Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation)

Mary Donohue (River Edge), Vice-Chairwoman

Steve Ellis, DEP Commissioner's Designee

W. John Oddie (Teaneck)

Eric Pain, DEP Alternate Commissioner's Designee and Superintendent,
Ringwood State Park

Deborah Powell (Bergen County Historical Society), Treasurer

Michael Putrino (New Milford)

James Smith (Bergen County Historical Society), Chairman

Adam Strobel (County of Bergen)

Kevin Wright, Secretary, (Alternate for the Blauvelt-Demarest
Foundation)

John Heffernan (Alternate for the Bergen County Historical Society).

2015: The Year in Review

Upper left, a living-history interpreter pours tallow candles according to an antique recipe in the Out Kitchen on *Brigit's Day and Candlemas*, January 25, 2015. *Upper right*, volunteers repair and paint walls in the Steuben House on January 17, 2015. Below, River Edge scouts built a handy lean-to woodshed, similar to the one at Jockey Hollow, outside the Jersey Dutch Out Kitchen.





Visitors discovered the origins of Groundhog's Day through historical presentations on the midwinter feasts of Brigit's Day and Candlemas at Historic New Bridge Landing on January 25, 2015. *Upper left*, harpist Ardis Cavin performs for an appreciative audience. *Upper right*, Historian and BCHS Past President Todd Braisted provided an illustrated talk on the *Irish in the American Revolution*. *Below*, volunteers cleared the pathways in time to open the houses for Brigit's Day and Candlemas.



Experience history in one of the most storied places where it was made!



*Upper left, Floyd Little Sun Hicks performs a welcoming song and a thank you (blessing) song for **Under the Shad Moon**, Chwame Gischuch, the Lenape New Year on March 29, 2015. Upper right, the Tricorne Dancers perform at the **Country Ball upon the Anniversary of Washington's Birthday** on February 22, 2015. Below, Chief Dwaine Perry of the Ramapough Lenape Indian Nation makes welcoming remarks.*





In April, the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission organized a clean up on both sides of the Hackensack River, the heart of Historic New Bridge Landing Park. Garbage and invasive species were removed in an effort to restore vistas that were visible ten years ago. The Bergen County Historical Society has long been an environmental steward of this important green space along the Hackensack, first, by purchasing the property around the Steuben House to prevent an encroaching junk yard, and later by donating its own property to prevent a four-lane highway from going through the heart of New Bridge. Throughout the year, the Commission engaged all partners in fulfilling a shared vision of restoring and interpreting Historic New Bridge Landing Park to the greatest public benefit.





Above, on April 11, 2015, historian and researcher Todd Braisted conducted a **Battlefield Tour of New Bridge**. Below, on April 15, 2015, the Bergen County Historical Society's innovative **School of Historical Interpretation** conducted volunteer interpreters on a training tour of the newly restored Westervelt-Thomas Barn.





Nineteen authors, including several authors of children's books, participated in **Authors' Day** at Historic New Bridge Landing on May 3, 2015. Titles covered Native Americans and early explorers, the Revolutionary War, town histories, biographies, cemetery ghosts, and more.





Pinkster, a Jersey Dutch celebration of Spring, was held on May 17, 2015. *Upper left*, the maypole is raised in front of the Campbell-Christie House. *Upper right*, naturally dyed eggs for Pinkster. *Below*, the Tricorne Ensemble danced around the maypole with Ridley and Anne Enslow on fiddle and hammered dulcimer.





Above, the Pinkster table in the Steuben House is set with dyed eggs, butter, bread, cream, coffee, sugar, and tallow candles, which merry-makers going door-to-door, led by a May queen and king, have gathered in baskets for a feast. Below, Scott Barone, of the Third New Jersey Regiment, explains his musket to an interested audience.





Above, roadside banners announced **Vintage Baseball** doubleheader between the Flemington Neshanocks and the Brooklyn Eckfords on July 11, 2015. A rendition of *Casey at the Bat* is always a crowd pleaser! Below, team photo after the game.





Upper left, during major events, such as **Vintage Baseball**, the Bergen County Historical Society employs parking attendants on the state parking lot. *Upper right*, Assistant Director John G. Trontis, NJDEP Division of Parks and Forestry, poses with team captains after throwing out the first pitch. *Below*, **Calico Frolic for Swithin's Day** in the Steuben House on July 18, 2015.





Left, a volunteer on the Buildings & Grounds Committee paints the Closter Out-House. The Bergen County Historical Society, founded in 1902, privately owns the central portion of the historical park and does not apply for or receive grants or publicly funded operating support, but maintains its land and buildings through membership donations of time, talent and money and through event income and fundraising. *Below*, dancers attending the **Calico Frolic** sit on the porch of the landmark Steuben House. The Bergen County Historical Society initially occupied the Steuben House as its museum headquarters at the invitation of the State Historic Sites Commission after the WPA restoration of the house in 1939. The Historical Society is presently providing all programming at the state-owned historic site, which it staffs and cleans with volunteers.





On August 28-30, 2015, the Bergen County Historical Society and the 4th Battalion, NJ Volunteers hosted **School of the Loyalist**, a weekend of classes, lectures, workshops and living history on the American Revolution as America's first civil war. *Above*, an out-door class in front of the Steuben House. *Below*, Carrie Fellows, Executive Director of the Hunterdon County Cultural & Heritage Commission, gives an illustrated talk in the Steuben House on "Not Everyone Can Be Mrs. General: Best Practices for Women of the Army."





The Zabriskie-Steuben House was home to Loyalist Jan Zabriskie during the American Revolution and Abraham van Buskirk, of the 4th Battalion, NJ Volunteers, lived across the river in what is now Brett Park. *Above*, McAlpin's Corps demonstrated Brush Hut Manufacture in lower Brett Park in Teaneck. *Below*, tailor/historian Henry Cooke presents "The Cutting Table Advisor: A Workshop on How to Properly Cut and Fit Men's Clothing" in the Westervelt-Thomas Barn.





Baronfest, A Birthday Celebration of Major-General Baron von Steuben, held on September 15, 2015, featured a craft-beer garden, music by the Teutonic Knights, and pony rides in the Meadow. *Above*, the crowd enjoys German fare and music in front of the Campbell-Christie House. *Below*, Bob Gleason of the American Historical Theater portrays Baron von Steuben in front of the Steuben House.





Above, Bergen LEADS Class of 2016 poses for a group photo behind the Steuben House on September 21, 2015. Forty-one attendees heard presentations on local history and discussed non-profit organizations they visited. Below, River Edge scouts completed a nature trail and interpretive kiosk on the Bergen County Historical Society's lands, which opens new views of the historic 1889 swing-bridge, the Steuben House, and the wreck of the Hackensack schooner *Kate Lawrence*, which burned to the waterline in 1868 while moored to the bridge fenders.





Upper left, HNBLPC Vice-Chairwoman Mary Donohue with officials of the US Citizenship and Immigration Services at the Naturalization ceremony in the Steuben House on September 24, 2015. *Upper right*, the League of Women Voters was on hand to register new citizens to vote in time for the November election. *Below*, twenty-five new citizens take the oath of citizenship in the parlor of the Steuben House at Historic New Bridge Landing.





Upper left, broomcorn growing outside the Out Kitchen for manufacture on a broom machine. Upper right, students from Felician College volunteer to assist the Museum and Buildings & Grounds Committees on October 10, 2015. Below, Deborah Powell, art director at a major company, designs most advertising, including this card for the **Harvest Homecoming**, held on October 18, 2015, which featured the Acoustic River Band in the Westervelt-Thomas Barn, craft beers in the tavern and beer garden by Brix City Brewery, food trucks and free pumpkin picking for children.

Harvest Homecoming

at HISTORIC NEW BRIDGE LANDING

October 18, 2015 SUNDAY 1-5 PM

NEW BRIDGE:
 Battleground
 in the
 American
 Revolution



Picket-Fence Beer Garden • Music by River Acoustic Band
Brix City Brewery • Food Trucks • 3 Historic Sites
Pumpkin Picking • Pumpkins FREE to first 100 children
Tour the only remaining home on the 1776 Retreat through Bergen County!
 Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201 Main Street, River Edge, NJ.
 Adults: \$12, Students: \$8, BCHS members: FREE. Beer, food: additional cost.

BergenCountyHistory.org

The Bergen County Historical Society is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) volunteer organization, and was founded in 1902. Audio Info: 201-343-9492

Come home to history





Above, Bergen County Historical Society volunteers serve cider, donuts, and pretzels in the Steuben House during **Harvest Homecoming**. On October 24, 2015, historians Todd Braisted and Kevin Wright conducted a **Retreat-To-Victory Staff Ride**, tracing the routes of the 1776 British Invasion of Bergen County and the Retreat of Washington's troops from Fort Lee. Below, Eric Nelson, historical interpreter with the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, talks with staff-riders at the Alpine Boat Basin.





On the **Retreat-To-Victory Staff Ride**, the 28-seat chauffeured motor coach stopped at the Alpine Boat Basin, Fort Lee Historic Park, Napoli Restaurant, and Historic New Bridge Landing. *Above*, staff riders enjoyed spectacular views of the autumn foliage on the Jersey Palisades. *Below*, John Muller, of Fort Lee Historic Park, conducts an artillery demonstration.





Heritage tourism is good for business! Above, staff riders enjoy lunch at Napoli Restaurant in Fort Lee. Below, the Bergen County Historical Society honored Veterans' Day with a wreath-laying ceremony at the grave of Captain John Outwater in Carlstadt on November 8, 2015. Outwater's Company of Bergen County Militia was organized in December 1776 and served with distinction throughout the American Revolution. The ceremony included members of the Carlstadt Historical Society, who maintain the ancient cemetery.





Above, members of the recreated Outwater's Militia Company fire a salute over Captain John Outwater's grave in Carlstadt for **Veterans' Day**. Below, Bergen County Historical Society President James Smith and Past President Todd Braisted conduct a lantern reading of Thomas Paine's *American Crisis* on the **Bridge That Saved A Nation** at Historic New Bridge Landing to mark a special event commemorating the **239th Anniversary of the British Invasion and American Retreat**, held on November 21-22, 2015.





The Bergen County Historical Society, Outwater's Militia and the Fourth Battalion, NJ Volunteers, co-sponsored our **Retreat to Victory** weekend of living history and scholarly presentations on November 21-22, 2015. *Above*, Sam Davis, portraying General George Washington, addresses visitors in the Steuben House on November 22, 2015. *Below*, historical re-enactor Don Post portrays an eighteenth-century military surgeon.





Upper left, BCHS President James Smith, a member of the recreated Outwater's Militia Company, gives crowd some historical background prior to a reenactment of the American rear guard engagement that occurred at New Bridge on November 21, 1776. *Upper right*, re-enactors portray American defenders at New Bridge against the advancing British army. Below, military re-enactors converse with visitors during the **Retreat-To-Victory Weekend**, this year commemorating the 239th Anniversary of the 1776 British Invasion of Bergen County and American Retreat across New Bridge, held on November 21-22, 2015.





Upper left, Rodger Yaden portrays Sinter Klaas in the Demarest House for the Open House on **Sinter Klaas Day** on December 6, 2015. Foods displayed are authentic recreations of those depicted in Jan Steen's painting, *Het Sint-Nicolaasfeest*, dating to 1660-65. Upper right, Ariel, Denise and Elizabeth await guests in the Campbell-Christie House on Sinter Klaas Day. Below, open-hearth cook Andrea Clinch Jenner shows Dutch holiday foods, prepared from seventeenth-century recipes, in the Jersey Dutch Out-Kitchen at Historic New Bridge Landing.





Above, Ariel Woll, daughter of Rabbi Jonathan S. Woll and a longtime Bergen County Historical Society volunteer, kindles the first light on the Menorah for the first day of Hanukkah on December 6, 2015. She sings the traditional blessing and *Ma'oz Tzur* ("Rock of Ages"). Below, the Museum Committee of the Bergen County Historical Society installs a special Christmas exhibit of antique ornaments and "clear toy candies," made from the original molds from Bogert's Candy Kitchen in Hackensack.





Upper left, Bergen County Historical Society volunteers decorate Historic New Bridge Landing with boxwood, pine, holly, ivy and mistletoe. *Upper right*, a kissing bell is one of several old-fashioned decorations recreated. Below, the Bergen County Historical Society's 32nd Annual Colonial Christmas Concerts and Tavern nights were held on December 19-20, 2015. A magical weave of stories and song, these concerts by Linda Russell & Companie have become a family tradition and are now attended by the third generation of some families.





Above, volunteers of the Bergen County Historical Society's museum committee meet weekly to work on collections management. Here they fold a WWI battleship flag for safe storage. *Below*, the State Park Service installed a new gate across the vacated portion of Main Street, which Ringwood State Park carpenter John Livesey built.



How and When Were State Lands at Historic New Bridge Landing Acquired and Administered?

By Kevin W. Wright©2015

This was written eighty-seven years ago. Is its sentiment still timely?

“Steuben House a Disgrace”

“When the State of New Jersey purchased the old Steuben House for preservation as a historic relic, it assumed a moral obligation for its upkeep.

This responsibility our lawmakers in Trenton shunned by refusing to appropriate the necessary money to make repairs to the building and keep the grounds in order.

The structure, about which much romance lingers, stands today a disgrace to the state and a disgrace to the county. What are patriotic organizations of Bergen County going to do about it?

... It should be a matter of county pride to see that the Steuben House is given the care it deserves and we hope for prompt action to that end on the part of several organizations and individuals.”

The Bergen Evening Record, August 7, 1929



The Zabriskie-Steuben House about 1925. This is the only known image to depict the eighteenth-century bake house to the north of the mansion.

Our journey begins with the Sesquicentennial of American Independence (1776-1926) and the accompanying surge in interest in Revolutionary War sites. Few surviving relics of the American Revolution in New Jersey were more intriguing or deserving of preservation than the old Baron Steuben House in River Edge, a

cynosure of Jersey Dutch architecture, steeped in associations with the great American struggle for self-government. Here Washington had headquartered for ten days in September 1780. This was New Jersey's gift to the German baron who had trained the first American army. Here was an American battleground certainly worthy of preservation, but all was not well. In 1923, its owners had leased the old stone mansion for a tearoom, serving the touring car trade out of New York City and its suburbs. To accommodate the restaurant, an interior stone wall and chimney, including a jambless Dutch fireplace, were removed to turn two parlors into one large room. This poorly conceived renovation threatened the very integrity of the structure, weakening the roof and threatening an invasion of the elements. What could and should be done?

On January 26, 1926, Bergen County's Senator William B. Mackay Jr. introduced a bill to preserve the Baron von Steuben House in River Edge under auspices of the State of New Jersey, saying, "this so-called Steuben House is a place of national significance dear to the heart of every Jerseyman who wishes it to be preserved." Without a single dissenting vote, the legislature passed a bill (Chapter 15, Public Laws of 1926) on Washington's Birthday in 1926 to establish the three-member Steuben House Commission for the purpose of acquiring the old stone mansion and its grounds as a historic memorial. The commission was specifically charged with buying the property for a sum not to exceed \$12,000, and invested with the full responsibility of caring for it and keeping it open for public inspection under the supervision of a caretaker. It was further empowered to permit such persons and societies as it saw fit to occupy the historic house, once it was acquired. The commissioners were to serve without compensation and were required to make an annual report to the Legislature.

Upon the recommendations of Senator Mackay and Judge George Van Buskirk, Governor A. Harry Moore appointed two prominent members of the Bergen County Historical Society, namely, Joseph Kinzley Jr., of Teaneck, former Republican sheriff of Bergen County; and Margaret Porch Hamilton, of Leonia, former Democratic Assembly candidate, to the Steuben House Commission. After conferring with Louis Auerbacher Jr., of Newark, chairman of the legislative committee of the Steuben Society, he also named Dr. Robert F. Mautner, of Elizabeth as the commission's third member. The Steuben House Commission first met in Governor Moore's office on June 2, 1926.

From the outset, the Steuben House Commission experienced difficulty in locating Mrs. Walter W. Irwin, sister of William Randolph Hearst, the wealthy owner of the property, who traveled extensively. It was originally hoped the owners might deed the property to the state of New Jersey as a patriotic act. Instead, they demanded the full \$12,000 appropriation for the house alone, even though the property on which it stood was then valued at \$3,500 to \$4,000 per acre. The owners repeatedly declined offers based upon valuations from qualified realtors and, after a year of fruitless negotiation, Joseph Kinzley, chairman of the Steuben House Commission, conferred with Governor Moore and asked for an amendment to the law in February 1927 "so as to clothe the Commission with the necessary power to condemn if we are unable to acquire it by gift or purchase." The legislature accordingly granted use of the power of eminent domain to take the

property. Condemnation proceedings were initiated to take title to the old house, as well as to the water frontage on the Hackensack River owned by Walter Benson. In May 1928, the Hearst interests decided to contest the condemnation proceedings. While the Steuben House Commission prevailed, it cost the astounding sum of \$12,000 to acquire the house on only an acre of ground, frustrating efforts to preserve the surrounding battleground as a public historical park.

Acting through the Steuben House Commission, the state of New Jersey formally took title to the Steuben House and one acre on Sunday, October 21, 1928. Three thousand people attended the dedication of the Steuben House as a state historic site, including members of the Steuben Society, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Boy Scouts, veterans' associations, and others. A large crowd applauded as Joseph Kinzley handed the deed to Assemblyman Ralph W. Chandless, who represented the state. It was hoped that renovations of the interior and its surroundings might "establish an institution of some sort that may be maintained for generations to come."



Three thousand people attend the ceremony marking state acquisition of the Steuben House on October 21, 1928.

In February 1929, former county sheriff Joseph Kinzley Jr., chairman of the Steuben House Commission, asked for an appropriation of \$100,000 to repair and restore the building, expecting that even a smaller amount could do much good.

The Bergen Evening Record called attention to the fact, "The Steuben house as it now stands and the property nearby are a disgrace to the state and an eyesore to the county. If the relic and its immediate surroundings are put into decent condition, enough will have been accomplished for the present." It was further hoped the historic landmark and acreage in the rear of the house could be developed into a public park. The *Record* concluded, "Efforts to restore the old Steuben house and the adjoining grounds to some semblance of respectability will be approved by most Bergen County residents."

Bergen County Assemblyman Robert W. Purdy supported the requested appropriation as the building was "in such dilapidated condition that it must be rebuilt in part to prevent it from collapsing." This dire state of affairs apparently came about by the removal of an interior stone wall in 1923, which included a jambless Dutch fireplace and chimney, set in the original end wall of the 1752 house, to open two parlors into one large tea room for restaurant purposes. Assemblywoman Agnes Jones, of Essex County, a leading member the joint appropriations committee, opposed the appropriation.

On July 17, 1929, the *Bergen Evening Record* reported, "The State of New Jersey has never contributed a cent toward the upkeep of the Steuben House, a historical North Hackensack building of Revolutionary War times, despite the fact that two years ago it bought the old building for memorial purposes...." The neglect continued despite chairman Joseph Kinzley's best efforts to secure a state appropriation. In an editorial published on August 7, 1929, and headlined "Steuben House a Disgrace," the *Bergen Evening Record* opined:

"When the State of New Jersey purchased the old Steuben House for preservation as a historic relic, it assumed a moral obligation for its upkeep.

This responsibility our lawmakers in Trenton shunned by refusing to appropriate the necessary money to make repairs to the building and keep the grounds in order.

The structure, about which much romance lingers, stands today a disgrace to the state and a disgrace to the county. What are patriotic organizations of Bergen County going to do about it?

Several methods are open. One of the best, it would seem, would be for the Bergen County Historical Society to demand action by Governor Larson.

The Sons of the Revolution, with hundreds of members in Bergen County, might join in a vigorous protest. It is a matter of concern to every patriotic resident.

Are there not among the Boy Scout executives those who will lead the troops to the Steuben House, cut down the weeds and put the grounds in some semblance of decency? Who might better assume this task until the state is shaken from its lethargy?

It should be a matter of county pride to see that the Steuben House is given the care it deserves and we hope for prompt action to that end on the part of several organizations and individuals."

As the house that survived more of the American Revolution than any other in America was “nearing a state of ruin,” the Frank J. Van Wetering Post, V. F. W., undertook the task of reclaiming the building, which had virtually disappeared behind an overgrowth of weeds. Hiram B. Blauvelt, president of the Bergen County Historical Society, joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars in denouncing state neglect. It was learned that former sheriff Kinzley contributed the only funds expended on repairs and general maintenance. The Bergen County Historical Society therefore urged Governor Morgan F. Larson to appropriate \$25,000 in a timely manner to preserve the ancient fabric of the building. One Society member noted that it had been alerted only two or three days earlier to a published report announcing the demolition of the Mansion House in Hackensack, opposite the Court House, where Washington made his headquarters in November 1776. The Steuben Society, one of the leaders in the movement to preserve its namesake’s former home, contributed nothing to its preservation.

On August 7, 1929, the *Bergen Evening Record* asked, “Has the state senator from Bergen or any of the assemblymen moved to provide for the Steuben House through any of the customary legislative channels?” Its editor insisted, “Regrettable though it would be, the Steuben House might better be demolished than continue to stand, a disgrace to the state and to the county, and an eyesore to the community.” Patriotic folks were urged to continue their care because “the old house is fast going and needs a thorough overhauling if it is to be held for posterity.”

Assemblyman Joseph Marini of Bergen County introduced a bill in 1930 to convert the Steuben House into a museum, empowering the Steuben House Commission to rebuild, repair and improve the Steuben House and surrounding grounds. It was understood that “the annual appropriation bill will include an appropriation sufficient to cover these expenses.” Assemblywoman Emma Peters, Bergen County member of the appropriations committee, supported the \$100,000 appropriation, but expected \$50,000 by way of compromise. The statement attached to the bill (No. 318) noted, “the building, which is of historical importance, is now in a much dilapidated condition and it is necessary to rebuild and repair the same so that it may be established as a museum. It is also necessary that the commission be given the necessary authority and funds to care for and manage the property.”

The joint appropriations committee decided against any appropriation and, once again, the *Bergen Evening Record* reported, “Bergen County people who want to see the state take proper care of the Steuben House are interested in the fact that while the appropriation bill now pending does not provide one cent for the repair and maintenance of the Steuben House, it provides [...] appropriations for other causes....” Despite state ownership and widespread support in Bergen County, the legislature adjourned “with no thought for the care of the building at New Bridge....”

On August 30, 1929, the Veterans’ Legislative Committee, meeting in Newark and representing 100,000 veterans of all wars, added its voice to the outcry, already raised by the Frank J. Van Wetering Post 316, Veterans of Foreign Wars, in

Hackensack, and the General George S. Green Post 761, of Dumont. Its secretary, William C. Fay, of Teaneck, recommended an emergency appropriation from contingency funds held by the State House Commission to immediately fund repairs. Veterans from Essex, Camden and Mercer counties gave their support and it soon became evident “that the Steuben House question has become of state-wide interest.” Accordingly, the Bergen County Board of Freeholders agreed to provide \$1,000 for the maintenance of the Steuben House over the approaching winter, if the county’s legislative delegation would secure the enactment of laws making it possible “for the state to maintain the old colonial shrine in the future.” Senator Chandless thought it necessary to legislatively amplify the Steuben House Commission’s powers in order to have it maintain and oversee the preservation and operation of the Steuben House. He also agreed to seek reimbursement of whatever funds the county expended to preserve the state historic property. In writing to the Governor and to the State House Commission, he stated, “I believe that we in Bergen County are interested in the proper maintenance of this historical memorial and although it may be the primary duty of the State of New Jersey to finance the maintenance of this worthy project, if the State is temporarily unable to do so through a legal technicality as it apparently is, then it strikes me that Bergen County should be willing to step in and help out.” Since the State House Commission had lawful authority “to contribute funds toward the maintenance of monuments in any public place in the county,” he successfully asked it for temporary maintenance funds, amounting to \$1,000, to prevent damage to the building from the elements over the coming winter.

This emergency fund did not go very far. By the beginning of May 1930, the Steuben House Commission expended the last few dollars and therefore was forced to lay off the caretaker residing in the Steuben House. Bergen County’s legislative delegation took up the fight once more in the fall. In the meantime, architect Wesley S. Bessell prepared a “plan for the proposed restoration of the Steuben House, which would “retain all of the atmosphere which has sprung from its rich traditions, and still be a shrine of beauty.” In January 1930, it was announced that the new Assembly speaker, William Knight, of Camden County, was inclined to appoint Bergen County Assemblyman Robert W. Purdy to the appropriations committee, which Assemblyman Charles Otto, of Union County, was expected to chair. In February 1930, Assemblyman Joseph Marini sponsored Bill No. 319, which purposed to convert the Steuben House into museum, giving the Steuben House Commission “the necessary power, authority and funds to care for an manage the property.”

With its partial collapse imminent, the Steuben House Commission pleaded for the ongoing care and proper management of the Steuben House with reliable annual appropriations. Proponents of the historic site, including the *Bergen Evening Record*, noted, “Old Dutch Colonial architecture, even with no historic significance, is fast disappearing. This antique building, state property, rich in legends and history, a shrine in its possibilities, has been ignored year after year by those charged with the responsibility of making financial provisions for the care of the state’s interests.”

Assemblywoman Emma Peters, a member of the joint appropriations committee,

succeeded in May 1931 in at least obtaining an appropriation for emergency repairs. She said, "I believe that the \$10,000 will help pay for a much needed new roof for the Steuben House and will also help to meet the claims of the caretaker of the property and cover some other bills." Consequently, the Steuben House Commission received bids on June 18, 1931, to make emergency repairs from Collins Construction Company (\$6,116); John C. Hoth (\$6,930), Ferber Construction Company (\$7,150), and Frank Bogert (\$9,200). The commission's legal counsel Louis Auerbacher drew up contracts, awarding the project to the lowest bidder, who would work under supervision of architect Wesley S. Bessell. Civil service certification was also filed for the purpose of appointing a resident caretaker once repairs were completed. Plans were made "to enlist all patriotic support for the further improvement of the building looking toward establishing the house as a landmark of Washington's retreat through New Jersey." The Daughters of the American Revolution requested a room in the repaired colonial mansion.

To historically refute contentions made that the Steuben House was not authentic and that it was not standing during the American Revolution, Miss Saretta Demarest, of Teaneck, compiled a groundbreaking study of the historic fabric of the old structure, proving its antiquity. She was the first to explain how the house "really contains a house within a house," noting the additions were built before the American Revolution. She pointed out that rat-tail nails were used in hand-split laths, window frames and doorframes, attesting to its mid-eighteenth-century construction. In contrast, mill-sawn laths were used in a later addition. She also noted the Holland brick and old clay mortar, tempered with straw, used in the low circular vault in the rear of the house. "Holy Lord" or "H L" hinges, predating 1770, were also found throughout the house. She concluded, "The Steuben House is not only an historical site in connection with Baron Steuben, but also a Revolutionary War site, and an outstanding one in Bergen County."

In July 1931, Chairman Joseph Kinzley expressed gratitude to Assemblywoman Emma Peters for her success in securing the emergency appropriation. Architect Wesley Bessell thought the house could be made "fairly habitable for next winter, though our plans make no provision for heating or sanitation." Despite these limitations, he hoped to set aside a room or two as caretaker's quarters. Former sheriff Kinzley promised to make the most of the emergency funding, remarking, "Tearing down decaying structures, removing accumulated debris, rebuilding stone walls, fireplaces and chimneys is costly and restoration is far more expensive than new work." Even in making emergency repairs, the contractor was "directed to preserve all the old Holland brick, hand-hewn beams, stone block and old sills in the building. A beamed ceiling, which has been re-plastered is reputed to be one of the finest examples of the Colonial period in this section. An antique step, which for many years was used in the demolished Hackensack Courthouse, has been secured for the entrance."

Kinzley concluded, "We are hopeful that next year there will be an awakening of those responsible for state property to a realization of the fact that many people in New Jersey believe this fine old colonial structure is worth what it will cost to restore and preserve. History proves that in years past state officials gave it

concern. The present day records show that all patriotic organizations are desirous of its proper restoration. Our hope is that the legislature of 1932 will definitively and properly consider its obligation to complete what it started when it purchased the old structure for preservation. It will be a fitting monument to the memory of the man who, out of despair at Valley Forge, created the soldiery which enabled Washington to be the victor at Yorktown.” Meanwhile, large numbers of visitors were “making special trips to see it almost every day from all parts of the state.”

On June 20, 1938, a crew of WPA workmen began a \$20,000 renovation of the Steuben House with the New Jersey Historic Sites Commission contributing \$3,000 and the WPA supplying \$15,800 worth of labor. A new oil heating system, a bath and lavatory were installed. Original floorboards of the ground level were removed and the floor level raised about six inches; new random-oak flooring was installed in the front rooms over concrete pads poured between the original floor joists. In the front rooms on the first floor, original plaster walls and ceilings were either removed or concealed as a sand-finish plaster was applied over expanded metal lath. A system of subterranean concrete conduits (called French drains) were installed to drain the grounds and the New Jersey Highway Department built an 18' driveway around the house (removed in 2001). A mid-nineteenth century frame kitchen wing was torn off the southwest corner of the building. Lastly, whitewash coating the east and south elevations of the house was sandblasted and a temporary concrete porch pad was laid in front.

On October 14, 1938, Thomas Marple, assistant director of the Historic Sites Commission, invited the Bergen County Historical Society to occupy the restored Steuben House as their museum headquarters. The Society accepted on October 20, 1938. The Hackensack Boys Workshop of the National Youth Administration set about splitting rails and posts from condemned chestnut telephone poles to fence the Steuben House property on August 19, 1939. The renovated house was formally dedicated on September 23, 1939. Thomas Marple, director and secretary of the New Jersey Historic Sites Commission, represented the state. A red oak, the official state tree, was planted near the northeast corner of the front porch, where it remains to this day.

Three hundred people attended the dedication ceremony, which featured Francis C. Koehler, president of the Bergen County Historical Society, and Thomas Marples, director of the State Historic Sites Commission. According to newspaper accounts, Francis Koehler “spoke of the conversion of the building into a historical museum as the realization of a boyhood dream.” Thomas Marples “declared that the Steuben House was one of the most interesting and important historical sites the State had acquired.” The program also “included singing by three Indians, who are in the vicinity in connection with the filming of a motion picture dealing with the history of a vanished New Jersey tribe.” They were Chief Red Wing, a Cherokee; Chief Blow Snake, a Winnipeg; and Princess Naomi, a Sioux. It was noted at the time that “many ranking officers on both sides of the [Revolutionary] war were quartered at the Steuben House, including George Washington when in 1776 he led his forces in a retreat from Fort Lee toward Trenton and again in 1780 when his army occupied the village.” Others included Light Horse Harry Lee, Mad Anthony Wayne, Lord Cornwallis, Sir Charles Grey, and Sir John Baird

in 1778. General Lee started his expedition against Paulus Hook from the mansion.



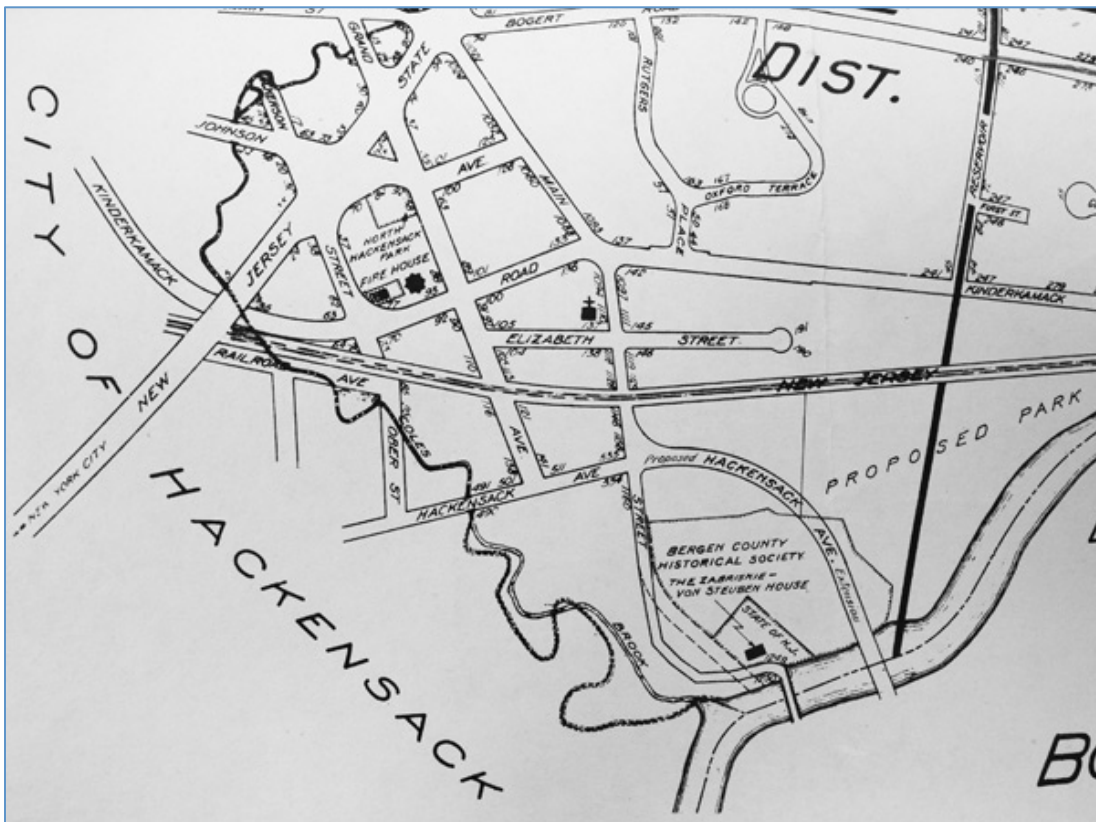
The house was not restored in 1938-39 as a period home or as an artifact of its time, but rather the state converted its front rooms into a museum for showcases to display artifacts with an office and library on a part of the second floor in the rear, and four small rooms (originally two upstairs and two downstairs) for a caretaker's residence. The Society began meeting in the historic homestead in 1940. The museum regularly opened between 10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. from Tuesday through Saturday. Admission was free and 3,000 schoolchildren visited during the first year.

Although the Zabriskie-Steuben House as regarded as "one of the most significant shrines in the State," an automobile junkyard to the west was expanding with the potential to reach the very back door of the house. Fires started in wrecked cars menaced the historic building several times. In April 1941, Francis C. Koehler, president of the Bergen County Historical Society, appealed for support for a bill, which would authorize the Commission on Historic Sites to acquire eight acres adjoining the Baron von Steuben House, including some shore frontage, at a cost not exceeding \$3,000 for a park. He had an option on it at the quoted price, expiring July 31, 1941. The land in question belonged to Mrs. Phoebe Hearst, mother of William Randolph Hearst, and was appraised at \$1,100. It had been acquired many years earlier for industrial purposes. The extra property was needed partly for parking at the Steuben House, as visitors to the house were then required to park along narrow New Bridge Road, creating a bottleneck.

Construction of a large development on River Road in New Milford made it increasingly dangerous to park along the busy road approaches to the old bridge.

As to the significance of the ground, Koehler notes, "History seldom records the fact that the crossing of the Delaware in December 1776 was made possible by the safe crossing of the Hackensack a month previous." He contended Washington's retreat across the New Bridge on November 20, 1776, was a turning point since "the Revolutionary War was decided at the location on the Hackensack River rather than at the crossing of the Delaware a month later in 1776."

As the state failed to fund acquisition of the land adjacent to the Steuben House, threatened by an expanding auto junkyard, the Bergen County Historical Society responded to the threat of encroachment and the lack of parking facilities by purchasing 7.3 acres lying west of the Steuben House. Acting in trust for the Bergen County Historical Society, David D. Bellis acquired the property on April 18, 1944, thereby saving a large portion of the Revolutionary War battleground. The Society vigorously contested the county's revived plans to build a new river crossing adjacent to the Steuben House in 1947. The right-of-way for the



Above, this 1952 master plan map of the borough of River Edge shows the lands of the Bergen County historical Society and the state of New Jersey. Note the original right-of-way for a proposed new bridge, running along the south gable end of the Steuben House and the "proposed Hackensack Avenue Extension", which moved the new county bridge away from the landmark house, preserving the American Revolutionary War battleground.

approaching roadway on the west side of the river is still evident on the tax map, showing the road corridor as it would have crossed immediately south of the Steuben House to the river's edge.

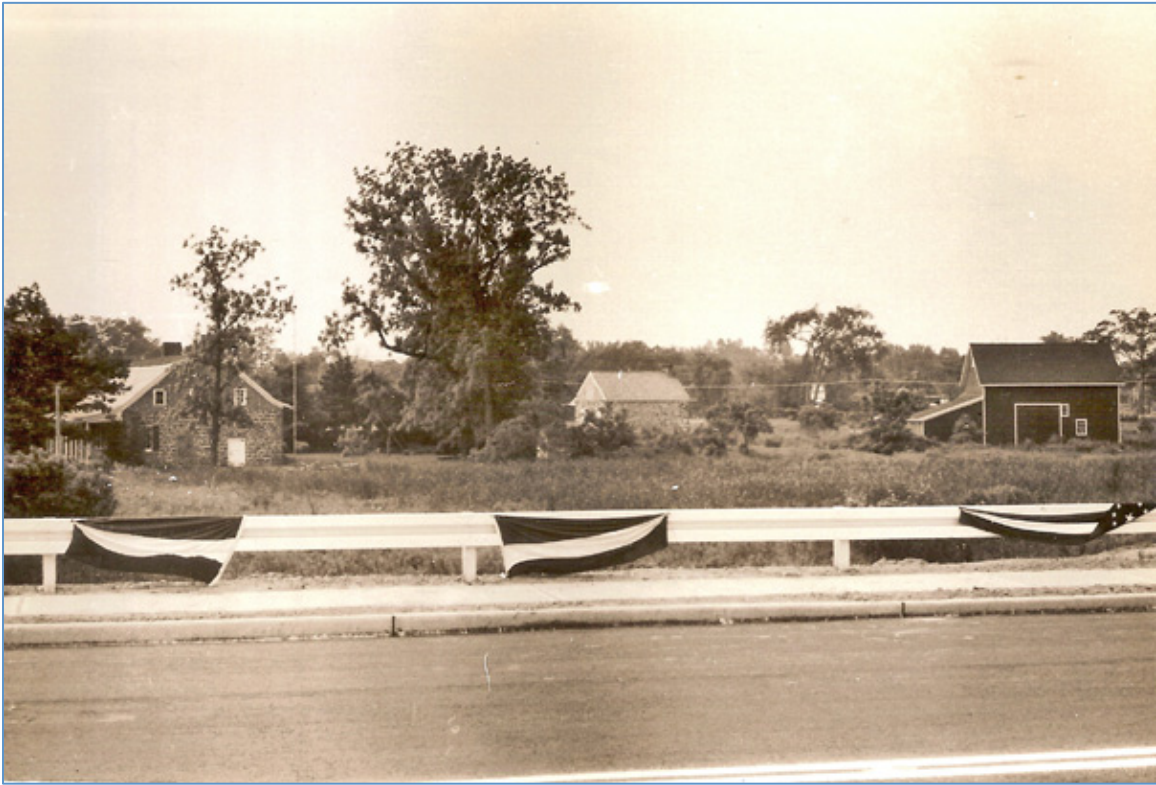
Beginning its descent into a disinterested bureaucracy, the State Historic Sites Commission's functions and properties were transferred to the Division of Forestry, Geology, Parks and Historic Sites in 1945. Twenty historic sites, either partially or wholly supported by the state, were placed under the Division's administrative jurisdiction and a Bureau of Historic Sites was created for their management and care. In the re-organization of state government following the adoption of the new State Constitution in 1947, "Historic Sites" was ominously dropped from the Division's title. The Division was absorbed into a Division of Planning and Development, Department of Conservation and Economic Development. In 1961, the name was changed to the Division of Resource Development.

To redirect the location of the proposed new span away from the dooryard of the Steuben House, the Bergen County Historical Society deeded a right-of-way, 60 feet wide, with 10 foot slope rights, across its property for \$1.00 on January 13, 1953, to provide for an extension of Hackensack Avenue northeast from the intersection of Main Street in River Edge to the site of a proposed new bridge. In December 1953, the Bergen County Board of Freeholders announced plans to replace the narrow iron bridge with a modern span as part of a proposed military highway to connect Hackensack and Englewood. County engineer Roscoe P. McClave designed a new structure that would cross the river about 300 feet north of the old New Bridge, permitting an extension of Hackensack Avenue in River Edge to connect with Brookside Avenue in New Milford, just beyond Roosevelt Avenue, thus straightening out what was described as "perhaps the most crooked overland route in Bergen County." (*Bergen Evening Record*, 13 December 1954).

The new roadway and bridge, projected to cost \$500,000, was declared a military route to gain federal dollars. On November 11, 1954, the Freeholders applied to the Federal Bureau of Public Roads for approximately \$250,000 in federal aid for the project. The new bridge was designed 44 feet wide (with pedestrian walkways on both sides of the roadway) and 250 feet in length. In comparison, the old iron swing bridge was 20 feet wide and 100 feet long. A strike delayed the arrival of steel needed for construction of the new fixed-span bridge, which finally opened in June 1956. The bridge alone cost \$218,000. The Army Corps of Engineers considered the old bridge an impediment to navigation and tried to make its removal a permit requirement for erection of its replacement. The Woman's Club of Bergen County joined the Bergen County Historical Society in a call to preserve the 1889 swing-bridge across the Hackensack River. Colonel John T. O'Neill, of the Army Corps of Engineers, yielded to Freeholder Walter M. Neill, who promised that the County of Bergen would henceforth maintain the old bridge, if it were spared.

Once the location of the new bridge and its approaches was settled, plans developed for a historical park centering upon the Steuben House. In 1954-56, the Demarest Memorial Foundation (now the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation)

painstakingly disassembled the Demarest House on its original site, where the Elks Club now stands behind the present New Milford Borough Hall at 1 Patrolman Woods Lane, and reconstructed it on Main Street, River Edge, directly behind the Steuben House, taking a 99-year lease for 2,800 square feet from the Bergen County Historical Society. The Red Barn (an 1889 English-style dairy barn or “cow house,” also known as the Westervelt-Thomas Barn) was moved from Ridgewood Road, Washington Township, and reconstructed in its present location behind the Steuben House in November 1954. The Old Red Barn featured an assemblage of ancient farming implements, old sleighs, a picnic wagon or runabout, harness and saddles. Farming implements included a wooden shovel found in the 1776 House in Tappan, NY; yokes for oxen, sheep and pigs; a plowshare carved from the crutch of a tree; a broom-making machine; a corn-shucker; a wheat separator; an automatic seeding machine (1864); a cobbler bench; axes; saws; traps; a wagon jack; and even an old divining rod. Parking was available south of the Steuben House on the Society’s property. The Westervelt-Thomas Barn was opened to the public on October 14, 1956.



Above, this photograph was taken in 1956 when the new Hackensack River bridge at New Bridge was dedicated. The Steuben House stands to the left and the newly reconstructed Demarest House and Westervelt-Thomas Barn to the right.

On January 13, 1959, the Bergen County Historical Society deeded part of its lands, just south of the house, to the state of New Jersey, acting through the Division of Planning and Development in the Department of Conservation and Economic Development, to provide the first parking lot for the Steuben House. The Maintenance Division of the State Highway Department completed

construction of the parking area in May 1960. The project also included installation of a brick walk with a “basket-weave pattern” on a 4-inch concrete base, leading from the new parking lot to the south end of the Steuben House. In July 2001, a portion of this walkway was re-laid to form a ramp to the level of the new wooden porch.

Recent state acquisitions

The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission was originally established by legislation (PL 1995, Chapter 260) to coordinate and implement governmental and private development policies and other activities incidental to the preservation, maintenance, restoration and interpretation of the historic riverfront village surrounding New Bridge, so as to optimize its educational and recreational benefit to the public. Since this historic neighborhood spans the Hackensack River at the intersection of four municipalities (namely, River Edge, New Milford, Teaneck, and Hackensack), the commission provided for an intercommunicative forum to inform and coordinate decisions made by diverse public and private entities having ownership of properties within the Commission’s jurisdiction. As originally empowered, the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission consisted of a representative from the County of Bergen, a representative from the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation, a representative of the Borough of River Edge, a representative from the Borough of New Milford, two representatives from the Bergen County Historical Society, and two representatives from the Township of Teaneck. The director of the NJDEP’s Division of Parks and Forestry was the ninth commissioner.



This photograph, circa 1925, shows the Arrow Canoe Club, built in 1913 on a state riparian grant, in the background to the right. It was last known as the Saw Shop.

With funds from the Open Space and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, the state of New Jersey acquired the Saw Shop property on Old New Bridge Road in New Milford, immediately adjacent to the east abutment of the iron swing-bridge, on October 28, 2000, for about \$120,000. Storekeeper James Natalo originally built this wooden building as a boathouse and soda fountain in 1913 on riparian lands adjacent to his store. For the time being, the current resident and owner of the small lawn-mower business was be allowed to stay. This sale marked the first property acquisition since the establishment of the HNBL Park Commission in 1995. Moreover, it represented a major commitment by the state of New Jersey to the on-going efforts of the Commission, and it recognized the historical significance of the eastern side of the Hackensack River as part of the Revolutionary War battleground. Negotiations to acquire the Pizza Town property (owned by the Kaferon Trust) at the corner of Hackensack Avenue and Main Street in River Edge and the adjacent residence (Sutton & Lys property) were continuing. The federal grant used to acquire and clean the Bergenfield Auto Parts Company (“BAPCO”) property at the intersection of Main Street and Hackensack Avenue/New Bridge Road in River Edge originated at a meeting in US Senator Robert Torricelli’s Newark office on January 18, 2000. Senator Torricelli announced a federal appropriation of \$1.1 million to the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission at a press conference in the Campbell-Christie House in January 2001.



This photograph from 1956 shows the buildings of the Bergenfield Auto Parts (BAPCO) auto-salvage yard at the intersection of Hackensack Avenue and Main Street in River Edge. This is now the meadow where vintage baseball games and other historical programs and activities are conducted.

On June 7, 2001, Gregory Marshall, director of the NJDEP Division of Parks and Forestry, reported he and his staff were working with Joseph DiBello in the National Park Service Regional Support Center in Philadelphia to work out an agreement for transfer of the federal grant by the end of July 2001. Acting in trust for the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission, the Department of Environmental Protection signed an agreement with the National Park Service to turn over the \$1.1 million federal grant and was awaiting the reciprocal signature from Marie Rush, the NPS Regional Director in Philadelphia. On November 1, 2001, Robert Griffin, chairman of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission, reported the National Park Service had finally concluded an agreement with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection for the transfer of the \$1.1 million grant for the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission. The 10-page document would be made available for the commission's review and approval.

At the meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission on December 1, 2005, Acting Director Jose Fernandez, of the Division of Parks and Forestry, announced he had received a phone call about an hour earlier, confirming the acquisition of the BAPCO property. Chairman Robert Griffin announced that NJDEP Commissioner Bradley Campbell would hold a press conference at the site on December 6, 2005. Senator Loretta Weinberg, Assemblywoman Charlotte Vandervalk, Bergen County Executive Dennis McNerney, River Edge Mayor Margaret Watkins and HNBLPC Chairman R. Griffin planned to attend. Kevin Tremble, president of the Crossroads of the American Revolution Association, extended his congratulations and praised HNBL as the great ideal, the model for the rest of New Jersey's Revolutionary War sites to emulate. Thus, after almost 67 years of trying, the BAPCO property on Hackensack Avenue was acquired as an addition to the historic park. Funds for cleaning up the property were reportedly included in the purchase agreement.

On March 1, 2001, Adam Strobel, the County of Bergen's representative on the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission, reported that Green Acres had contacted the County Planning Department to alert them that their efforts to acquire the former Pizza Town lot on Hackensack Avenue and Main Street, River Edge, from the Kaferon Trust had fallen short of the asking price and inquired whether or not the County might be interested in a "partnership," using funds from either from County Open Space Trust Fund or from some alternative source. This request was on the agenda for the County Open Space Fund meeting, scheduled for the following Monday. The County was, however, working on several parallel tracks. The County Planning Department, which administers the Bergen County's Open Space Trust, expressed interest in participating in the purchase, since they were concerned about improvements to the intersection needed to provide better access to the expanded historical facility planned for this crossroads. The County Planning Department was therefore engaged in finding out what road improvements would need to be done and how to acquire the necessary right-of way for a redesign of the intersection before Green Acres' acquisition of the remainder for open space. In this regard, the County was trying to be proactive and to deal with future needs for road reconfiguration in order to avoid future bureaucratic headache of trying to deal with land set aside through Green

Acres or open-space funding.

On May 3, 2001, Adam Strobel reported Green Acres had contacted the County of Bergen and asked to work in partnership in the acquisition of land along Hackensack Avenue, part of the Pizza Town property. Available funding was identified within existing bond appropriations for such acquisitions and improvements within the River Street/Hackensack Avenue corridor. The County Executive appeared before the Board of Chosen Freeholders to request an appropriation for this purpose and the Board unanimously approved the same on April 18, 2001. The County intended to talk with Green Acres to discuss the mechanics of how to move forward, including county plans for road widening. Capital improvement plans for road improvements covering any reconfiguration of the entrance to the historic park were included in the discussions and engineers were to make a preliminary presentation to the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission at the appropriate time. Chairman Robert Griffin reported Green Acres closed on the Sutton & Lys house (.1 acre) on the tip of the traffic island on May 14, 2001, paying about \$150,000.

On June 7, 2001, Adam Strobel reported the County of Bergen made \$250,000 from existing bond appropriations available for purchase of necessary right-of-way on the Pizza Town property and was working in partnership with Green Acres. Chairman Griffin reported that Green Acres had reached a "verbal agreement" with the owner of the Pizza Town property and was preparing purchase contracts. On August 9, 2001, the DEP reported that Green Acres signed contracts with the owners of Pizza Town property, agreeing to purchase for about \$800,000, and they would work with the County on surveys. Superintendent M. Pitchell had the utilities at the Sutton & Lys property disconnected, but needed to submit a demolition package. Ringwood State Park also installed new locks on the recently acquired Saw Shop property. The owner of the adjacent New Bridge General Store property had received but not yet returned an offering form to Green Acres.

On September 6, 2001, Chairman Griffin reported the owner of the Pizza Town property signed contracts and the closing was scheduled for around September 21, 2001. A demolition request was submitted for the Sutton & Lys property. The owner of the New Bridge General Store property signed and returned a Green Acres' offering form, but said he would like to exclude the garage from the sale.

On October 4, 2001, Chairman Griffin learned the closing on the Pizza Town property was still imminent and asked DEP officials for details concerning the actual date and price. Negotiations for additional property acquisitions were progressing. Commissioner A. Strobel reported there was a continuing discussion among the county engineer, the public works department, and the River Edge borough engineer, regarding a reconfiguration of the intersection of Hackensack Avenue and Main Street, River Edge. As soon as plans progressed, the County would make a presentation to the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission. An offer on the General Store property had been received in September and was being reviewed.

Robert Abbatomarco, executive director of the Bergen County Open Space Trust

Fund, sent a letter, dated October 17, 2001, to Judeth P. Yeany, chief of the Division on the Disposal of State-Owned Parcels, Green Acres, NJDEP, requesting a swap of land on the traffic island, bounded by Hackensack Avenue, Main Street, and the jug-handle access road, between the County of Bergen and the State of New Jersey, to match up with other County-owned right-of-way lands for intersection improvements adjacent to Historic New Bridge Landing.

On January 3, 2002, Farouk Ahmad presented a conceptual plan to the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission for roadway improvements at the entrance to Historic New Bridge Landing, including a proposed road widening for addition of turning lanes at the intersection of Hackensack Avenue and Main Street, River Edge, and creation of a circular plaza with a battle monument. Also, he introduced the possibility of building a pedestrian tunnel or bridge across Hackensack Avenue to connect riverfront wetlands, north of Hackensack Avenue, to Historic New Bridge Landing. The County was reportedly making good progress with respect to the road widening, having completed the surveys and would embark upon the design only after getting input and approval from the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission. A copy of the conceptual plan was left with the Commission so it could be used to refine thinking and to help visualize future possibilities.

At its meeting on March 25, 2002, the State House Commission, which reviews matters relating to state property, approved trading a strip of land in the Lys & Sutton property on the traffic triangle, needed for the widening of Hackensack Avenue, to the County in exchange for small plots of land adjacent to the State's holdings along the jug-handle, which would transfer ownership of the jug-handle to the state of New Jersey, when it was ultimately abandoned as part of the road widening. This trade was apparently never consummated by deeds of agreement.

Transfer of the administration and funding for state lands

Public Law 2009, CHAPTER 45, approved April 23, 2009, revised the jurisdiction, power and duties of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission and transferred administration of Historic New Bridge Landing State Park from the Division of Parks & Forestry to the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission. The new enabling legislation defines the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission as a body corporate and politic with corporate succession, created in the Department of Environmental Protection. The commission is an instrumentality exercising public and essential governmental functions. Exercise by the commission of the powers conferred by this act is deemed to be an essential governmental function of the state.

The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission consists of nine members appointed and qualified as follows: (1) the Commissioner of Environmental Protection or the commissioner's designee; and (2) eight residents of the State, who shall be recommended by their respective governing body and appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, among whom shall be one representative each from the County of Bergen, the Blauvelt-Demarest

Foundation, River Edge Borough, and New Milford Borough; and two representatives each from the Bergen County Historical Society and Teaneck Township.

Under terms of the act, the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission shall administer the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park, including but not limited to the Steuben House; and “any State funds appropriated to the Department of Environmental Protection or the Division of Parks and Forestry in the department specifically for, or related to the administration of, the Steuben House or the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park shall be reallocated to the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission for the purposes of the administration of the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park.” The commission may also, at any time, request the Governor and the Legislature to appropriate funds for commission purposes. Lastly, the commission may apply for Green Acres and other grant funding for the specific purpose of acquiring or developing real estate related to the mission of the park.



The Steuben House and old river landing from the *Newark Sunday News*, 1959.

Resolution requesting Line-Item Appropriation

Whereas, under Public Law 2009, CHAPTER 45, approved April 23, 2009, “the commission shall administer the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park, including but not limited to the Steuben House; and (2) any State funds appropriated to the Department of Environmental Protection or the Division of Parks and Forestry in the department specifically for, or related to the administration of, the Steuben House or the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park shall be reallocated to the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission for the purposes of the administration of the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park; and

Whereas, neither the Department of Environmental Protection nor the Division of Parks and Forestry has ever reallocated any State funds appropriated specifically for, or related to the administration of, the Steuben House or Historic New Bridge Landing State Park; and

Whereas, the Steuben House, acquired by the State of New Jersey in 1928, and Historic New Bridge Landing State Park are the only unfunded State Historic Site and State Park in New Jersey; and

Whereas, under Public Law 2009, CHAPTER 45, approved April 23, 2009, “The commission may, in addition, at any time request the Governor and the Legislature to appropriate funds for commission purposes.”

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission, acting in good faith, requests a line-item appropriation in the 2016 state budget of \$375,000 for operating expenses in order to take over full administration of the Steuben House and other state parklands at Historic New Bridge Landing State Park and to relieve the Department of Environmental Protection and the Division of Parks and Forestry of all its perceived responsibilities over state-owned buildings and lands under the Commission’s statutory jurisdiction. The Commission also requests direct access to capital funds for the care and development of the Steuben House and for all other capital projects on state-owned and operated properties at Historic New Bridge Landing State Park.

Resolution adopted on August 7, 2015.

Audit and Financial Statement

We respectfully, but regretfully, report that the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission has not administered or expended any state funds in the administration of the Steuben House or Historic New Bridge Landing State Park during 2015.

The Department of Environmental Protection has not provided us with any accounting of State monies expended by the NJDEP or the Division of Parks & Forestry at Historic New Bridge Landing State Park during 2015.

Meeting schedule for 2016

The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission will meet at 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, N. J., 07661 at 7:00 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month a, namely, February 4, 2016; March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3, December 1, 2016, and January 5, 2017.

Public Programs for the Year 2015

Under its General Management Plan, the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission seeks to preserve Historic New Bridge Landing for the purposes of public education and enjoyment by implementing a varied program of heritage interpretation. The setting of a museum village is used to provide visitors of different age groups and levels of interest with an authentic historical experience.

The Bergen County Historical Society presently provides all interpretation and programming at Historic New Bridge Landing, relying on volunteers and admissions (usually \$10 per adult and \$7 for children). Even when the state staffed the Steuben House, there was no operating budget for programming, the primary attraction at historic sites. Despite these limitations, the public enjoys a full schedule of quality programs. Events are well attended and programs play to capacity audiences. The following was the schedule for 2015:

Wednesday, January 21, 2015	<i>School of Interpretation</i> , 7:30 p.m. James Smith on "Cultural Landscapes."
Sunday, January 25, 2015	<i>Brigit's Day and Candlemas</i> , 1 to 5 p.m., 45-minute musical performance in the Steuben House at 3 PM
Wednesday, February 18, 2015	<i>School of Interpretation</i> , 7:30 p.m., "Stopping by the Wayside: Early American public houses, taverns and inns" with historian Kevin Wright.
Thursday, February 19, 2015	<i>BCHS Lecture Program</i> , Steuben House, 7 p.m. Historian Kevin Wright speaks on "Bellies In The Dust: Political Dissent In New Jersey, 1858-1865."
Sunday, February 22, 2014	<i>A Country Ball upon the Anniversary of Washington's Birthday</i> , 1 to 5 p.m.
Wednesday, March 18, 2015	<i>School of Interpretation</i> , 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, March 26, 2015	<i>BCHS Lecture Program</i> , Steuben House, 7 PM. Professor Farley Grubb speaks on "Colonial New Jersey's Paper Money Regime, 1709-1775: How it worked and why it succeeded."
Saturday, March 28, 2015	<i>Buildings and Grounds Spring Cleanup</i> , 8 to 11 a.m.

Sunday, March 29, 2015	<i>Chwame Gischuch: Under the Shad Moon</i> , 1 to 5 p.m.. Archaeologist and author Dr. Meta Janowitz will discuss Sara Roelofse at 1:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 11, 2015	<i>Battlefield Tour of New Bridge.</i>
Wednesday, April 15, 2015	<i>School of Interpretation</i> , 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 17, 2015	<i>BCHS Lecture Program</i> , Steuben House, 7 p.m. Land title expert Joseph Grabas peaks on "Owning New Jersey: Finding History in the Land Records."
Sunday, May 3, 2015	<i>Authors' Day.</i>
Sunday, May 17, 2015	<i>Pinkster, a Jersey Dutch Celebration of Spring</i> , 1 to 5 p.m.
Wednesday, May 20, 2015	<i>School of Interpretation</i> , 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 21, 2015	<i>BCHS Lecture Program</i> , Steuben House, 7 p.m. Historian Todd Braisted speaks on New Bridge.
Monday, May 25, 2015	<i>Memorial Day Wreath-Laying at General Enoch Poor's Grave at the First Dutch Reformed Church in Hackensack</i> , at 10 a.m.
Saturday, June 6, 2015	<i>Brett Park Cleanup</i>
Wednesday, June 17, 2015	<i>School of Interpretation</i> , 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, July 11, 2015	<i>Vintage Base Ball at Historic New Bridge Landing</i> , 11 a.m. Doubleheader.
Wednesday, July 15, 2015	<i>School of Interpretation</i> , 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, July 18, 2015	<i>Calico Frolic for St. Swithin's Day</i> , 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Saturday, August 15, 2015	<i>50/50 Raffle Drawing</i> , 7 p.m. at Steuben House.
Wednesday, August 19, 2015	<i>Lantern Tour</i> , 7 p.m.
Saturday, August 22, 2015	<i>Grounds Clean-up</i> , 8 a.m.

Saturday, August 28-30, 2015	<i>School of the Loyalist</i> , a weekend of academic presentations, workshops, research and interpreting geared towards the Loyalist living history community. Friday lecture: 7 p.m. Saturday: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday: 12 noon to 3:30 p.m. \$10 adult; 47 child; BCHS members free. Two day pass: \$15 Adult; \$10 child.
Wednesday, September 16, 2015	<i>School of Interpretation</i> , 7:30 p.m. The Demarest house, or Paulison Millhouse. History and Tour with Kevin Wright
Thursday, September 17, 2015	<i>BCHS Lecture</i> : Richard Koszarski, <i>Silent Film in Bergen County</i>
Saturday, September 19, 2015	<i>Grounds cleanup</i> , 8 a.m.
Sunday, September 20, 2015	<i>Baronfest, A Celebration of Major General Friedrich W. Baron von Steuben at his Jersey Estate at Historic New Bridge Landing</i> , 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Featuring Teutonic Knights.
Monday, September 21, 2015	<i>Bergen Leads Class of 2016</i> (41 attendees), 3:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Steuben House.
Thursday, September 24, 2015	<i>Naturalization Ceremony</i> at 10:30 a.m.
Sunday, September 27, 2015	<i>HNBL Walking Tour with Kevin Wright for the Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway through Teaneck</i> , 10 a.m.
Thursday, October 15, 2015	<i>BCHS Lecture</i> : Lisa Begin-Kruysman, <i>Around the World in 1909: Harriet White Fisher and Her Locomobile</i> ,
Sunday, October 18, 2015	<i>Harvest Homecoming</i> , 1 to 4:30 p.m. Kevin Wright speaking on “History of the Pumpkin.” River Acoustic Band in Barn.
Wednesday, October 21, 2015	<i>School of Interpretation</i> at 7:30 p.m. Kevin Wright on the “Basics of Interpretation and the Visitor Experience”

Saturday, October 24, 2015	<i>Staff Ride, Fort Lee.</i>
Sunday, November 1, 2015	<i>Mitzvah Day, 10 a.m. – 12 noon.</i>
Sunday, November 8, 2015	<i>Wreath-laying and ceremony at Captain John Outwater's grave, Carlstadt, NJ.</i>
Wednesday, November 18, 2015	<i>School of Interpretation, 7:30 p.m.</i> Historian Todd Braisted on "New Bridge in the American Revolution."
Thursday, November 19, 2015	<i>BCHS Lecture: Kevin Wright, History of the Meadowlands, From glacial morass to cultural landform.</i>
Saturday, November 21 and Sunday, November 22, 2015	<i>The 239th Anniversary of the British Invasion and American Retreat from Fort Lee at The Bridge That Saved A Nation, At 7:00 p.m., Saturday, November 23 in Steuben House and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, November 24, 2013, with talk in Steuben House at 1 p.m.</i>
Sunday, December 6, 2015	<i>Sinter Klaas Day at Historic New Bridge, 1 to 4 p.m. Open House.</i>
Saturday, December 12, 2015	<i>Decorating Historic New Bridge Landing for winter holidays, 10 AM to 4 p.m.</i>
Wednesday, December 16, 2015	<i>School of Interpretation, 7:30 p.m.</i> "Origins of Christmas, winter solstice celebrations, and midwinter festivals" with historian Kevin Wright.
Saturday, December 19 and Sunday, December 20, 2015	<i>The 32nd Anniversary of Colonial Christmas Concerts in the Steuben House at Historic New Bridge Landing, At 7 and 8:30 p.m., Saturday, December 19 and 6 and 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 20, 2015</i>

Minutes of the Meetings of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission for January 2015-December 2015

Meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission January 7, 2015

I. Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Secretary K. Wright read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and Chairman J. Smith opened the meeting at 7:01 PM.

II. Attendance

L. Bauer; M. Donohue; D. Powell; M. Putrino; J. Smith; A. Strobel.

Excused: W. J. Oddie

Also, John Heffernan (BCHS Alternate); K. Wright (Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation Alternate)

III. Review of Minutes

Review of the Minutes of the Meeting of November 6, 2014: Motion to approve: M. Donohue; second, A. Strobel. **Motion carried.**

Review of the Minutes of December 4, 2014: Motion to approve: M. Donohue; second, A. Strobel. **Motion carried.** M. Putrino, abstained.

Secretary K. Wright informed the commission that he posted the meeting schedule for 2015 in the *Record* and with the Clerk of Bergen County and with the Secretary of State in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

IV. Calendar

V. Chairman's Report

Good evening everyone, I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and wish you all the best in the New Year. As the New Year begins, I feel it is important to do two things: reflect and revisit items that have occurred in the past, but also, move forward with a new year and new start.

In 2011, this very commission passed a resolution authorized Commission Member, the State DEP to complete the following work with the Commission's approval:

Resolved, the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission, acting in good faith, authorizes the DEP's Office of Resource Development and the State Park Service to act as agents of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission to complete needed repairs to the state-owned Steuben House (as described in the attached list) in a timely manner on condition that the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission approve plans for all such repairs, restoration and maintenance prior to the commencement of work. The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission further authorizes all work or repairs that can be undertaken in winter weather to be executed as soon as possible under the conditions stipulated and that other exterior repairs or maintenance begin in the spring. Motion, M. Donohue; second, D. Powell. Motion carried. J. G. Trontis, abstained.

List of Repairs and Restoration at Steuben House and State Owned Lands at Historic New Bridge Landing, attached to the resolution of **November 3, 2011**.

1. Replace furnace and repair heating system. (On-going?)
2. Repair flooring on main floor and refinish. (Replaced, not finished)
3. Check and update all fire extinguishers throughout the Steuben House. (we have not heard)
4. Replace at least four missing shutter dogs to secure shutters (order extra to have on hand). **Completed by the Bergen County Historical Society**
5. Replace shutter bolts (at least four are damaged; order extras). **Completed by the Bergen County Historical Society**
6. Repair and repaint plaster walls in Dwelling Room and rear rooms, correcting defects that have either existed for years or resulted from flooding. (Not done)
7. Repair broken windowpanes (At least two on first floor, three or four on rear elevation) (Not done)
8. Finish paving and striping parking lot on Pizza Town property. Place sign identifying parking for HNBL (Not done)
9. Restore portion of roadway (formerly Main Street) where washed out in Hurricane Irene. (Done)
10. Have snow removal contract include removal by hand shoveling or snow blower any ice and snow on BAPCO pathway, and all walks and pathways on grounds of Steuben House as well as roundabout. (Resolved?)
11. Provide hand-towel dispenser and supply of hand towels for bathroom. (Resolved)
12. Level grade of roundabout, removing drainage swale, and place curbing to demark roadway from island and lawn areas. (Not done)
13. New brick walkway has brick too widely spaced with recessed joints, making walking difficult. Repair or replace as required. (Not done)

14. Repair north porch light and replace handicapped ramp at north parlor door (which washed away in flood). **(Completed)**
15. Repair north shutter on parlor (broken for years and nailed shut). **(Resolved)**
16. Emplace bollards where saw horses currently block roadway. **(Not done)**
17. Cut meadow on BAPCO property. **(Completed irregularly)**
18. Restore and maintain landscaping on Sutton & Lys property. **(Trees are toppled over, property ungraded).**
19. Eliminate poison ivy vines from black locust along walkway and ash tree by bridge. **(Completed)**
20. **Requires Immediate Action** Repair porch columns and decking. **(Not done)**
21. **Requires Immediate Action** Repair pointing as required around Steuben House. **(Not done)**
22. Remove weeds from pathway on former BAPCO property and maintain. **(Not completed)**
23. Maintain and replace bulbs on all lighting fixtures, interior and exterior, on the Steuben House. **(Exterior Completed)**
24. Repair track lighting in garret (broken connection means only one segment of track lighting works)
25. Repair furnace room Light (remains on)
26. Remove Pergo flooring and raised floor on second floor in rear; install reproduction doors in openings with appropriate period hinges and box locks, and repair and refinish original floorboards on second floor as required. **(Not done)**
27. Purchase reproduction box locks for front doors and doors on second floor.
28. Paint rear rooms on first and second floors. **(Not done)**
29. Find key or remove lock from north door in basement. **(Not done)**
30. Move black walnut sapling into place where ancient black walnut was removed. **(Not done)**
31. Remove pokeweed and other overgrowth from state-owned portion of river landing. **(Removal completed by Bergen County Historical Society, state has mowed/maintained to control)**
32. Remove florescent lighting on second floor (rear rooms) and replace with appropriate period lighting fixtures. **(Not done)**
33. Repair exterior rear staircase. **(Not done)**

Vice-Chairwoman M. Donohue commented that twenty-four of thirty-three items on the list are either unresolved or unfinished. Of the four items completed, the Bergen County Historical Society completed three, even though they were at the Steuben House. She didn't think this is proper supervision of the site. She suggested writing a factual letter to the NJDEP, addressing these issues. Commissioner D. Powell questioned whether the process is correct and whether they would do a satisfactory job.

Chairman J. Smith continued, noting, as we now enter the 4th year of this list, I believe there are concerns that need to be addressed immediately, like the pointing on the Steuben House and the columns on the front porch. We must make every effort to ensure that the DEP fulfills their obligation on this important County, State, and International landmark to ensure it is available for future generations. My fear is that if these structural concerns are not addressed immediately, a true Bergen County and national landmark will be damaged even greater.

With the New Year, it also gives everyone the opportunity to start a new. I want to thank Mary for her continued efforts with River Edge and Adam S. for facilitating and further examining the on-going drainage issues here at New Bridge. The Society has begun designing interpretive signage, which will replace the brown signs along the riverbank. Once completed, the Society will introduce their work to the Commission. I believe the current text is good, but as visual learners, a greater story with images and text can greatly improve the visitor experience at New Bridge. Similar panels exist at historic sites throughout the country. These will help define the narrative of New Bridge. I also want to thank Larry B. for taking on Lower Brett Park and creating the opportunity to engage Teaneck in the care and maintenance. It may be beneficial for the Commission to spearhead/sponsor an earth day centric event in the park that kicks off this initiative in the spring, though planning will need to begin. Lastly, I would like to thank Kevin for drafting the Commission's *Annual Report*—it is no easy task to accomplish this, yet he has completed it at on time once again.

Again, in 2015, each member of the Commission should play an important role and will play an important role in our meetings. Whether they are interacting their respective stakeholders and then communicated back to the Commission, or taking concerns from the Commission back to their stakeholders (which is what is starting to happen). This is exciting because I believe this how the commission was intended to operate and I hope we can continue to facilitate that in the New Year. To recap and looking forward, our short term goals will be to (a.) address the condition of lower Brett park and work on solutions, (b.) help to improve the visitor's experience at the 1888 swing bridge and (c.) address the immediate needs of the Steuben House.

VI. Continuing Business

A. Teaneck

Commissioner L. Bauer reported he reached out after our last email exchange to engage interest in a community project to help clear Brett Park of invasive species that are overwhelming the native plantings. He reached out through the Mayor and Township Manager, seeking approval for Public Works' participation. He also

is reaching out to the Garden Club. He reported there is continuing interest in locating a Holocaust memorial in upper Brett Park.

Secretary K. Wright noted that we still have a (one-sided) blue Historic New Bridge Landing sign, designed by *Signs by Blohm* on River Road, New Milford, which is identical to those on the Pizza Town Lot and near the flag pole at the Steuben House, and which could be placed on River Road in upper Brett Park, helping to identify the entire park as part of the Revolutionary War battleground at Historic New Bridge Landing. He emphasized that upper Brett Park falls under the commission's jurisdiction under the boundary description in the 2009 legislation, which excludes only the Public Works' facility.

B. New Milford

Commissioner M. Putrino reported he would locate the Historic New Bridge Landing sign at *Signs by Blohm*. He also noted we would meet with the borough tax assessor next week to ascertain the assessment of the New Bridge General Store property on Old New Bridge Road, which is currently being advertised for sale. He also reported the borough is still waiting on news about the *Gateway to New Bridge* grant.

C. River Edge

Vice-Chairwoman M. Donohue reported she spoke to the town and to PSE&G about the light in the Pizza Town parking lot. She also reported that the proposed residential development on New Bridge Road in River Edge is still early in the talking stage and is not yet ready for submission to the Planning Board. The developer is apparently interested in knowing more about possible tax incentives.

D. County of Bergen

Commissioner A. Strobel reported he received a copy of the letter from the Borough of River Edge, addressed to County Engineer Joe Femia, regarding the storm drainage system on Main Street and the tidal flap at the outlet in the river, which was referred to County Drainage Engineer Christos Kavvadas (Principal Engineer – Hydraulics), who will meet with K. Wright at the site at 10 AM on January 15, 2015. The drainage engineer searched the county's files for relevant maps to see if they have anything in advance of the planned site visit. He is asking if the Bergen County Historical Society has any relevant information in its files. Secretary K. Wright said he would look to see if he has any relevant information in his files.

Commissioner A. Strobel also gave a brief update on the structural repairs to the Campbell-Christie House, saying he reached out to Kurt Leasure of HMR, Architects, who is reviewing the close-out documents from Lewis-Graham, the contractor, and John Terreri, the County Architect. One thing we want is final drawings for our archives to document what was done. We believe the final inspection of the work was done on November 17, 2014, when outstanding issues were resolved, such as elevating the back-up battery for the new sump pump on a shelf above the flood level.

E. Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation

F. Bergen County Historical Society

Commissioner D. Powell reported that we got through the sold-out Colonial Christmas Concerts. We continue to be amazed at how much time volunteers contribute to the success of our programs. The concerts and accompanying Tavern Nights rounded out a remarkably successful year of programming at Historic New Bridge Landing. She also reported that the Society's email blast (*Our Connection to the Past*) goes out to 1,800 interested people. The BCHS website has received over 200,000 unique visits, representing 11,000 annually since its inception, but proportionately more in recent years. She posted the Commission's *Annual Report* on the website. The Historical Society continues with planning and work through its committees and is presently focusing on new interpretive signage. Volunteers have stepped forward to volunteer and paint the Washington Room in the Steuben House, replicating the original colors. On the first weekend in May, we will host our first Authors' Day at Historic New Bridge Landing.

Vice-chairwoman M. Donohue noted she recently gave the Society a check for \$140 from the sale of her children's book on New Bridge and she is scheduling presentations for River Edge students and their parents. Commissioners M. Putrino and L. Bauer said they would look into having the book sold at the New Milford and Teaneck Libraries.

VII. New Business

A. Meeting of Mayors

Commissioner L. Bauer suggested we host a meeting of mayors and council members from the surrounding towns at Historic New Bridge Landing to better inform them on the historic park and what we are accomplishing and what we would like to accomplish.

VIII. Public Comment

BCHS Alternate J. Heffernan noted that, now that all the leaves are off the trees, you have a clear view of all the historic buildings at New Bridge. Chairman J. Smith remarked how wonderful it is to have such a lovely green spot in such a densely populated area.

IX. Adjournment

Chairman J. Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:04 pm.

X. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission will be held in the Campbell-Christie House at 7 PM at Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey, 07661 on February 5, 2015. Future meetings are scheduled for March 5, 2014; April 2, 2015; May 7, 2015; June 4, 2015; July 2, 2015; August 6, 2015; September 3, 2015; October 1, 2015; November 5, 2015; December 3, 2015; and January 7, 2016.

**Meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission
February 5, 2015**

XI. Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Secretary K. Wright read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and Chairman J. Smith opened the meeting at 7:01 PM.

XII. Attendance

L. Bauer; M. Donohue; D. Powell; M. Putrino; J. Smith; A. Strobel.

Excused: W. J. Oddie

Also, John Heffernan (BCHS Alternate); Richard Karp, Teaneck; K. Wright (Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation Alternate); John Seasley, Staff Writer, *The Record*.

XIII. Review of Minutes

Review of the Minutes of the Meeting of January 7, 2015: Motion to approve: L. Bauer; second, M. Donohue. **Motion carried.**

XIV. Calendar

XV. Chairman's Report

Good evening everyone, It's February and who would have thought it? More snow. Still, I thank everyone for attending tonight as we continue to move the H.N.B.L.P.C. *forward*. Per our last meeting, the Bergen County Historical Society has offered and followed through with the painting of the "Washington Room" of the Steuben House. It is believed that this is the room Washington used as his headquarters and it is imperative that we improve the visitor's experience when they enter it. If a room has peeling paint or walls that were never painted, it is difficult for a visitor to grasp the importance of the room they are standing in. I would like to thank the Society volunteers who carefully moved their outstanding collection and painted the Washington Room and adjoining room (the former caretaker kitchen). As partners in this Commission, the Society values the importance of its collection, this important site and the role that it played in both Bergen County and national history.

I want to thank Adam Strobel for facilitating a meeting, with Kevin present, to further examine the ongoing drainage issues here at New

Bridge. I also want to thank Larry Bauer for his continued efforts concerning Brett Park and creating the opportunity to engage Teaneck in the care and maintenance. After further discussions with Larry, we believe April 22nd (Earth Day) may be an appropriate day to organize our cleanup of the park, inviting all involved to a discussion soon to further facilitate this endeavor.

At the last meeting, I thoroughly enjoyed each and every Commission member taking the lead with their respective entities and going back to them to them to facilitate progress. Whether it was with the signage for Brett Park to events in Teaneck, River Edge, Bergen County or the Society, I believe this is what the Commission was intended for and how to operate. Moving forward, we have already begun to tackle our short range goals for 2015 (it's only February), from opening dialogue and helping to clean up Brett Park, to the Society taking the lead with the upstairs of the Steuben House. Moving forward, I do think we need to focus on the swing bridge, as this is an important component of this site that is sometimes overshadowed. The bridge itself connects the different entities involved, is a historic crossing and historic for its construction in its own right. Yet when one approaches the bridge from either side, it is underwhelming. I would like to begin discussions on replacing the guardrail on the Teaneck side with decorative bollards. This would improve pedestrian traffic flow, prevent vehicles and be attractive to the site, and have matching bollards replace the wooden bollards on the River Edge side. Current bollards can have reflective tape worked into the design, therefore eliminating the need for large red reflective signs. I also think it is time for the stockade fence to come down and be replaced with a rail fence, similar to fences shown in early photographs of the bridge. The landscaping on the Teaneck side can be removed and eventually, new interpretive signs provided by the Society will help tell the story of this important crossing. Not only will this be an improvement for the site, but will also benefit the surrounding community. While I don't believe these changes can happen overnight, though I can dream, I do believe it will be yet another important step, an attainable step, to moving this site forward.

XVI. Continuing Business

A. Teaneck

Commissioner L. Bauer reported we have a tentative date of Earth Day, April 22, 2015, for a cleanup of Brett Park. Once we have put a committee together, we should have a large number of volunteers, which we can then break up into smaller teams, each with a leader, who can coordinate an ongoing effort. Richard Karp, President of the Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway Through Teaneck, suggested a weekend would be better than the 22nd, which falls on a Wednesday. Commissioner L. Bauer reported he reached out to the Public Works Department and they are interested in helping. He asked if we did do a cleanup on the weekend following

Earth Day, would the Public Works Department be able to pick up discarded vegetation. Richard Karp said they could pick it up at the roadside and do the mowing of the grounds. He also said that at their board meeting last month we made it a priority to have the Greenway through lower Brett Park made a priority. He said he would coordinate with the board and do a mailing. He suggested talking to the Bergen County Historical Society about symbiosis. Chairman J. Smith indicated that is what the commission is intended to do—to coordinate our efforts. He mentioned that older photographs show what it looked like and emphasized this is an important piece of historical ground. Commissioner D. Powell noted that the Bergen County Historical Society routinely advertises the Greenway in its newsletter. She also suggested that we encourage better screening of the DPW yard to improve the viewshed from the river landing. Richard Karp indicated the trail technically is supposed to run along the DPOW yard, but equipment currently blocks the route. Commissioner L. Bauer indicated that's why he suggested meeting here with the Teaneck Mayor and Council so that our concerns might hit home. Chairman J. Smith concurred and recommended setting up a date for such a meeting. Vice-chairwoman M. Donohue said that St. Peter the Apostle in River Edge has a Green Team that would want to participate in an informal way.

Commissioner L. Bauer reported copied K. Wright on an email that indicated the Holocaust Memorial Committee is still pursuing Brett Park as the location for the memorial. They put out a survey and other communications, so the issue needs to be addressed and we need to further illuminate people on the historical significance of the Brett Park as part of the Revolutionary War battleground and as a prehistoric site. He indicated the Township of Teaneck is willing to provide space for the memorial on the municipal green, but some still insist upon the park. Chairman J. Smith concurred and indicated we would be glad to give this matter the attention it deserves. Secretary K. Wright wondered if the memorial committee had considered Roemer Woods (Matthew Feldman Nature Preserve), since the synagogue built on four acres of the preserve in 1992 might provide parking. Richard Karp noted that the HNBL Park Commission has statutory jurisdiction in regards to coordinating and implementing planning for the park and ruling on the impact of private and public developmental projects on its historic and archaeological resources. He also noted the Friends of the Greenway voted against the proposal to locate the memorial there. He noted the original suggestion was to use Andreas Park and adapt the carriage barn there as an interpretive center, but this was precluded by stipulations in the original gift of the land.

Commissioner L. Bauer also raised the issue of participation in the Teaneck Film Festival, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary. He

is on the committee and would like to see cross pollination with Historic New Bridge Landing, especially since one of the themes is “People Making Change Happen.” Secretary K. Wright noted it might be interesting to locate and show a copy of the

B. New Milford

Commissioner M. Putrino reported he visited Wayne at *Signs by Blohm* and the Historic New Bridge Landing sign is there, but the signposts were stored in a shed that was robbed. Commissioner L. Bauer reported he had already reached out to the Teaneck DPW for assistance in posting the sign.

Commissioner M. Putrino also reported that the Borough had not heard anything yet about the *Gateway to New Bridge* grant. He also reported that he spoke to the tax assessor and got the assessment for the General Store property at 79 Old New Bridge Road, which is \$187,000.

C. River Edge

Vice-Chairwoman M. Donohue reported:

I spoke with Mayor Moscaritolo who regrets that he cannot be present at tonight’s meeting because he has a River Edge Planning Board meeting. He will come if the meeting should end early.

Mayor Moscaritolo’s office has advised that River Edge has not heard back from the County concerning the floodgate flaps. They will pursue this matter. I will ask County representative Adam Strobel for an update and report back to River Edge.

I inquired about any progress on the apartment development plans for the property across the road from the Meadow and was told that the Borough Attorney is preparing a resolution asking the Planning Board to perform a study to determine whether the area for the proposed apartments should be included in redevelopment. This approach may take some time.

I spoke with Dave Hollenbeck from PSE&G regarding the progress of work by PSE&G at the substation, abutting HNBL. He informs us that PSE&G has appointed Ms. Rosalie Serapiglia as the new Regional Public Affairs Manager for the Borough of River Edge. Last week Mr. Hollenbeck provided information to the River Edge Mayor and Council that plans for the elimination/removal project of the substation proceeds according to plan. They plan to begin the elimination of the substation during the month of February.

Electrical work pertaining to the project hopefully will begin by the third week in February. The last week in February, they expect to remove the transformers from the station and this will require very large equipment—he would like to alert is to this happening. The process of removing the transformer is expected to be completed in one day—so the inconvenience will be brief. The project team is coordinating with the River Edge Police and the residents of the area have been notified. PSE&G has done ample outreach to the residents of the area to keep them informed of their work. Should we have any question or concerns, Mr. Hollenbeck asks that we contact him. He is looking forward to working with us and pleasing us in every way possible.

I was also in touch with Rosalie Serapiglia who has confirmed all the proposed work plans mentioned above. She too looks forward to working with us and promises to keep us informed of any and all developments at the site.

On another matter, regarding the sale of the book *The Revolutionary War at New Bridge Landing*, the local public schools in River Edge are arranging for me to speak to their classes and PTOs. Also St. Peter in River Edge and the River Edge Public Library are planning events to foster sales. The weather has not been cooperating. Mayor Moscaritolo also called me regarding a program of reading to schoolchildren in which he is involved and he is looking into this possibility. He will also check with the League of Municipalities in November—but being an optimist, I hope all the books have been sold by then and that we have \$20,000 to add to the museum building fund.

I would like to thank the New Milford and Teaneck representatives for the possibility of selling books in their schools and libraries.

Malcolm Borg has promised a review of the book in the *Better Living* pages of *The Record* also. When the weather improves we look forward to landslide business!

Commissioner M. Putrino reported he had initial conversation with the New Milford Library about selling the book and it looks like a go, if we can work out arrangements to handle the cash so that the library staff doesn't have to do so. Secretary K. Wright suggested having a Society volunteer handle a petty cash box.

D. County of Bergen

Commissioner A. Strobel reported he met on site with County Drainage Engineer Christos Kavvadas (Principal Engineer – Hydraulics) and with K. Wright on January 15, 2015, spending about forty-five minutes walking the grounds and examining the

storm drainage system and other relevant features. He reported that Mr. Kavvadas is analyzing the information he has gathered as well as any additional maps or information we might find and then come back with recommendations for improvements.

Commissioner A. Strobel also reported that last month the Freeholders passed the final resolution to close out the structural-repairs project at the Campbell-Christie House and to authorize final payment to the contractors. He will reach out to Kurt Leasure of HMR, Architects, regarding the final deliverables for archival purposes and will try to get them put on disk. The last payment was \$15,000, including a change order for \$7,000 dealing with the repairs to the fireplace lintel, for an additional lally column in the basement and for raising the back-up battery for the sump pump on a shelf above flood level.

Lastly, commissioner Strobel noted that Bergen County Parks Director Ron Kistner would be departing for another job and that William Comery would serve as Acting Director while a national search for a replacement was made. The commissioners asked if Adam might find an address where we might send a word of thanks to former Parks Director Kistner for his cooperative and friendly involvement with us at Historic New Bridge Landing.

E. DEP – Steuben House

No representative in attendance.

F. Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation

The Demarest House Museum will feature military re-enactors and a spinning demonstration for Washington's Birthday.

G. Bergen County Historical Society

Commissioner D. Powell reported that she and Jim Smith received questionnaire from the Governor's office pertaining to their recommendation by the Bergen County Historical Society as commission representatives. She noted the Society is busy with many projects and activities, including answering queries from around the world pertaining to local history. The FEMA project is ongoing. We have also received a request from Morven for inclusion of folding chairs made at the Collignon chair factory in River Vale for inclusion in an upcoming exhibit, so Bergen County will once again be represented in a statewide museum exhibition. Our first Authors' Day is scheduled for May 3, 2015, and we may be able to accommodate up to twenty authors. She noted that the attic of the Campbell-Christie House is being re-organized for proper artifact storage through the efforts of volunteer Manfred Wegner.

Commissioner D. Powell said she would like to see a committee formed to apply for an NPS Battleground grant and she will raise the topic at the next Board meeting of the Historical Society. The grant could be used for signage and archaeological survey. Fort Mercer recently received a \$40,000 grant for archaeological surveys and excavation.

Commissioner D. Powell is also working on interpretive signage to replace the two existing brown signs on the riverbank. The new signage will be at fence level and so less obtrusive. She is working on one sign to cover the mill and landing and another to cover the bridge. The one by the bridge will talk more about the 1776 Retreat. She is also developing a visual time line for display on the interpretive signs. It is important to get out the message that New Bridge survived more of the American Revolution than any other spot in America. Vice-chairwoman M. Donohue reported she has a friend at the United Nations who will help us with the proposed designation as a World Heritage Site.

XVII. New Business

A. Swing Bridge

Chairman J. Smith provided the following report on the 1889 Swing Bridge:

The 1889 Swing Bridge is a unique structure at Historic New Bridge Landing. The strategic crossing is immortalized by Thomas Paine in “The Crisis” where Paine recognizes the strategic crossing during the retreat of Washington’s forces from Ft. Lee in November 1776. This strategic location would continue to be a flash point during the war with battles raging over this location through-out the Revolutionary War.

In more modern history, the Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders decided to replace the wooden structure at New Bridge with the iron structure we see today. Kevin Wright provides an eloquent description of the current bridge’s history:

1889 Swing Bridge at New Bridge Researched and written by Kevin Wright

Attracted to their greater durability and ease of maintenance, the Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders began about 1885 to install iron swing bridges as part of a program to facilitate inland navigation, which the slow operation and low clearances of wooden

draw-bridges had long impeded. Accordingly, on August 6, 1888, they awarded a contract to replace the New Bridge to the King Iron Bridge & Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio, for \$3,990; the contract for sub-structural masonry was awarded to Joseph Westervelt Stagg of Highwood for \$3,994. Contractor Stagg removed the old wooden draw-bridge in the last week of August and completed construction of the sandstone abutments and center pier by November. Because of delays by the bridge company, he also installed a temporary footbridge to accommodate pedestrians. The King Iron Bridge Company installed the extant truss swing bridge in January and the completed work was opened to the public on **February 2, 1889**. It occupies the same location as the wooden bridge of Revolutionary fame.

New Bridge is a Pratt-type, low or “pony” truss, rim-bearing highway swing bridge, fabricated by the King Iron Bridge & Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio, using truss members manufactured by the Phoenix Iron Company of Philadelphia. A pedestrian walkway was added to the north side of the span in 1911. The Bridgeweld Company of Washington, D. C., reconditioned the bridge in 1936. A fixed concrete-and-steel roadway bridge, located 300 feet to the north, superseded it in 1956. The old bridge was listed on the New Jersey and National Register in 1989 as the oldest extant highway swing-bridge in New Jersey. It is one of the oldest bridges in Bergen County. Open for pedestrian traffic.

With the bridge closing in 1956, it has served a new purpose, a pedestrian pathway within Historic New Bridge Landing Park, uniting the town of River Edge with New Milford, Teaneck and Brett Park. Yet the bridge, with so much history and a focal point for three communities, does require visual improvements in this new century. The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission would like to make the following suggestions to improve the 1889 Swing Bridge at Historic New Bridge Landing to enhance the visitor’s experience at H.N.B.L.P and provide a positive improvement to the communities of River Edge, New Milford and Teaneck:

- Removal of the stockade fence on the bridge– the fence provides no structural nor historical purpose for the bridge
- Removal of wooden bollards on the River Edge side to be replaced with more visual appealing steel bollards with built in reflective tape (Images provided)
- Removal of steel guard rail on the Teaneck/New Milford side to open the flow of pedestrian traffic and also replace with identical steel bollards. (Images provided)
- Replica wooden guard rails, painted white, leading to the bridge on both sides, to replace the steel fences and steel guard rail. (Images provided)

Sample steel architectural bollards meant restrict automobile traffic yet enhance visual appeal. Final bollards would need approval by the Historic New Bridge Land Park Commission.

Sample A.



Sample B.



Sample B. Is steel and slips over 4x4 wooden posts
http://store.interstateproducts.com/products/Parking_Lot_-_Traffic_Safety/EAGLE-1713BLK-ArmorKraft-Classic-Post-Sleeve-Black?gclid=Cj0KEQiAr9ymBRDdqYrH6Mj5170BEiQAcRUsi06xRoaAjBM6uB2BEVLZbwRPeOqpLScqiaRhTBbhacAaAmFF8P8HAQ





Modern example of a split-rail fence, which can be seen in the second and third image.



Note the white rail fence that leads from the bridge to the Steuben House property (early 1950s).

***The Bergen County Historical Society has agreed to fund and design interpretative signage at “The Bridge that Saved a Nation” to better enhance the visitor’s experience and help to tell the story of the crossing and surrounding area through the use of text and images.**

By making these changes, the bridge will once again be an important focal point for Bergen County. As you approach this important crossroads from Teaneck and New Milford, you would be welcomed by a scene similar to that in the images provided. This provides an important enhancement to the historic preservation of the bridge and the important crossing that it occupies.

XVIII. Public Comment

XIX. Adjournment

Chairman J. Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:23 pm.

XX. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission will be held in the Campbell-Christie House at 7 PM at Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey, 07661 on March 5, 2015. Future meetings are scheduled for April 2, 2015; May 7, 2015; June 4, 2015; July 2, 2015; August 6, 2015; September 3, 2015; October 1, 2015; November 5, 2015; December 3, 2015; and January 7, 2016.

**Meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission
April 5, 2015**

I. Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Secretary K. Wright read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and Chairman J. Smith opened the meeting at 7:04 PM.

II. Attendance

L. Bauer; S. Ellis; M. Donohue; W. J. Oddie; D. Powell; M. Putrino; J. Smith; A. Strobel.

Also, Richard Karp, John Heffernan (BSCHS Alternate); Lou Kahn, Mark Texel, Director, State Park Service; Teaneck; K. Wright (Secretary and Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation Alternate).

III. Review of Minutes

The meeting scheduled for March 5, 2015, was cancelled due to inclement weather. Review of the Minutes of the Meeting of February 5, 2015: Under VI. Continuing Business, C. River Edge, insert the name of Mary Donohue's book, *The Revolutionary War at Historic New Bridge Landing* into the sentence: "Commissioner M. Putrino reported he had initial conversation with the New Milford Library about selling the book and it looks like a go, if we can work out arrangements to handle the cash so that the library staff doesn't have to do so." Motion to approve as amended: L. Bauer; second, M. Donohue. **Motion carried.**

IV. Calendar

V. Chairman's Report

Spring is here and with the snow clearing, Historic New Bridge Landing is once again preparing for a busy year and already April is shaping up to be a busy month! The Society recently cleared invasive plants near the Christie House and we all can look forward to the Commission-sponsored Earth Day clean up on April 25th. I have met with Larry over the details and we will conduct a walk through prior to the event. We have even talked about this becoming an annual event to assist with Brett Park. It is exciting to see the Commission used in this way and will be another example of the different stakeholders working together in a coordinated effort for the common good of this important Historic Site. Thank you to all the Commissioners for your continued hard work in moving the H.N.B.L.P.C. forward.

April also marks the 8th year that the Steuben House and the priceless collection of the Bergen County Historical Society suffered damage from a nor'easter. Since that time, a bipartisan law was passed to transfer funding and supervision of the site to this Commission, which has not occurred. The Bergen County Historical Society, through its volunteers and HNBLP commission members, have worked tirelessly during this time to keep the house open for special events. Still, this site can and should be available even more. It should be the premier historic destination in Northern NJ, with access to trains, NYC, shopping, schools, and a story that could not have been written by a Hollywood or Ft. Lee writer. It would provide jobs, culture and tell the important narrative that Bergen County has in our country's origins to the present day.

Once again, as volunteers on this Commission, I thank you in all of our efforts to move the narrative forward in a positive manner and appreciate your help on all fronts. Everyone has an important stake in this Commission and everyone plays an important role.

VI. Continuing Business

A. Teaneck

Commissioner L. Bauer reported the Mayor and Township Council had resolved the issue of the location of the proposed Holocaust Memorial by offering the Municipal Green. He noted that Davis, Saperstein & Salomon offered to provide service of drone flight over Historic New Bridge Landing. He reached out to the Teaneck Public Library and they are interested in selling Mary Donohue's book, *The Revolutionary War at New Bridge Landing*, and that we should share any ideas we have on doing so. He reached out to the Garden Club and to the Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway through Teaneck and they already have programs in place and they are already involved.

Commissioner L. Bauer mentioned again the Earth Day cleanup of invasive vines in Brett Park, scheduled for April 25, 2015, noting that he reached out to the Rotary Club and to the Chamber of Commerce. He also contacted Louis Osman, who will place an announcement in the Master Gardeners' newsletter as an opportunity to fulfill their requirement for volunteer service. The Greenway is already on of the designated sites for volunteers to work.

Commissioner John Oddie noted he had missed the last few meetings because while he was up in Connecticut on New Year's Eve, he was hospitalized and received an emergency implant of a pacemaker. Everyone was pleased to see him again and wished him

the best of health. He thanked Teaneck's new representative Larry Bauer for reporting on Teaneck affairs.

B. New Milford

Commissioner M. Putrino reported New Milford's Community Development grant application for streetscape improvements along River Road between Borough Hall and New Bridge Road, had been rejected, despite many letters of support.

C. River Edge

Vice-Chairwoman M. Donohue reported:

1. Printed copy of my report for the cancelled March meeting will be given to Kevin Wright for the files.
2. I have been in communication with David Hollenbeck from PSE&G regarding the possibility of PSE&G sponsoring an interpretive sign or a diorama telling of PSE&G's history at NBL. I received a response from David Hollenbeck that he had given my letter to Rosalie Serapiglia and Jessica Kirk, PSE&G officers in charge of dismantling the substation, and also to someone at PSE&G Foundation for action. He also said that PSE&G would like to meet with us in the very near future. Jessica is PSE&G's Project Public Affairs Specialist.
3. The deconstruction of the substation is proceeding according to plan. The substation was de-energized in November 2014. At the end of February 2015, crews began to remove equipment from the site. The process has continued and completion of the work is expected by the end of April.
4. I have been in touch with Mayor Moscaritolo's office regarding the problem at NBL with the flooding at the turnabout. On November 17, 2015, Kevin Wright and I attended a meeting of the Mayor and Council at which we expressed our concerns for injury and liability at the site due to the situation at the "sinkhole." On December 2, 2015, Alan Negreann, River Edge Administrator, sent Mr. Joseph Femia, County Engineer, a letter explaining the problem and requesting information and assistance. We are awaiting a formal response. The "sinkhole" problem is getting worse and we fear liability in the event anyone is injured. A police car has already been damaged at the site. If personal injury were to take place, we would like to be on record that we have been pursuing this hazardous condition by attendance at a public meeting of the Mayor and Council and by monthly follow-ups. Secretary K. Wright interjected that the Historical Society has been researching its archives for copies of plans regarding the

original installation of the drainage system. We have already met on site with the county hydraulic engineer, who is reviewing the documentation that has turned up, but winter weather has delayed a follow-up site visit. The County Engineer and his staff have worked with us to provide the information requested by River Edge and to hopefully recommend action to mitigate the problem of “sunshine” flooding through the storm drains, which are connected to the river and therefore act to flood portions of Main Street with especially high tides. The “sinkhole” in question is caused by tidal back flow from a storm drain on state property that fills a low spot in the turnabout. This is therefore an issue connected to the design of the turnabout on the vacated portion of Main Street. Especially high tides also inundate Main Street through storm drains, opposite the Steuben Arms Apartments and near the intersection of the jug handle and Main Street. Secretary Wright said he would respond to the Mayor and provide an update on our efforts to study and suggest remedies for the problem. Commissioner A. Strobel added that County Engineer Joseph Femia had asked drainage engineer Christos Kavvadas to conduct a site visit, which he did, walking the grounds, examining the storms drains, intakes and outlets, and tidal flaps. Christos also looked for historic drawings and maps of the storm drainage system and requested the Historical Society to do the same in hopes of locating useful documentation. We have been waiting for warmer weather to do a follow-up site visit. He explained that River Edge Administrator Alan Negreann’ original request to County Engineer Joseph Femia was for original plans of the storm drainage system that might shed light on the problem.

5. I have been in touch with Mayor Moscaritolo’s office regarding the status of the proposed apartments on Hackensack Avenue/New Bridge Road, opposite our site. On February 17, 2015, the Mayor and Council authorized the Planning Board to conduct a survey to determine whether the area qualifies as an area of redevelopment.
6. On April 16, 2015, I am scheduled to speak to the fourth and fifth graders at Roosevelt School about my book, *The Revolutionary War at New Bridge Landing*. Mike Ginch has printed sales forms and I hope we sell a lot of books! On April 26, 2015, I will have a table at the DAR convention in Monmouth County. Again, I hope for sales. I am this evening giving the Bergen County Historical Society checks amounting to \$550 for deposit in the Museum Fund. I don't know how much has been sold in the gift shop or on-line, but I have so far given a total of \$1,195 from sales I have

personally made. I will also be selling at Authors' Day in the Steuben House.

7. The River Edge Cultural & Heritage Commission has received a grant of \$20,000 from the New Jersey Historical Commission to digitalize all of River Edge's historical documents, maps and photos that are stored in Borough Hall in cartons. Phyllis Angelo and I have been cataloguing the items and we are presently working on items dating between 1898 and 1959. We are preparing these items for a professional archivist who will scan and put them onto disks and the Internet.
8. Lastly, I note that the St. Peter Green Team has had a notice in their bulletin for the past two weeks advertising the April 25th cleanup.

D. County of Bergen

Commissioner A. Strobel reported on closing out the work on the structural repairs to the Campbell-Christie House, which have been completed, and to get copies of the documents for archival purposes. Kurt Leasure, for Holt, Morgan, Russell, Architects, will provide copies of as-built drawings, approvals, affidavits, and contractor Lewis-Graham's one-year guarantee for workmanship. Hard copies have been provided to Deborah Powell, who will place them in an archival storage box in the attic. It was a long process that the Commission, the Society and the County went through together, but everybody was pleased with the outcome.

Commissioner Strobel reported he contacted County Drainage Engineer Christos Kavvadas (Principal Engineer – Hydraulics) to follow up with another site visit once the weather permits. Commissioner D. Powell located copies of a 1951 plan for the storm drainage system, installed as part of the relocation of the new bridge to connect Hackensack Avenue and New Bridge Road along its present course. She has scanned the drawing and will provide the County with a digital copy. This is an important development because it gives us the first real insight into what was done and when.

Lastly, commissioner Strobel noted that there is an opportunity to discuss the red triangular warning signs placed on the bollards closing off the 1889 swing bridge and to see if there might be a different way to address everyone's concerns. Commissioner D. Powell noted they used potted plants to block off the bridge near the Martin Luther King Memorial, so she recommends something less obtrusive should be used here. Commissioner A. Strobel noted that this might be addressed in the larger endeavor of figuring out how a new roundabout, the former PSE&G substation, the tidal mill

site and landscaping might fit into a larger vision and plan for the site.

E. DEP – Steuben House

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis reported that the landscapers are coming out for a spring cleanup on April 11, 2015. The need to remove the fallen trees on the Sutton & Lys property next to the parking lot was emphasized. Noting the cutting and killing of an antique lilac bush and the cutting of other plantings, including rose bushes, Commissioner D. Powell noted we have never received, no less approved, a copy of the landscaper's contract. She thought it might also be productive to have us meet with the landscaper.

On Tuesday, April 7, 2015, at 10 a. m., there will be a final walk-through with the heating contractor in the Steuben House. The new system has paid us big dividends by being able to provide an equal heat throughout the building when outdoor temperatures went as low as two or three degrees below. The contractors had to re-pipe the system twice. Correcting an uneven distribution of heat between the second floor and basement rooms at the northwest corner of the house required cutting and removing a section of pipe feeding the radiators. The new high-heat furnace is equipped with a twenty-gallon glycol storage tank, located outside the furnace room, to replenish pipes with glycol and so prevent freezing. The new system also automatically drains water lines in the event of a power outage and loss of heat. The solenoid burned out a few days ago and required replacement. The thermostat in the hallway was moved to a less obtrusive location.

Commissioner D. Powell raised the issue of the deteriorated pointing and the consequent nesting of mud wasps and other stinging insects in the gaps between the stones, which created a very bad situation last spring. The repointing of the stonework, which has deteriorated to the point that the original puddling clay has eroded out, is certainly a priority, since the damage dates back to the April 2007 nor'easter. Secretary K. Wright noted the Division of Parks & Forestry had all the necessary architectural drawings and bid specifications for the repointing of the mortar (including the correct formula for its mixture) and for the repair of the porch column bases, etc., from 2000-2001, when these same repairs were undertaken. The State Historic Preservation Office approved those plans, so they should be good to go, pending Commission approval. Commissioner S. Ellis thought he could get the scope for the mortar repairs to us by the next meeting.

Mark Texel, Director of the State Park Service, said it was nice to be here and that he had planned to attend the March meeting, which was cancelled due to a winter storm. He said he hopes to

attend at least three or four of our meetings during the year. He is seeing all the great things we are doing and is appreciative of the work the Commission and the Society are doing at Historic New Bridge Landing. He wanted to be sure we knew our efforts do not go unnoticed or unappreciated in Trenton and that the DEP is one of the stakeholders represented on the Commission.

Director Texel discussed cuts in funding for historic preservation, parks capital improvements and parks management staff in consequence of voter approval of Public Question #2 last November. He noted the Governor vetoed enabling legislation that had a lot of support from environmental non-profits, saying it would leave state parks without capital improvement moneys. Under the new formula, state parks might get \$13.9 million, far less than previously anticipated from dedicated funding sources, so we have to go back to arm wrestling and playing political football for several years. But there should be some money for funding projects on the list, though it will be more challenging to determine priorities. He suggested Senator Weinberg's line-item appropriation for Historic New Bridge Landing would be fantastic, but he discussed the possibility of setting aside \$100,000 for a public facilities grant, if it comes up. He suggested he wanted to see the site get that money. He noted that this is the way "other historic sites are being funded." Secretary K. Wright asked if by "other historic sites," he was referring to the Trenton Barracks and the Battleship New Jersey, which are funded by this method? Secretary Wright then noted the Old Barracks Association and the Battleship New Jersey are 501(c)(3), non-profit, private membership organizations, completely unlike the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission, which is an administrative unit of the DEP, exercising governmental functions. The park commission is ineligible for any of the grants these other non-profits receive and no other State Park or State-owned and operated Historic Site is funded by such a grant. Secretary Wright further noted the Bergen County Historical Society, unlike these other non-profits, does not receive or seek public operating support or grants of taxpayer money to fund its activities or the upkeep of its privately owned land or buildings. The supplement to the enabling legislation for the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission, enacted in 2009, transferred exclusive administration of the Steuben House and other state park lands from the Division of Parks and Forestry to the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission along with "any state funds" appropriated for their maintenance and operation. The line-item appropriation, requested and vetoed last year, is intended to fund the Steuben House and other publicly owned parkland at Historic New Bridge Landing and is not for the Bergen County Historical Society. He noted the only lawful use the park commission could make of a grant under the enabling legislation is for the acquisition and physical development of state parkland; that is why we acceded to requesting the \$100,000 public

facility grant to design a public restroom facility on the former BAPCO property, which was acquired through a federal grant to the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission. Director Texel thought that use of the money might be acceptable, if offered again.

F. Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation

Reporting on behalf of the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation, Secretary K. Wright noted the Demarest House Museum is open for all events, featuring not only trained interpreters but also special thematic exhibits related to each event, including American Revolutionary War re-enactors and such crafters as spinners.

G. Bergen County Historical Society

Commissioner D. Powell reported that her Museum Committee had made a lot of progress since the work on the Campbell-Christie House had been completed, installing shelving and purchasing archival boxes for managing the Historical Society's collections. She also has made great progress with the FEMA claim to fund conservation of flood-damaged collections.

Commissioner D. Powell reported last Sunday's event, *Under the Shad Moon, the Lenape New Year*, was very successful and we were filled to capacity. Archaeologist and author Dr. Meta Janowitz gave an illustrated lecture on Sara Roelofse Kierstede, who acted as an interpreter and mediator with Native Americans in New Netherland. Chief Dwaine Perry of the Ramapough Lunaape Nation gave welcoming remarks and Floyd Little Sun Hicks performed Native songs of welcome and thanksgiving. Kevin Wright spoke on the Peach War of 1655. She concluded by saying we have such a great story to tell, covering not only the American Revolution, but also so much more, including prehistory. We literally answer inquiries from around the world and public appreciation is growing. Due largely to our successful programming, the Bergen County Historical Society has become the largest historical society in the state.

VII. New Business

A. Earth Day Clean-Up on April 25th

Vice-chairwoman M. Donohue reported the Green Team at St. Peter the Apostle Church in River Edge was notifying volunteers of the Earth Day Clean-Up in Brett Park on April 25th. She also reported the River Edge Public Works' Department would provide dumpsters for pick up of debris and garbage from the site.

B. Meeting with Assemblyman Robert Auth, 39th District

Jim Purcell, a trustee of the Bergen County Historical Society, his brother Robert Purcell and K. Wright met with Assemblyman Robert Auth at his office on March 25, 2015, for a discussion of issues relating to Historic New Bridge Landing and to seek his support for the line-item appropriation. Assemblyman Auth was receptive and expressed a willingness to help us.

C. Bergen County Academies

Chairman J. Smith reported that after meeting with the National Park Service at Ellis Island, the Bergen County Academies have acquired the rare ability and equipment to do laser mapping and architectural renderings of buildings. We have met with teachers, who are developing a curriculum for laser mapping, to arrange for scanning the historic buildings at Historic New Bridge Landing, thus creating the potential for a virtual tour. It is also an excellent way to get students involved in local history and to begin raising cultural awareness in the next generation of historic preservationists.

VIII. Public Comment

IX. Adjournment

Chairman J. Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:41 pm.

X. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission will be held in the Campbell-Christie House at 7 PM at Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey, 07661 on May 7, 2015. Future meetings are scheduled for June 4, 2015; July 2, 2015; August 6, 2015; September 3, 2015; October 1, 2015; November 5, 2015; December 3, 2015; and January 7, 2016.

Meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission
May 7, 2015

I. Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Secretary K. Wright read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and Chairman J. Smith opened the meeting at 7:09 PM.

II. Attendance

L. Bauer; S. Ellis; M. Donohue; W. J. Oddie; D. Powell; J. Smith; A. Strobel.

Excused: M. Putrino

Also, Richard Karp, John Heffernan (BSCHS Alternate); Lou Kahn, J. Trontis, Assistant Director, State Park Service; Teaneck; K. Wright (Secretary and Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation Alternate).

III. Review of Minutes

Review of the Minutes of the Meeting of April 5, 2015: Motion to approve: L. Bauer; second, M. Donohue. **Motion carried.**

IV. Calendar

V. Chairman's Report

Ladies and gentlemen of the commission: May and spring time are finally here and with it comes a new season of rebirth after a long cold winter. I want to thank Larry and the Township of Teaneck for helping to organize our first cleanup of Brett Park, which was well attended by over thirty individuals and exposed a new group of volunteers to Historic New Bridge Landing. By tying lower Brett Park into the footprint of the site, we are able to maximize the historic nature of this important location. Thank you to Mary and the Borough of River Edge for supplying the dumpsters for the cleanup. I hope this is the start of something that can continue to happen and will be another way to engage the community in their local history.

I recently spoke to Mike Putrino and though he is unfortunately unable to attend tonight, he is requesting signpost prices for the final HNBL sign. This past month was also busy as I was able to attend the final inspection of the new heating system in the Steuben House, but I will let DEP representatives explain. Thank you to all that were involved in that project and we look forward to moving ahead.

Lastly, I would like to recognize the Bergen County Historical Society for organizing another first time event, a historical Authors' Day that was well received and meticulously organized. Many hours go into the planning, preparation and execution of such an event and I would like to recognize the efforts of many in the Society who make such events possible.

Historic sites are much like gardens: they require patience, practice, knowledge, an understanding of your surroundings and an ability to plan for the future. Sometimes you might get the chance to sit back and enjoy your work, but most of the time you are onto the next corner of your garden. With all that is occurring both with the Bergen County Historical Society and Historic New Bridge Landing State Park in the past year or so, I think it is important to take everything in, but also we need to move forward on the future and what this site could be—a venture between public/private interests, tied together seamlessly, to preserve and promote our shared history.

VI. Continuing Business

A. Teaneck

Commissioner L. Bauer reported on the success of the Brett Park cleanup and noted interest in continuing with such efforts. The broken pole near the east abutment of the bridge was reported to the Township Manager, who is taking care of it. He is approaching the DPW about possible screening for the Quonset hut and equipment in their yard. He also reached out to the Shade Tree Commission for possible assistance in this matter. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the Teaneck DPW's assistance in removing the vegetation removed from the river bank in consequence of the cleanup in Brett Park. Secretary K. Wright noted that while the cleanup was progressing, several visitors at the Steuben House expressed their amazement that there was a park across the river, which became visible due to the removal of invasive species. Likewise, the view of the Steuben House from Brett Park is equally amazing!

B. New Milford

Chairman J. Smith reported on behalf of commissioner M. Putrino about requesting a street cleaning of Old New Bridge Road, which belongs to New Milford. He is also contacting Signs by Blohm about pricing for two sign posts.

C. River Edge

Vice-Chairwoman M. Donohue reported:

1. I have communicated with PSE&G regarding the removal of pole at HNBL. PSE&G discovered that one of the poles belonged to Verizon and that it was no longer in use. Verizon removed their equipment from the pole, but left the pole. PSE&G suggested that we contact them and request that the pole be removed ASAP. I contacted Mayor Moscaritolo, who requested the pole ID number—he has asked River Edge administrator Alan Negreann to contact Verizon for the pole’s immediate removal. Chairman J. Smith responded with the pole ID number needed and I will keep you posted.
2. The Earth Day cleanup project at Brett Park was advertised in St. Peter the Apostle’s church bulletin for the Sundays in April as a service and civic project for families. The Green Team from St. Peter’s answered the call for help. Approximately twelve to fifteen volunteers responded.
3. I contacted the River Edge DPW and asked whether they might be able to pick up the debris collected on Monday, April 27. DPW Director John Lynch instead assigned a dumpster to be placed at the site so that volunteers could load their “findings.” This was much appreciated. I wrote Mr. Lynch and the River Edge DPW a note of thanks from the Commission for their cooperation.
4. I was invited to address the fifth and sixth grades at Roosevelt School on Thursday, April 16 at their 9:30 a.m. assembly. It was very successful and I sold fourteen books. I asked the Bergen County Historical Society to provide me with a letter of thanks so that I may give it to purchasers who pay cash for the books as a receipt for donation purposes.
5. I have also been asked to participate in Author’s Day at the Paramus Library and the Book Festival in Teaneck on May 14. Proceeds from the sale of my book benefit the museum fund. My participation in Author’s Day at the Steuben House on May 3, 2015, resulted in the sale of eleven more books. Total donations to the Bergen County Historical Society’s museum fund from book sales for the month of April amounted to \$840. The grand total to date (not including gift shop sales at the Campbell-Christie House) is \$2,875.
6. I asked for a meeting with PSE&G, representatives of the Bergen County Historical Society and the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission to discuss the disposition of land being vacated by the decommissioning of the substation. I am awaiting their response.
7. I emailed the County of Bergen’s representative Adam Strobel, asking whether there might possibly be a grant

from the County to place the remaining overhead electrical wires and service underground.

8. I also wrote to Ellen Gold of the NJ Open Space program to see whether they might be interested in funding the placing of power lines underground. PSE&G informed me they do not have funding for this. She responded that no funds are available for this purpose.

D. County of Bergen

Commissioner A. Strobel reported that County Drainage Engineer Christos Kavvadas (Principal Engineer – Hydraulics) made a follow-up site visit on May 1, 2015, accompanied by two employees from the County's drainage division, who are responsible for cleaning catch basins and storm drains. They again examined the storm drains and their connections to intakes/outlets on the river, particularly the in the culvert between the Campbell-Christie and Demarest Houses. They discussed a possible effort to clean and vacuum the drains, underground conduits and tidal flaps of debris, depending upon the availability of their work force. There was discussion about the major conduit bisecting the property, its age and condition, and the possible need for DEP permits to design something that would mitigate the flooding problem. Part of the due diligence in this effort was to locate maps and other documents that would help us understand the drainage system. Deborah Powell was able to locate such a map from 1951, when the system was installed. With this information, engineer Christos Kavvadas is proceeding with his review of the matter and possible means of mitigation. We also discussed clearing away some of the phragmites near the inlet/outlet in the culvert between the Demarest and Campbell-Christie Houses to facilitate work on possibly installing a tide flap to help regulate backflow through the storm drains on Main Street from this source. Secretary K. Wright contacted the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation, who expressed a willing to help clear the culvert and drainage ditch. We recognize the need to proceed through the necessary channels to secure permits and authorization.

As a follow-up to the site visit on May 1, 2015, secretary K. Wright sent the following email to River Edge Mayor Sandy Moscaritolo, updating him on our efforts and asking his continuing support and assistance:

“Sandy,

I met yesterday with Adam Strobel, the County's representative on the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission, and with the County's hydraulic engineer Christos Kavvadas, regarding the storm drainage system on lower Main Street that not only drains this area during storms, but which conversely

floods it during supernormal tides. Christos has been most helpful, reviewing the information gathered through several site visits and through a careful review of relevant documents and old plans. After searching high and low, we recently had a break-through when Deborah located the original schematic drawings for this drainage system from 1951, which were made preparatory to building the present bridge across the river between River Edge and Teaneck on New Bridge Road.

With Adam's and Christos' professional interest and assistance, it seems we have the first real promise of progress in potentially mitigating this perennial problem of so-called "sunshine flooding." Despite the overlapping of jurisdictions, these professionals are proposing to clean and vacuum the storm drains and underground conduits of fifty years of accumulated, clogging debris. They also seem willing to recommend the cleaning and replacement (if necessary) of the tidal flap on the outlet in front of the Steuben House, but more importantly, to also install a tidal flap on a second outlet in a concrete culvert discovered in the swale between the Demarest and Campbell-Christie Houses that drains the intersection by the Main Street jug handle (but which conversely floods that intersection with supernormal high tides, making it virtually impassable at such times). Their recommendations and services would be an important step forward, if realized, but they need our support and encouragement to persuade the County Administration of the public benefit.

I discussed this with Mary Donohue at dinner last night and I don't mean to overstep her, since she is a most effective liaison, but I thought since I attended several meetings with Christos and Adam, I might be best able to relay the content of our discussions and of their recommendations. While we have been delayed by the long winter and the tedious search for documentation, I am most appreciative of the Borough's interest and involvement in this matter and the County's timely response to our request for their professional assistance. This is a very promising development.

Any encouragement to the County Administration in continuing their participation in this worthy project would be appreciated.

Best regards,
Kevin Wright"

In another matter, commissioner A. Strobel informed the commission that the Governor's office contacted him about his appointment as the County's representative to the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission. The County Administrator forwarded a letter

requesting Adam's appointment to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for their approval.

Secretary K. Wright noted that during the recent Battleground Walking Tour, a visitor drew his attention to a piece of plywood that had been nailed over a missing or damaged plank near the middle of the 1889 swing bridge, which poses a potential tripping hazard.

E. DEP – Steuben House

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis reported that chairman J. Smith had attended final walk-through and inspection with DCA and the heating contractor in the Steuben House on April 7, 2015. The new system has several safeguards, including a frost-free hose bib in the basement, to protect against damage in the event of a power loss in freezing weather and it ensures an equal distribution of heat throughout the building. He also reported they sent the landscaper to tend the grounds before the Battlefield Tour and to address the issue of fallen trees on the Sutton & Lys property. Assistant Parks Director J. Trontis said he was not yet satisfied because of another large tree that appears dead is still standing by the roadside.

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis reported they are moving ahead with the relocation of the electrical service panel and meter. Assistant Parks Director J. Trontis reported the Office of Resource Development has agreed to pay for repointing the stonework and repairing the porch columns and porch decking and is putting the project out to bid. There was also discussion of landscaping contract and replacing the sawhorse barricades blocking the vacated portion of Main Street by the Steuben House. Secretary K. Wright offered to look for a photograph of a suitable permanent turnstile, which he noticed at another park, for better blocking the roadway to traffic. Chairman J. Smith noted that volunteers were planting wildflowers near the Steuben House and asked that the landscapers be made aware of their efforts, noting several plantings had been damaged or cut down in the past, including rose bushes and an old lilac.

Assistant Director J. Trontis noted that Acting Northern Regional Superintendent S. Ellis was given permission to again attend commission meetings last month. He said he has a personal spot in his heart for Historic New Bridge Landing and feels things have changed for the better. He also said the restored Westervelt-Thomas Barn looks amazing.

F. Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation

Reporting on behalf of the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation, Secretary K. Wright again noted the Demarest House Museum is open for all

events, featuring not only trained interpreters but also special thematic exhibits related to each event, including American Revolutionary War re-enactors and such crafters as spinners.

G. Bergen County Historical Society

Commissioner D. Powell reported on the success of Authors' Day, which featured nineteen authors and drew 150 people. She gave an update on the design of interpretive signage for the site. She also noted the Bergen County Historical Society loaned a Collignon folding-deck chair, manufactured at the Collignon factory in River Vale, to Morven for their upcoming nineteenth-century New Jersey chair making exhibit. The Shad Moon event drew a visitor from as far away as New Castle, Delaware. Secretary K. Wright reported that he opened the Steuben House for nine students and three instructors from the Bergen Academies, who did laser scanning of the building to create a virtual tour.

VII. New Business

A. Meeting with the Mayors

Following up on commissioner L. Bauer's suggestion, Chairman J. Smith is trying to arrange a meeting with the Mayors of Teaneck, River Edge and New Milford for our June 4th meeting.

B. Memorial Day Event

Chairman J. Smith invited everyone to attend the Bergen County Historical Society's Memorial Day wreath laying at the grave of General Enoch Poor in the churchyard of the First Reformed Church on the Green in Hackensack at 10 a.m. on Monday, May 25, 2015.

C. Springfest at Teaneck Creek Conservancy

Richard Karp noted the Teaneck creek Conservancy is hosting a Springfest from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on May 17, 2015.

VIII. Public Comment

Lou Kahn, of Teaneck, asked about the commission's powers and jurisdiction over Brett Park. Secretary K. Wright noted the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission is empowered by statute to coordinate and implement federal, State, county, municipal, and private development policies and other activities relating to the historic preservation and recreational use of the property under the commission's jurisdiction. The jurisdictional boundaries on the east side of the

Hackensack River encompass all publicly owned lands fronting on Old New Bridge Road or on Steuben Place, or lying south of Riverview Avenue, east to River Road in Teaneck Township; or fronting on the Hackensack River within two tenths of a mile of New Bridge Landing and the 1889 iron swing bridge. Additionally, the commission is empowered to review and approve all proposed changes, developments or improvements to publicly owned lands, buildings, and structures within its jurisdiction to prevent or mitigate any adverse impact upon pre-historic or historic resources that have a significant potential to add to the knowledge and appreciation of the story of Historic New Bridge Landing and its vicinity or to enhance its preservation as a Revolutionary War site.

IX. Adjournment

Chairman J. Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:20 pm.

X. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission will be held in the Campbell-Christie House at 7 PM at Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey, 07661 on June 4, 2015. Future meetings are scheduled for July 2, 2015; August 6, 2015; September 3, 2015; October 1, 2015; November 5, 2015; December 3, 2015; and January 7, 2016.

**Meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission
June 4, 2015**

I. Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Secretary K. Wright read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and Chairman J. Smith opened the meeting at 7:02 PM.

II. Attendance

L. Bauer; S. Ellis; M. Donohue; D. Powell; M. Putrino; J. Smith; A. Strobel.

Excused: W. J. Oddie.

Also, John Heffernan (BSCHS Alternate); Lou Kahn, K. Wright (Secretary and Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation Alternate); T. Braisted.

III. Review of Minutes

Review of the Minutes of the Meeting of May 5, 2015: Commissioner D. Powell noted that under VI. Continuing Business, E. Steuben House, she had asked about a wireless electrical meter so that there doesn't have to be an exterior meter on a pole. Commissioner A. Strobel noted under VI. Continuing Business, C. River Edge, 8., that "Ellen Gold of the NJ Open Space program" should be "Elaine Gold of the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund." Motion to approve as corrected: M. Donohue; second, L. Bauer. **Motion carried.** M. Putrino, abstained.

IV. Calendar

V. Chairman's Report

I want to welcome everyone here this evening for our June 2015 Historic New Bridge Landing Commission meeting. The different entities that fall under the umbrella of the Commission have been hard at work and I look forward to hearing more detailed information in their reports.

Special thanks to Adam Strobel and the County of Bergen for their continued efforts to address the drainage system at New Bridge Landing. I also want to thank Stephen Ellis and Eric Pain for keeping me apprised of the State's efforts in finding the appropriate information for the pointing of the Steuben House, looking for competent companies and beginning discussions with the landscape contract/responsibilities. I also want to recognize the Society's efforts to continue to improve the grounds at New Bridge Landing, and to bring the gardens at the Steuben House, that greet visitors, back to life. Later the Society will discuss the purchase of a

garden shed and its placement behind the outhouse of the Christie House. The Society was also informed by letter from the DEP that red soil that was placed between the Westervelt-Thomas Barn and Demarest House as part of the final barn project would need to be removed and the ground re-seeded. The Society is working towards total compliance and has spoken with the contractor in charge of the project, Tim Adriance, to ensure this situation is resolved to their satisfaction in a timely manner. Per the contractor, he has spoken to the DEP to remedy the situation. Lastly, I want to thank Larry Bauer and the township of Teaneck for removing the severely leaning pole near the bridge in Brett Park. Not only was this a hazard, but unsightly, so thank you.

After a walk through the grounds the other day, it never ceases to amaze me at the amount of visitors this location receives, even when there are no events occurring. The Society continues to work and design new interpretive displays to replace the intrusive and boring brown signs with new visuals that can better illustrate the story of “the bridge that saved a nation.” A major part of this untold story lies at the approach to the bridge on the east side. Again, there are a few different ways we can approach this: 1. New signage and removal of old signage (this is beginning) 2. Remove the stockade fence and chain link fence to replace the late 19th century wide plank rails that used to exist there. 3. Remove the guardrail, replace with bollards and replace the pavement in that area with pavers. This could be a monument to Thomas Paine with excerpts of the *American Crisis* about the bridge written on them, or have footprints placed on the pavers, so that as one passes, they visually walk in that same line as those soldiers that bravely gave us the freedoms we enjoy today. I don’t expect these changes to occur over night, but I do think it is important to start thinking about these key areas in the long term, how to interpret them and how best to acquire funds to see these long projects through to term.

VI. Continuing Business

A. Teaneck

Commissioner L. Bauer reported the Township Manager had the broken pole near the east abutment of the bridge removed. He also reported the proposed meeting with the Mayors of Teaneck, River Edge and New Milford had to be postponed because one of them was on vacation and hence unavailable. Chairman Smith noted poor weather hindered the turnout for the second cleanup, but much was accomplished and we hope to work collaboratively on future cleanups in Brett Park.

B. New Milford

Commissioner M. Putrino reported that the New Milford street sweeper would include Old New Bridge Road in his rotation as per

our request. He noted the streetscape in the vicinity of the bridge included street lamp, garbage can and bench, although it might be better if the bench were reversed. The borough has a pretty active beautification committee and it might be helpful to get them involved as they are looking for projects to do. He also left two messages at Signs by Blohm about getting a price for the signposts.

C. River Edge

Vice-Chairwoman M. Donohue reported:

1. A meeting is scheduled for June 8 at the office of Mayor S. Moscaritolo with PSE&G. PSE&G reports there remains only one piece of equipment to be removed from the site and that is pending permits from the County.
2. Have procured from the Borough of River Edge the document for NJ Transit acknowledging their awareness of the Vintage Baseball Game on July 11 and establishing a contact person.
3. No new information from the River Edge Planning Board concerning apartment project on New Bridge Road.
4. Have obtained from the River Edge Borough Clerk a document verifying my appointment to the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission.
5. Gave Deborah Powell a check for \$40 for the sale of two books. Scheduled to participate at the authors' day at Paramus Library on Sunday, June 14 from 12:30 to 5 pm. Delivered two books sold through internet to a buyer in River Edge.
6. Mayor S. Moscaritolo would like to know how Historic New Bridge Landing stands on possible designation of a site at New Bridge as a tavern for the future service of liquor. A bill is pending before the legislature at the present time that would enable former sites of taverns to serve liquor.
7. Has anything happened with the pole that Verizon is supposed to remove?

D. County of Bergen

Commissioner A. Strobel provided an update on the drainage system, reporting that the Operations Division had gone to the site at low tide to examine the outlets. Also upon closer examination, the pipes appear pretty sturdy. They cleaned some of the storm drains. He reminded everyone that County Drainage Engineer Christos Kavvadas compiled information from documents and site visits at our request to try and understand how the drainage system works, not to resolve the complicated question of ownership.

Hopefully some routine maintenance will help mitigate some flooding.

Commissioner A. Strobel is trying to schedule a site visit with the assistant county engineer in the next week or so she can do an assessment of other possible options for the large red signs at the approach to the bridge to address our concerns; safety being the primary concern.

He also reported that permits for PSE&G moving heavy equipment over bridges and culverts need to be assessed to be sure these structures can withstand the weight.

For the good and welfare, commissioner A. Strobel noted that County architect John Terreri is doing well after cancer surgery about two or three weeks ago. Everyone wished him a speedy recovery.

E. DEP – Steuben House

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis reported that he has been working hard to locate a consultant and contractor for re-pointing the missing mortar on the Steuben House. He asked the commissioners to look at the resume of historical architect Michael J. Margulies, of Eclectic Architecture, who is currently working at the Red Mill in Clinton, mjm@eclectitecture.com, to see if we agree to have him do the specifications for the re-pointing. He has done his vendor papers and would like to make a site visit. He has a mason he employed at Black Eddy, Pa., named Steven Ferrari, who works in stone. Commissioner's designee S. Ellis will do procurement paper work, the state purchase order, and the consultant will oversee the project.

They are also working on specifications and approval of porch repairs, to remove and replace the mahogany decking, to replace the deteriorated column bases with composite material and to repair the temporary patches made.

Resolved, the Historic New Bridge Landing Park State Commission, acting in good faith, approves and authorizes the State Park Service to act as our agent and to proceed with the repair of the porch and porch columns at the Steuben House, including replacement of the column bases with bases made of composite material, matching the existing profile, and replacement of mahogany decking in kind, determining that this project will have no adverse effect on historic resources at Historic New Bridge Landing. Motion, M. Donohue; second, A. Strobel. **Motion carried.**

Secretary K. Wright noted the landscaper needs to include regular trimming of the parking lot and maintenance of the adjacent Sutton & Lys lot, and mow regularly along the pathway through the former BAPCO property (now the meadow on Main Street and New Bridge Road), where that section of the pathway, leading from the intersection of Main Street and Hackensack Avenue/New Bridge Road to the boundary of the Society's property, has disappeared under weed growth. The meadow (former BAPCO) needs to be mowed several times yearly, but especially in advance of the vintage baseball game on July 11.

Resolved, the Historic New Bridge Landing Park State Commission, acting in good faith, approves and authorizes the State Park Service to act as our agent and to install a channel turnpike gate (as depicted in a photograph of a gate from the Sussex Branch Trail near Waterloo Road) across the vacated portion of Main Street near the turnabout as marked by representatives of the commission and to also continue the four-rail fencing (as it presently exists) at a safe distance of three or four feet from the edge of the turnabout roadway (so as to allow for snow plowing), leaving an opening for the brick walkway, but so as to keep vehicles from driving around the gate and to the bridge. Motion, L. Bauer; second, M. Putrino.
Motion carried.

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis asked that the location of the bollards be marked with circles and with a square for the gateposts.

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis noted it would be time to move the electrical meter when the electrical panel is changed out. He'll get an estimate for extra cable.

Secretary K. Wright noted the Society has been replacing damaged or deteriorated post and rails on state parkland and that the state needs to keep the fence on state parkland, including the former BAPCO property (now the meadow on New Bridge Road and Main Street) in good repair.

F. Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation

G. Bergen County Historical Society

Military historian and past BCHS president Todd Braisted discussed the School of the Loyalist event he is planning for August 28 – 30, 2015. He noted this was the first event he organized at Historic New Bridge Landing back in 1997, which was also the first day he joined the Bergen County Historical Society. The idea was to make it interesting for people who do Loyalist impressions by bringing

them to a site with strong historical associations with prominent Loyalists so they could hone their craft. This is the first time the School of the Loyalist has been done since 1997. This presents an opportunity to build heritage tourism and to market the site internationally. Todd is enlisting some notable speakers, including David Moore, from the historic village of Ancaster, Ontario, Canada; Kathryn Lake Hogan, a professional genealogist who is Dominion Genealogist of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada; tailor/historian Henry Cooke; and Carrie Fellows, Executive Director of the Hunterdon County Cultural and Heritage Commission. The Bergen County Historical Society, the 4th Battalion, NJ Volunteers and the BAR are co-hosting the event. Loyalist troops will organize into two groups, those sleeping in brush huts or wigwams and those staying in tents. We may need to work with Teaneck to stage one of these groups in Brett Park for the event, on or near the site of the residence of noted Loyalist Abraham Van Buskirk. We may also have the bateaux on the river for this event. Todd reported he is very pleased with the level of chatter about the event and it is likely to bring people from a great distance and greatly enhance our reputation as a heritage destination.

Chairman J. Smith noted the Bergen County Historical Society would like to place a 10 by 10 cedar shed near the Out Kitchen to store garden and grounds maintenance tools and a snow blower to maintain the Society's walkways in winter. He noted that the Society had secured the necessary permits and approval from the Borough of River Edge.

Resolved, the Historic New Bridge Landing Park State Commission, acting in good faith, approves and authorizes the Bergen County Historical Society to locate and install a 10 x 10 cedar tool shed near the Out House and Out Kitchen to store tools and maintenance equipment, determining this installation will not have any adverse impact on historic resources at Historic New Bridge Landing. Motion, M. Putrino; second, L. Bauer. **Motion carried.**

Commissioner D. Powell reported that eighteen volunteers opened the historic buildings and gift shop at Historic New Bridge Landing for Authors' Day on May 3, 2015, between 12 noon and 5 pm and twenty-two volunteers opened the buildings for Pinkster on May 17, 2015 between 1 and 5 pm.

VII. New Business

- A. *Dedication of funding to New Bridge Landing and other historic sites from proposed expansion of casino gambling*

Commissioner M. Donohue commented on recent newspaper reports on interest in building gambling casinos in the Meadowlands and at other localities, suggesting that a portion of the proceeds earned from any such casinos be dedicated to funding Historic New Bridge Landing as a companion heritage destination and to other historic sites with potential as destinations as well.

B. Film industry

Commissioner D. Powell noted such a scenic and historic setting as Historic New Bridge Landing, situated seven miles from the George Washington Memorial Bridge, should be attractive to movie and television producers and so she has contacted the state agency responsible for promoting film locations to properly advertise the site. She has already been contacted from someone with interest and received a sample contract and advice from the state film commission. Todd Braisted noted that he saw the 1776 House in Tappan, NY, being used for filming only last Monday and Tuesday. Commissioner A. Strobel said he would look into whether there is a relevant fee schedule for using county parks as a location.

C. Destination Bergen

Commissioner L. Bauer reported local chambers of commerce are interested in developing *Destination Bergen*, which began as a project of Bergen LEADS' class of 2013, into a cohesive website.

VIII. Public Comment

IX. Adjournment

Chairman J. Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:43 pm.

X. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission will be held in the Campbell-Christie House at 7 PM at Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey, 07661 on July 2, 2015. Future meetings are scheduled for August 6, 2015; September 3, 2015; October 1, 2015; November 5, 2015; December 3, 2015; and January 7, 2016.

**Meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission
July 2, 2015**

XXI. Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Secretary K. Wright read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and Chairman J. Smith opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

XXII. Attendance

L. Bauer; M. Donohue; E. Pain; D. Powell; W. J. Oddie J. Smith.

Excused: M. Putrino; A. Strobel.

Also, K. Wright (Secretary and Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation Alternate); John Trontis, Assistant Director, State Park Service.

XXIII. Review of Minutes

Review of the Minutes of the Meeting of June 7, 2015: Motion to approve: M. Donohue; second, L. Bauer. **Motion carried.**

XXIV. Calendar

XXV. Chairman's Report

Upon the death of Captain Jacob Zabriskie during the Mexican American War, Abraham O. Zabriskie, Esq., of Hackensack, replied on behalf of the Bergen County Committee of Arrangements and his fellow citizens with the following statement:

"Sir: The duty which we this day with mournful alacrity assume to perform is a sad and solemn one. It is to receive, from your hands, the remains of one well known and loved among us; these insensate remains, from which the spirit has long since fled, which have travelled far, borne by friendly though stranger hands, to reach among us, on their natal soil, their last earthly abode."

"It is most fitting now, that these remains should be brought here, to be borne on the shoulders of his companions and friends of his boyhood and youth, to their home in the dwellings of the dead; to be lain in a grave over which a father's affection or a mother's fond love may bend with sad satisfaction; which may be watered by their kindly tear of manly brothers and deeply afflicted sisters."

"This, too, Sir, is a most fitting place for those who bear the soldier's bier, to pause; we stand on revolutionary ground, hallowed by martial

mementos of the past. Yonder, beyond the Hudson, stood a fortress honored by the great name of the father of his country; here, on the high cliffs above us, stood another, named from one of Washington's chief generals, which, in its turn, has given its name to this fair village — each, in that year, were scenes of deadly conflict.”

“New Jersey was battle ground in the war of the revolution; and our good county of Bergen, though not distinguished by those brilliant though brief successes that gave lustre to the names of Trenton, Princeton and Monmouth, was the constant arena of war. Tradition has well preserved the story of many a fray, and the sufferings and stout resistance of the Bergen yeomanry, who with a few inglorious exceptions, in the years when the stronghold of the enemy was in our great city, stood shoulder to shoulder in that protracted strife and slept not but on their arms. Amid these traditions was this young man raised, at the hearthstone of a grandsire who bore an active and efficient part in the great struggle of that day. From them, as you Sir, well suggested, he doubtless imbibed that love of glory, and spirit of patriotism which carried him to the armies of his country, and alas, to a too early grave.”

Time, as it so often does, allows stories like these to slip away. Yet we are lucky and thank Kevin Wright, who made this eloquent graveside reading available through his research. While it occurs some 70 years after the American Revolution, it reflects on and shows that as the last veterans were dying from this important conflict and fought on the ground that we meet here today, these citizens realized the importance that our county and state played.

Good evening and welcome to our July Commission meeting. You may be wondering why I just read this at a Commission meeting and its relevance. I am happy to report on behalf of the Society that we are moving forward with an endeavor to tell just one of the many stories that occurred here at New Bridge through a commissioned artwork. The Revolutionary War and other important moments in our history are defined by images and icons, whether it be of Washington crossing the Delaware, of his praying on one knee at Valley Forge, of the bodies covering the fields of Gettysburg or of brave men hoisting the flag at Iwo Jima: these are seminal events that define us. This new art piece will capture a pivotal battle during the Revolution that will further the story of New Bridge and will eventually be used for literature, signage, graphics and to help educate school children.

Again, I want to reiterate and thank all of the Commission members for their constant contact and communication over the past month and your efforts have not gone unnoticed. Further, we are exemplifying what this Commission was created to do: to coordinate activities here at New Bridge Landing and to foster dialogue with the surrounding

communities as to the importance of this location. Thank you and I wish you and your families all the best this 4th of July.

XXVI. Continuing Business

A. Teaneck

Commissioner L. Bauer reported the second cleanup was successful despite bad weather. Todd Braisted will provide info for press releases for the School of the Loyalists and to particularly link in Jewish Loyalists and local history. Chairman J. Smith suggested another cleanup on Saturday, August 22nd or Sunday, 23rd. A two-day cleanup schedule was thought best. Commissioner M. Donohue would like to advertise the cleanup dates for the Green Team at St. Peter's Church to participate. We are still working on a date to get the three mayors together.

B. New Milford

Commissioner M. Putrino reported through a communication from commissioner M. Putrino:

Due to work circumstances I will not be able to attend this evening. In the meantime, here is the report from New Milford:

Blohm Signs: I visited Wayne this morning and pinned him down for the pricing on the sign poles. Here is the breakout: 6 x 10 Cedar = \$1195; 6 x 10 pressure-treated (CCP) = \$836; 6 x 10 aluminum = \$1,060. He said that we currently have aluminum on our current two signs. He recommends this material because it matches our existing sign poles, it's lighter, and it will "age" better than wooden posts. Installation of the poles is an additional \$400-\$600 depending on materials and difficulty (water in post holes, etc. ...) Wayne said ideally he would like to get a deposit and then paid the balance upon completion of the job. He was not sure how the finances work (being that HNBL has policies and rules which govern). I told him I was not exactly sure but would find out the procedure for purchase orders, etc. Wayne's email is wblohmsigns@aol.com (for anyone who has questions, concerns or needs to discuss the purchasing procedure with him). Phone – 201-262-3172.

New Milford side of the bridge: As I mentioned, I visited the location with the NM DPW Superintendent Vince Cahill and discussed with him the aesthetics of the area and expressed HNBL issues and concerns. Mr. Cahill is very understanding and a "friend" of HNBL.

- The street has been added to New Milford's regular street sweeping schedule.
- DPW has cleaned the storm drain inlets (both side) of the street, Natural and unnatural debris has been removed.
- DPW sprayed to deter weed growth on both sides of the street.
- DPW will change the direction of the streetscape bench so that people will be facing towards Brett Park and Steuben House (currently it faces the beautiful bridge, which is usually bumper-to-bumper with cars.
- DPW has advised Galaxy (our garbage collector) to make sure that garbage/debris that is collecting in and around two of the homes in the area is picked up and properly disposed of (we found a real problem at one particular address).
- Vince was wondering if it was possible to use or add a "throwback historical looking" street signs on the road. Perhaps we could brainstorm on this. Probably would have to be in addition to our current sign due to DOT regulations, etc.)

Just FYI ...it would really be great to get Teaneck DPW on board with the level of attention that New Milford DPW is now paying to the street. The Teaneck side has a higher potential for weeds/growth that conflicts with the street than New Milford because their side is a park and ours is buildings.

Vince wanted me to pass along his contact info to you in case you ever need anything, phone 201-967-8172.
vcahill@newmilfordboro.com

Also, I spoke with the chairwoman of the New Milford Beautification Committee and she will bring forward to her committee the idea to do some colorful ornamental plantings just before the bridge on the New Milford side.

C. River Edge

Vice-Chairwoman M. Donohue reported:

1. Rosalie Serapiglia, PSEG representative has e-mailed several times that she has been in touch with Verizon re the pole we asked to be removed because it is no longer in use. She will contact us when she has definite news.
2. Attended DAR annual luncheon and was awarded American Woman of the Revolution Award for book on New Bridge Landing. Sold 7 books at the event.

3. I am giving the BCHS a total of \$ this month for book sales – approximately 3.5 – 4 K has already been collected from book sales to benefit museum building.
4. No report from RE Planning Board re proposed apartments on River Road.
5. There will be a table at the Fourth of July Festivities in RE where the RE Historic Commission seeks to identify photos in its collection – it is asking help from guests in identifying some photos in its collection. Will also be selling New Bridge Landing Books to benefit the museum fund.

D. County of Bergen

Commissioner A. Strobel provided the following report through communication with Chairman J. Smith:

On Monday spoke to Christos Kavvadas, the County's drainage engineer, on the storm drains and the design work he is doing for the storm water outfall(s) and other items. He reports he is continuing to talk to County engineer Joe Femia on the design plans and developing a course of actions, identifying NJDEP permits, etc. I'll press him again in two weeks on their work; hopefully something more specific will be forthcoming.

He reminded Secretary K. Wright that we still have to schedule a site visit with Assistant County engineer Nancy Dargis on the swing bridge approaches, signage, barriers, etc. He asked for us to provide some possible days so I can share with Nancy.

E. DEP – Steuben House

Commissioner's alternate designee Ringwood Superintendent Eric Pain reported:

We have located a historic preservation architect to prepare specifications for the Steuben House repointing. Michael Margulies has sent his resume to Chair Smith for review. S. Ellis has inspected his work at the Hoff-Vannatta House in Warren Co.

Mr. Margulies has made one site visit w/ Steve and requested all past analysis on the historic house. We need to know the commission's decision on this architect before we can proceed further. The architect is willing to attend a meeting if requested. Note: all of the existing loose mortar must be demolished. We must be careful with this job. Columns will also be addressed.

As requested by the commission and the architect have located older Steuben House restoration studies, specifications and possibly a HSR that the architect is extremely interested in looking over after seeing the attic construction. Not sure what that's about.

Landscaping of state lands: Ringwood State Park Superintendent continues to work with LaSalle Landscaping as the provider of general landscaping services at the Steuben House, Sutton & Lys property, parking lot, and strips on either side of pathway through the meadow. Another site visit has been scheduled with LaSalle Landscaping to further explain the landscaping they are responsible for.

Ringwood State Park has contracted with Green Meadows of Oakland, NJ, as the provider of the large scale landscaping services for the meadow and the former Saw Shop property at a substantial discount from the previous contractor.

We called in a plumber to follow up on the heating. He installed a new hot-water heater to preclude failure of the old one.

At Chairman J. Smith's request, Commissioner's alternate designee Ringwood Superintendent Eric Pain agreed to ask proposed repointing project architect Michael Margulies to attend the August meeting and make a presentation to the commission.

F. Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation

G. Bergen County Historical Society

We continue with event planning next week. We continue to meet regularly on updating the museum collection inventory. Due to complaints from tenants of Steuben Arms apartments, we ask that all landscaping contractors be informed that such work is only allowed between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. We have made important strides towards formalizing the curriculum of the School of Interpretation, covering the range of topics relevant to an understanding of the site, each of the historic buildings, the cultural landscape, and basics of historical interpretation and hospitality.

XXVII. New Business

XXVIII. Public Comment

XXIX. Adjournment

Chairman J. Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:39 pm.

XXX. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission will be held in the Campbell-Christie House at 7 PM at Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey, 07661 on August 6, 2015. Future meetings are scheduled for September 3, 2015; October 1, 2015; November 5, 2015; December 3, 2015; and January 7, 2016.

Meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission
August 6, 2015

I. Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Secretary K. Wright read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and Chairman J. Smith opened the meeting at 7:16 PM.

II. Attendance

L. Bauer; S. Ellis; D. Powell; M. Putrino; J. Smith; A. Strobel.

Excused: J. Bellis; M. Donohue; W. J. Oddie.

Also, K. Wright (Secretary and Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation Alternate); J. Heffernan; Richard Karp.

III. Review of Minutes

Review of the Minutes of the Meeting of July 2, 2015: Motion to approve: L. Bauer; second, D. Powell. **Motion carried.** A. Strobel, abstained.

IV. Calendar

V. Chairman's Report

Good evening everyone,

I hope the summer is treating you well and I want to welcome everyone to our August Historic New Bridge Landing Commission meeting. While the summer may be a down time, New Bridge Landing saw no down turn in activity, from the Meadow (former junkyard property) echoing with the crack of the bat and families enjoying an afternoon of Vintage Base Ball at an important historic site, to an 18th century dance, held in this very house. Society members continue to develop the grounds on Society property and are developing plans to present to the Commission to rejuvenate the gardens at the Steuben House. Whether coming to an event, or strolling the grounds, like any business, a visitor's first impressions can leave a lasting legacy if that person wants to return or not.

While at the dance, we were approached by one of the participants about the heat being given off by the incandescent bulbs in the large parlor area. He suggested the use of LEDs. A few weeks later, a conservator who is working with the Society on a FEMA claim, also suggested LEDs. LEDs offer lower energy costs, low heat, and a light

that is not harmful to historic artifacts. Going green not only benefits the environment, but also helps to lower costs. I would like to discuss these initiatives in “New Business” and would encourage all stake holders to consider how we can further green initiatives and I will discuss that challenge then.

Lastly, I spoke to Mark Texel and he mentioned the Commission did receive \$100,000 in this year’s state budget. He will be providing further details and we may need to have a separate meeting of the Commission to discuss further. I want to recognize Deborah Powell of the Society for all her work with the Vintage Base Ball game, including programming and obtaining permission to utilize the NJ Transit Lot. These are details that visitors and participants at our larger events at New Bridge often don’t notice, but they are crucial to their success. I also want to thank Eric Paine from the DEP/State Parks for making sure the fields were ready to go for the game and working with the Commission to make sure the lawn service maintained the parking lot and the empty lot on the triangle. When concerns arose, he quickly addressed them. These are examples of what the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission was established in 1995 by New Jersey State law N.J.S.A. 13:15B-1-5 to do, to tie together the stakeholders here at New Bridge to act in good faith, for the purpose of coordinating and implementing all federal, State, county, municipal, and private development policies and other activities relating to the historic preservation and recreational use of the property under the commission’s jurisdiction. I also believe that as a Commission we must continue to stress what historic tourism is and how it can be mutually beneficial to local municipalities. HNBL is a vital green space in the heart of Bergen County, a true historic treasure. I look forward to continuing to work with all the entities involved, as I believe I have shown over the course of my chairmanship, to further our shared mutual goals. Thank you.

VI. Continuing Business

A. Teaneck

Commissioner L. Bauer reported he was still working on getting the mayors of the three towns together. He also reported that Nicholas & Lence Communications, a New York communications and public relations firm, was interested in doing marketing here. Commissioner L. Bauer also said he was working with Todd Braisted on the School of the Loyalist event to get everything done in terms of Brett Park and the Teaneck Police Department. He also reported James Smith will receive the President’s Award at the 14th Annual Teaneck Chamber of Commerce’s Community Awards Dinner at the Marriott at Glenpointe on August 29, 2015. He also said he would get out a press release for the August 22nd-23rd park cleanup.

B. New Milford

Commissioner M. Putrino reported that we are in a holding pattern with the Historic New Bridge Landing sign. The public works department however has been active with street sweeping and repair of street light on Old New Bridge Road at the east abutment of the 1889 swing bridge. The park bench has not yet been reversed so as to face the street. Chairman J. Smith expressed gratitude for the public works department's efforts and looks forward to working with the New Milford beautification committee on their participation in the ongoing cleanup efforts on the east side of the river.

C. River Edge

Chairman J. Smith noted that Mary Donohue has been hospitalized and everyone present wished her a speedy recovery.

D. County of Bergen

Commissioner A. Strobel provided a quick update from county drainage engineer Christos Kavvadas, saying he is working with the contractor the County has on call, since there is no one on staff to do this kind of work. He also spoke to county engineer Joe Femia about making further progress on this. Commissioner A. Strobel noted the cleanup of the swale in front of the Demarest House might require permits. Chairman J. Smith noted there has been remarkable progress on dealing with this issue already and thanked the county for its efforts.

He reminded Secretary K. Wright that we still have to schedule a site visit with Assistant County engineer Nancy Dargis on the swing bridge approaches, signage, barriers, etc. He asked for us to provide some possible days so I can share with Nancy.

E. DEP – Steuben House

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis reported that historic restoration architect Michael Margulies is unable to attend the meeting this evening, but he provided a quote for the repointing project. Although the State Park Service has not much used his services to date, he is registered with the Department of Treasury as a restoration architect. He has expressed an interest in larger projects. Acting Northern Regional Superintendent S. Ellis noticed his work on the Hoff-Vannatta House. Superintendent Ellis noted it's all about the craftsmanship of the masons doing their job correctly and the restoration architect needs to get the mortar application correct as to proper admixture, color and style of joint. He reported

that Michael Margulies came up with his associate to view the Steuben House and studied the issue of the repointing. The repointing should be considered an emergency condition. Michael Margulies has all the specifications for the project, which he would provide to S. Ellis for bidding for the contractor and he will also supervise the contractor. He has given a good price: \$1,000. If we are satisfied with the mason contractor who is working on the Hoff-Vannatta House and who may be considered the best in the business, then we will try and get this project into his schedule.

Resolved, the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission, acting in good faith, authorizes and approves the State Park Service (NJDEP), acting as our agent in this matter, to accept the proposal of Michael J. Margulies, AIA, of Eclectic Architecture, L. L. C., to provide professional services for \$1,000 for preparing and providing specifications for emergency bidding on repairing and repointing the mortar loss on the Zabriskie-Steuben House and to supervise the contractor employed to do this work, determining the said project will not negatively impact the historic resources at Historic New Bridge Landing. Motion, L. Bauer; second, A. Strobel. **Motion carried.**

In response to a question about the timetable for the work from commissioner A. Strobel, Superintendent S. Ellis said he was going to contact the mason contractor working on the Hoff-Vannatta House, who has previously worked with architect Michael Margulies, about his availability to do the work. He said he would provide chairman J. Smith with a construction schedule. Superintendent S. Ellis responded to a question from commissioner A. Strobel, noting he would have to convince Treasury that it's a true emergency. Secretary K. Wright noted the repointing project and porch repair was one of two projects at the Steuben House funded by specific appropriations in the FY 2015 NJDEP Budget, receiving (he thought) about \$36,000.

Commissioner D. Powell asked about the contractor's need for access, noting we've previously found doors left wide open providing completely unrestricted access to the house and its contents while contractors were working in the building. Superintendent S. Ellis said he would have someone reliable from the Ringwood State Park staff on hand at all times to monitor access to the Steuben House during the project.

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis asked our satisfaction with la Salle, the landscaping contractor. In response to his question about when the field needs to be cut, chairman J. Smith said prior to August 27, 2015, for the School of the Loyalist event. Superintendent S. Ellis said he would schedule mowing the field for Monday, August 24th. Chairman J. Smith and commissioner D.

Powell noted there are several broken fence rails around the meadow and on the river landing that need to be replaced. The Bergen County Historical Society has replaced numerous broken rails on state lands over the past several years. The fence rails are eleven-feet long.

In response to a question from commissioner D. Powell, Superintendent S. Ellis said the River Edge police were summoned whenever the Steuben House alarm goes off. The alarm can be shut off from a remote monitoring station.

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis reported progress on the gate and fences to block off the vacated portion of Main Street, saying the metal gate is done. Chairman J. Smith noted that he had put paint marks down where the gate should go, but that they had washed away. Superintendent S. Ellis noted the installation of electrically working entrance gate at Waterloo, which works with a solar panel. He will try and install a similar mechanism at Historic New Bridge Landing.

F. Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation

G. Bergen County Historical Society

July 20, 2015 was a busy day—In the morning we met with the security company and the alarms for the Campbell-Christie House and Demarest House are now repaired and functioning.

This isn't under the purview of the park commission, but I will note that I requested and received approval of the BCHS board to fund an examination of the Revolutionary War Charleville musket, carried by a Continental soldier, and retrieved from the river by a boy fishing from the iron swing bridge in front of the Steuben House in 1903. Gary McGowan, of CPR, will conduct the examination and prepare a report. He suggested getting it x-rayed, whereby it could be determined what, if anything, is inside. For example, cartridges have been found in other such relics. We will probably need to have a special case built to house the musket when conservation is completed, because of its fragile condition.

The BCHS museum-collections committee has grown to include a schoolteacher, a retired construction manager, and four Bergen County college students of history as volunteers—at least one student is pursuing an advanced degree, but will continue to help throughout the year. We meet weekly.

HNBL as a potential film location: Our first movie-location contact

did not go beyond an initial visit, the prospective director not having funds to cover the insurance coverage recommended by BCHS's insurance agent. But it did help us get ready for such an endeavor; besides the insurance requirements, I also obtained a contract written by a lawyer for such purposes. I also supplied web-sized photos to the NJ Film Commission a couple of months ago, though I need to follow up to find out why they are not loaded onto their website showcase.

The 50/50 Raffle location (a museum fund-raiser) will be held in the Steuben House on August 15th at 7 p.m. All the raffle tickets but two have already been sold, so we will have either one \$10,000 winner or two \$5,000 winners.

Bergen County Executive James Tedesco noted the Steuben House in the new Meadowland Guide Book in his opening remarks, saying, "Our retail shopping facilities are second to none. Bergen Community College attracts students from across our county and throughout the state. Places to visit include the Meadowlands, Steuben House (home to the Bergen County Historical Society), Overpeck Park, the BC Zoo in Van Saun Park, and the NJ Naval Museum — just to name a few." We are most appreciative of the mention! BCHS became members of the Meadowlands Chamber a few years ago to take advantage of their regional tourism efforts. BCHS has a listing in the Guide Book. I circulated a copy of this new Meadowlands Liberty Convention & Visitors Bureau Guide Book to HNBL Park Commissioners—Steve Ellis requested a copy, which I gave him.

I distributed a copy of the new BCHS schedule-of-events rack card. Chairman Jim Smith suggested including the whole year of programming. Updated info is available on the website, Facebook and through weekly email blasts (*Our Connection to the Past*) to over two thousand interested history constituents. In addition, Past BCHS President John Heffernan has agreed to keep the BCHS phone message updated, which is also noted on the card. This is very helpful for those folks who are not on web.

Chairman J. Smith reported the Bergen County Historical Society is looking to create a tavern yard in front of the Campbell-Christie House with the installation of a white-picket fence and gates before Baronfest. We are getting a second estimate, but the first amounted to \$2,600. This will not only add to the authenticity, but it will facilitate the use of the tavern during special events.

VII. New Business

A. Green Initiative

As noted in his chairman's report, Chairman J. Smith spoke on bringing his green initiative to the board of the Bergen County Historical Society to assess the light fixtures and to make the switch to LED bulbs. He brought in samples of LED candelabra bulbs, which reduce heat and conserve energy, and which are ideal for museum collections, as they have no negative impact upon artifacts. The use of LED bulbs will reduce our carbon footprint and our operational costs.

B. Retreat Weekend

Chairman J. Smith noted the upcoming 239th anniversary of the British Invasion and American Retreat from Fort Lee in November. He reported we will again read the opening paragraphs of Thomas Paine's American Crisis, describing New Bridge as the American troops' first objective. He also said he would like to recreate the skirmish of November 21, 1776, when British troops under General Vaughan attacked the American rear guard, bringing the conflict to New Bridge. This would involve using the bridge and a portion of Brett Park, so we'd like to get that on everyone's radar.

C. Line-item appropriation for FY 2017

The Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission is requesting a line-item appropriation in the FY 2017 state budget of \$375,000 for operating expenses in order to take over full administration of the Steuben House and other state parklands at Historic New Bridge Landing State Park and to relieve the Department of Environmental Protection and the Division of Parks and Forestry of all its perceived responsibilities over state-owned buildings and lands under the Commission's statutory jurisdiction. The Commission also requests direct access to capital funds for the care and development of the Steuben House and for all other capital projects on state-owned and operated properties at Historic New Bridge Landing State Park. Motion, A. Strobel; second, M. Putrino. **Motion carried.**

VIII. Public Comment

IX. Adjournment

Chairman J. Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:58 pm.

X. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission will be held in the Campbell-Christie House at 7 PM at

Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey, 07661 on September 3, 2015. Future meetings are scheduled for October 1, 2015; November 5, 2015; December 3, 2015; and January 7, 2016.

**Meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission
September 3, 2015**

I. Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Secretary K. Wright read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and Chairman J. Smith opened the meeting at 7:14 PM.

II. Attendance

L. Bauer; M. Donohue; S. Ellis; D. Powell; J. Smith; A. Strobel.

Excused: J. Bellis; W. J. Oddie; M. Putrino.

Also, K. Wright (Secretary and Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation Alternate); Randi Duffie; J. Heffernan; Lou Kahn; Richard Karp; J. Trontis (Assistant Director, State Park Service).

III. Review of Minutes

Review of the Minutes of the Meeting of August 6, 2015: Motion to approve: M. Donohue; second, L. Bauer. **Motion carried.**

IV. Calendar

V. Chairman's Report

Good evening everyone,
Welcome to our September Commission Meeting. August proved to be another busy month at New Bridge, highlighted by a very popular evening walking tour, a site clean up that included the addition of a replica 18th century camp kitchen, the first of its kind in Bergen County, probably since 14,000 troops were in River Edge and Oradell and Washington was at the Steuben House, planning his next moves during the Steenrapie encampment of September 1780. We saw a successful and cerebral event where visitors from up and down the coast, along with Canada, came to New Bridge to learn about the other side of the American Revolution, Loyalists. People were amazed by the volunteers but also commented on the unique architecture of the buildings here at New Bridge, truly unique for the 13 Colonies, representative of the creole culture that existed here, and a style, while endangered, which is purely Bergen County.

This activity is not stopping in September, with the Naturalization Ceremony (thank you, Mary), Baronfest, a site clean up on September 19th, a lecture and a walking tour. A major challenge that this site encounters unfortunately is the continuing lack of multiple public

bathrooms. With larger events porta-johns are required, and even with smaller events, to help augment these facilities. To get Historic New Bridge Landing functioning properly, this should definitely be a major consideration when funding allows. By doing so, it would reduce the stress on all parties and remove the bathroom from the second floor Steuben House.

I want to thank Larry and Mike for assisting with the clean up on the other side of the river and it is exciting to see both New Milford and Teaneck take a vested interest on the approach to “the bridge that saved a nation.” While I have spoken about this in the past, about improving the approach, it will encourage visitors to wander down and discover the heart of New Bridge Landing, and likewise, encourage visitors on the River Edge side to venture across the bridge and explore what Teaneck and New Milford have to offer. Again, thanks to the State DEP, their grounds at New Bridge Landing looked great and a precariously hanging limb was removed prior to the big event, thank you. The Society began itemizing light bulbs in the buildings to start examining the switch to LEDs, but it continues to be an ongoing/long term project. The Society also replaced broken rails both on Bergen County Historical Society property and State Property, to improve the visitor experience prior to the School of the Loyalist and we thank them for that.

For our next meeting, I encourage us all to think of ways we can continue to make positive contributions to this Commission, as we are all partners in this together.

VI. Continuing Business

A. Teaneck

Commissioner L. Bauer reported that planning is underway for another cleanup of Brett Park. He reiterated the discussion that arose at our last meeting regarding Nicholas & Lence Communications, a New York communications and public relations firm, being interested in doing marketing for the site. Commissioner L. Bauer said he is working through the Teaneck Chamber of Commerce on a single piece of literature that will include all that is going on in our area because so much is just going over people’s heads. He’s had a lot of expressions of interest over the past two years and this would be a way to avoid conflicting events. He is also working on putting together a meeting of the mayors of the three municipalities involved at Historic New Bridge Landing. Chairman J. Smith suggested a meeting between the DPWs of New Milford and Teaneck to coordinate efforts in improving Old New Bridge Road and Brett Park.

B. New Milford

Commissioner M. Putrino was unable to attend this evening's meeting due to a scheduling conflict.

C. River Edge

Commissioner M. Donohue reported the naturalization ceremony for September 24th is all set. County Executive James Tedesco is scheduled to be the guest speaker. K. Wright will speak on the Steuben House and Historic New Bridge Landing. Twenty-five new citizens are expected to take the oath and the League of Women Voters will be on hand to register new citizens to vote in time for their participation in the November election. She reminded everyone that the rules of the US Citizenship and Immigration Services do not allow for the participation of any public officials who are running for re-election in the current cycle.

D. County of Bergen

Commissioner A. Strobel has been following email correspondence between county drainage engineer and the external drainage firm the County has on call, but there is no plan of action or definitive cost estimate as yet. Hopefully there will be more to report by next month. While this is moving forward, there is a need to know the potential cost.

Commissioner A. Strobel also reported that James Koth has been named director of the Bergen County Parks Department. He is an Oradell councilman with professional experience in New York City and Hudson River parks. While commissioner Strobel has had limited conversations with him, he is attuned to park systems' operations and management. He also noted County Executive James Tedesco has announced a vision to revitalize county parks with new and different activities. Commissioner A. Strobel said he would continue to advocate for historic preservation. Perhaps in time he suggested we might ask Jim Koth to attend one of our meetings.

E. DEP – Steuben House

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis reported he got the specifications for repointing the Steuben House, explaining the project is very complicated and time consuming, considering what they have to pull out of the joints and then refill, making small batches of mortar to get the right viscosity. He said he met today with Michael J. Margulies, AIA, of Eclectic Architecture, L. L. C., at the Steuben House. To get the color to match the aged mortar involves a process called petrographic analysis, utilizing a certified laboratory, which is capable of doing this. Architect Michael J. Margulies will

be here on hand to certify the mortar matches. We need to review this quickly so that this project can be completed before the snow flies.

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis also reported moving the electric meter would involve a change order. We need to review our options for moving the meter, as it would be done simultaneously with moving the electric panel above the flood level. The SHPO is reviewing the use of a composite material for the porch column bases.

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis circulated a picture of the electronic gates used at other sites and which he is recommending for installation here across the vacated portion of Main Street.

Assistant Director John Trontis of the State Park Service read the following email correspondence he received of State Parks director Mark Texel regarding a renewed offer of a grant for the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission:

"HNBLPC has been awarded an amount of 100K to be used for programmatic enhancements for the Historic New Bridge Landing, assuming some emphasis on the Steuben House

- Good for the current fiscal year; July 1 2015– June 31, 2016

- Formal letter is forthcoming from the State Park Service with terms of how the money gets disbursed. Within the coming week.

- Slight delay in waiting for DEP treasury to determine which grant form is to be used – apologies

- Funds could be used for a very wide variety of items ranging from program costs, publicity, marketing, hiring interpretive and other professional staff, soft costs for capital enhancements (not the hard costs themselves), program materials, supplies, utilities, etc.

- HNBLPC will need to have a bank account set up in which to receive the funds, and need to appoint a treasurer responsible for administering the funds as they are received from the State.

Mark Texel
Director, State Park Service
Division of Parks and Forestry"

Assistant Director Trontis said he would forward a copy of the email to secretary K. Wright.

Secretary K. Wright noted the slop sink that sits in the southwest back room of the Steuben House has never been installed. It is

supposed to go in the northwest back room to the existing water lines that used to feed and drain a washing machine.

F. Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation

No update.

G. Bergen County Historical Society

Chairman J. Smith praised the high-quality programming we are presenting as evidenced by the recent three-day School of the Loyalist event, which attracted participants and visitors from as far away as Nova Scotia, Ontario and North Carolina. Assistant Director John Trontis complimented the unique experience that Historic New Bridge Landing provides, having heard as much from Carrie Fellows, who was a presenter at the recent School of the Loyalist, and from Mark Texel.

Commissioner D. Powell noted we have added a pony ride in the meadow for Baronfest as an activity for children, but requiring a certificate of insurance from the operator.

VII. New Business

A. Tavern-yard Fence

In order to move us from a cost center to a profit center, we are building up the necessary infrastructure of hospitality, which includes the tavern-yard picket fence, which was brought up at our last meeting, which meets the criteria set by the River Edge police for a “corral” for consumption of beer and which allows us to expand the eighteenth-century tavern experience by including sale and consumption of beer or wine. Commissioner A. Strobel raised the issues of the historical appropriateness of a picket fence in front of the house; of special land-use permits for having a fence in a flood plain, which might act as either a trash-collector or as potential floating debris during a storm surge; and the issue of serving alcohol in a county-owned building; and of the fence inhibiting county access to the building as stipulated in the lease. Secretary K. Wright addressed these issues to the best of his ability, based upon decades of experience with the site, including as a resident. He explained that he had presented a PowerPoint program twice to the School of Interpretation, entitled *Eighteenth-Century Country Taverns: A Practical Guide to Early American Hospitality*, which described the characteristic features of early taverns with illustrations. He stated that the oldest known photograph of the Steuben House, an original copy of which hangs upstairs in the Steuben House, dating perhaps as early as 1870, shows a dilapidated white picket fence forming a

dooryard—its condition suggests that it had been around for some time before the photograph was taken. He also noted that he had obtained the SHPO's concurrence in re-erecting that fence about fifteen years ago. Chairman J. Smith noted he had circulated watercolors of Brooklyn of Revolutionary War vintage, showing such white board fences (in contrast to the four-rail fences surrounding agricultural lands) forming dooryard enclosures. He noted this was the same cultural context as Bergen County.

Secretary K. Wright noted the proposed picket fence is no different from the picket garden fence outside the Campbell-Christie House, which has neither collected debris nor acted as floating debris in the several record floods of recent years. He also noted the rail fences surrounding the entire property, including state lands, which the state installed, have never posed a hazard in the worst flooding. He also pointed out the slatted chain-link fence the county installed around the condensers at the northwest corner of the Campbell-Christie House and a similar fence around the former power substation, neither of which have acted as trash racks or become floating debris.

Secretary Wight recalled he has walked across the site from Hackensack Avenue to the Steuben House on several occasions during supernormal tidal flooding and none of the stone houses are subject to the direct current of the river or of Coles Brook, but are inundated by the backwash rising through the storm drainage system, including the drainage ditch that runs between the Demarest and Campbell-Christie House. The outlet of Coles Brook is subject to tidal backwash to a point just beyond the eastbound lanes of Route #4, thus preventing discharge of freshwater runoff during the high tides. When flooding is aggravated by runoff from heavy rains, the discharge down Coles Brook backs up where it passes through the culverts under Route #4 and Hackensack Avenue, flooding those roadways, as well as the properties on the west side of the NJ Transit tracks, but the Steuben Arms apartments block the direct flow of water from the stream onto Main Street. The county roadway embankment connecting Hackensack Avenue to New Bridge Road across the modern bridge acts as a barrier to the north, channeling the river under the bridge. While the downstream flow may pass around the 1889 swing bridge, even excavating a portion of the old road near the west abutment of the bridge and depositing sand, it has never even carried away the rail fence in front of the Steuben House. The picket fence we are recommending is too far distant from the wetlands and stream currents to pose a hazard as demonstrated several times in the past decade of record storm surges. In fact, there is not even a debris field around the Campbell-Christie House or the adjacent garden fence after even the highest recorded episodes of flooding. He reported that the Bergen

County Historical Society is obtaining a permit from the Borough of River Edge for the proposed fence.

Lastly, secretary Wright noted the ground lease with the County of Bergen not only specifies that the Bergen County Historical Society has exclusive occupancy of the Campbell-Christie House and exclusively determines its use and historic restoration, but also that nothing in the lease may be construed to diminish the Society's ownership of the land that the house occupies. The fence, which will only abut the two front corners of the house and is passable by gates, will not inhibit access to the exterior of the building. If need be, a fence panel could be removed as occasion requires.

Resolved, the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission, acting in good faith, authorizes the Bergen County Historical Society to install approximately 125 feet of wooden, white-picket fence and gates in front of the Campbell-Christie House to create a tavern yard, according to the specifications and description provided in the written proposal and diagram from the Wayside Fence Company, Fair Lawn, N. J., dated August 20, 2015, determining this project will have no negative impact upon historic resources.

Motion, L. Bauer; second, D. Powell. **Motion carried.**

VIII. Public Comment

Commissioner M. Putrino invited Randi Duffie, a former two-term councilwoman in New Milford, who presently serves on the New Milford Beautification Committee, to speak to the commission. She participated in our recent cleanup day and did some clipping of invasive vegetation. She used the opportunity to assess what improvements she and her committee might contribute to the New Milford side of the park. These might include the ornamental use of some Belgian block (found in a backyard of a New Milford resident), ornamental plantings along the existing rail fences, lights and benches. She agreed with the proposal to arrange a meeting with representatives of the commission and the heads of the New Milford and Teaneck DPWs, to address the cutting of overhanging trees, cleaning of storm drains and curbside weeding of vegetation. She offered the cooperation and services of the Beautification Committee in assisting such endeavors. Chairman J. Smith recommended that we form a plan of action together to establish priorities and to provide a direction and objectives that everyone can work towards. Richard Karp reported he had unsuccessfully attempted to get in touch with Sanzari's New Bridge Inn to see if they would be interested in helping with such improvements to the streetscape.

Assistant Director J. Trontis thanked everyone for welcoming him to the Vintage Baseball event, where he threw out the first pitch. He also

offered to sing the national anthem at the Naturalization ceremony, which he planned to attend.

IX. Adjournment

Chairman J. Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:57 pm.

X. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission will be held in the Campbell-Christie House at 7 PM at Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey, 07661 on October 1, 2015. Future meetings are scheduled for November 5, 2015; December 3, 2015; and January 7, 2016.

**Meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission
October 1, 2015**

I. Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Secretary K. Wright read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and Chairman J. Smith opened the meeting at 7:07 PM.

II. Attendance

L. Bauer; M. Donohue; E. Pain; D. Powell; M. Putrino; J. Smith; A. Strobel.

Excused: J. Bellis; W. J. Oddie.

Also, K. Wright (Secretary and Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation Alternate); J. Heffernan.

III. Review of Minutes

Review of the Minutes of the Meeting of September 3, 2015: Motion to approve: M. Donohue; second, L. Bauer. **Motion carried.** M. Putrino, abstained.

IV. Calendar

V. Annual Business

A. Election of Officers

Secretary K. Wright opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner M. Donohue nominated James Smith for Chairman, seconded by M. Putrino; Deborah Powell nominated Mary Donohue for Vice-Chairwoman, seconded by L. Bauer; M. Putrino nominated Deborah Powell for Treasurer, seconded by M. Donohue; M. Donohue nominated Kevin Wright for Secretary, seconded by L. Bauer. There being no other nominations, the Secretary asked for a motion to close nominations: motion, D. Powell, second, L. Bauer. Secretary K. Wright asked the commissioners to fill out their paper ballots in conformity with the By-Laws. The slate was unanimously elected.

VI. Chairman's Report

Good evening everyone,

I want to thank everyone for attending tonight and as always, thank you for communicating with me. I also want to thank you all for your

continued support for me as Chair of this Commission. It is not an easy task and yet, it continues to be my belief that all members of this Commission play an important role and I will continue to work with everyone to see to the success of Historic New Bridge Landing.

This past month saw the return of the Naturalization ceremony at New Bridge. Thank you, Mary and the members of the B.C.H.S for helping to organize such a wonderful event. We sit on a Revolutionary War battleground that witnessed 11 battles, including our darkest hour (the retreat from Ft. Lee), and the rebirth of Washington as a leader during the Steenrapie Encampment. I cannot think of a better place to become a member of this great state and country.

September also saw the first ever meeting between the New Milford DPW and Teaneck DPW, organized by the Commission. Thank you, Mike and Larry, for setting this up. Not only did it make everyone aware of who was responsible for what on the approach to the bridge, but it also allowed fruitful discussions on the development of the east side of the bridge, which we can discuss under *New Business*.

In September, I also had the opportunity to meet with state representatives to discuss placement of the wooden gate at the turn around. With the establishment of the gate, and movement of the fence, we can safely control access to the Steuben House grounds and redefine how one enters that area. Thank you, Eric, for helping to arrange this.

VII. Continuing Business

A. Teaneck

Commissioner L. Bauer reported we had our last cleanup on September 22-23 and we will try to do more on November 1 (Mitzvah Day). He is still trying to get the Mayors together. Chairman J. Smith thanked Commissioner L. Bauer for his assistance in working out arrangements for the Retreat Weekend in Brett Park. He also thanked him for his involvement with getting the DPW managers of Teaneck and New Milford together. Commissioner D. Powell suggested an event sign or banner on River Road to publicize the event.

B. New Milford

Commissioner M. Putrino reported on the progress made by the New Milford DPW in improving the appearance and drainage at the eastern approach to the bridge and the need for short-term and long-term objectives as discussed in the recent meeting with the DPW managers from New Milford and Teaneck. Chairman J. Smith

particularly liked and noted Commissioner M. Putrino's suggestion about the possibility of hanging street-lamp banners for New Bridge Landing on Old New Bridge Road.

C. River Edge

Vice-chairwoman M. Donohue reported there is no new information on the proposed apartments along Hackensack Avenue/New Bridge Road. She noted the Naturalization ceremony went very well and got good press coverage. She regretted the County Executive could not attend do to health issues, but we will invite him next year and hope for his speedy recovery. Vice-chairwoman M. Donohue also said she would get in contact with the River Edge beautification committee and see if a meeting could be arranged with the same committees in New Milford and Teaneck to explore and coordinate their involvement here at Historic New Bridge Landing.

D. County of Bergen

Commissioner A. Strobel spoke about a week ago with county drainage engineer Christos Kavvadas, but there is no new information to report as of this date on cost estimates or a definitive timeline. He offered his compliments to everyone on Baronfest, having spent a couple of hours attending the event—he enjoyed Kevin's talk on Baron von Steuben and thought the beer garden was well run, hearing only the highest praise from everyone.

E. DEP – Steuben House

Commissioner's alternate designee Eric Pain reported:

1. The bid package for Von Steuben House Masonry Restoration Project is prepared and going out to bid. Hopefully we will have a quick turnaround. We do need one initialed and dated copy from the HNBLPC for the project records. Please return an initialed copy to the Ringwood superintendent.
2. The Electrical Service Project specifications and plans are sent back to the Trenton office for revisions consideration.
3. A new gate is being constructed for Main Street.
4. Monthly Landscaping services will continue to be performed on an as-needed basis. The large scale landscaping services including the Meadow and former Saw Shop property will also be performed as needed and in time for the Harvest Homecoming scheduled for Sunday, October 18, 2015.

5. Calls to Blue Meadows Landscaping have not been returned to date. John Meeks is currently on vacation and will contact us when he returns to the office.
6. The slop sink in the basement of the Steuben House will be installed during the month of October. It will either be handled by Ringwood State Park Maintenance employees or a plumbing contractor.
7. Winter maintenance at the Steuben House will once again be handled by TJK Landscaping as they were the lowest bidder vendor for the services requested. Ringwood State Park Superintendent has noted the interest in having the path cleared in front of the Steuben House and leading to the bridge. Chairman J. Smith also reiterated the importance of having the brick pathway from the roundabout to the Steuben House hand shoveled and not cleared of snow by a vehicle.
8. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact Supt Ellis at 908-619-1891.

Chairman J. Smith noted the possibility of an Eagle Scout project to rebuild the outhouse that once stood northwest of the Steuben House and which is only known today through photographs. He also noted volunteer efforts to replant the walkway garden along the south gable-end of the house, which landscapers had mistakenly cleared.

Commissioner D. Powell again noted the need to treat the fungus growing at the base of the red oak tree at the northeast (front) corner of the Steuben House. This red oak (the official state tree) was planted when the museum was dedicated in September 1939. Commissioner D. Powell also asked about establishing a black walnut sapling where the old black walnut tree was cut down several years ago in the backyard of the Steuben House—the original plan was to use a tree auger to move a scion of the old tree in its stead.

F. Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation

Chairman J. Smith installed LED flame-tip light bulbs in the east room of the Demarest House to reduce heat and save costs. Secretary K. Wright reported a volunteer crew had thoroughly cleaned the Demarest House before Baronfest and the house was staffed with Continental soldiers and a spinner using an old walking wheel belonging to BCHS.

G. Bergen County Historical Society

Commissioner D. Powell noted we had standing room only in the large parlor of the Steuben House for the talk on Baron von Steuben on Baronfest. The Bergen County Historical Society gained

37 new memberships on that day alone—meaning we gained over 60 new memberships in the past month. Furthermore, many of these memberships are for couples or families. The Historical Society’s email blast goes out to about 2,000 recipients. We are also on our second printing of the event card (which list the schedule of events at Historic New Bridge Landing for the coming year), having run out of the original printing in only two months, due to the large interest.

Commissioner D. Powell (who is also chairwoman of the Museum Committee) noted it was quite warm in the attic of the Campbell-Christie House due to the failure of the old air-conditioning system. This is not good for artifacts. The air-conditioning system downstairs has not worked for a couple of years. Secretary K. Wright thought the county-employed architects for the structural repairs in the Campbell-Christie House, completed about a year ago, had also been asked to prepare a report on the status of the building’s mechanical systems, which mostly date back to 1977, and recommendations for their maintenance and replacement. Commissioner A. Strobel suggested we look at the digital copy of the submissions on the project that we provided to see if a mechanical-systems report is included.

Secretary K. Wright thanked the county for sending Jonathan Mesa and an assistant from the county parks maintenance crew to replace the broken hot-water heater and the old faucet on the kitchen sink. Secretary K. Wright noted these county employees were professional, pleasant to work with and proactive, reflecting well on the parks department and the county.

VIII. New Business

A. Meeting of New Milford and Teaneck DPW Managers

Chairman J. Smith reported on the meeting with Fran Wilson, Director of Public Works for the Teaneck DPW, and Vince Cahill, Superintendent of the New Milford DPW, which was also attended by Chairman J. Smith, Secretary K. Wright and HNBLPC Commissioners L. Bauer and M. Putrino. Everyone in attendance agreed on the need to put down some short and long term goals, including what we would envision for the streetscape on the New Milford side of Old New Bridge Road, particularly the old general store building. We ascertained that Old New Bridge Road falls under the jurisdiction of New Milford (and not the County of Bergen), up to the curbside along Brett Park in Teaneck. The Teaneck DPW is responsible for the roadside trees in Brett Park. The discussion included the street lighting (especially replacing street light bulbs) and their use to possibly display HNBL banners and the

possibility of getting Sanzari's New Bridge Inn involved since it would accrue to the benefit of the business. The New Milford DPW has already added the streetscape to its routine maintenance schedule, performing street and storm drain cleaning. Chairman J. Smith thanked commissioners M. Putrino and L. Bauer for their assistance in setting up this meeting and agreed that establishing goals is important to further progress on this approach to the bridge and historic park. Commissioner D. Powell reiterated the importance of planting trees to screen the Teaneck DPW from the viewshed of the Steuben House and river landing.

B. Road Signage

Commissioner D. Powell raised the important issue of directional road signage for Historic New Bridge Landing Park on State Route 4 and Interstate 80 and 287. Vice-chairwoman M. Donohue agreed to contact the state department of transportation about placing directional signs on Route 4 and Congressman Pascarella about federal interstate highways.

IX. Public Comment

X. Adjournment

Chairman J. Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:22 pm.

XI. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission will be held in the Campbell-Christie House at 7 PM at Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey, 07661 on November 5, 2015. Future meetings are scheduled for December 3, 2015 and January 7, 2016.

Meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission
November 5, 2015

I. Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Secretary K. Wright read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and Chairman J. Smith opened the meeting at 7:03 PM.

II. Attendance

L. Bauer; S. Ellis; W. J. Oddie; D. Powell; J. Smith; A. Strobel.

Excused: J. Bellis; M. Putrino.

Also, K. Wright (Secretary and Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation Alternate); J. Heffernan; Manfred Wegner.

III. Review of Minutes

Review of the Minutes of the Meeting of October 1, 2015: Motion to approve: L. Bauer; second, D. Powell. **Motion carried.** W. J Oddie, abstained.

IV. Calendar

V. Chairman's Report

Good evening everyone,

I hope everyone is doing well as the leaves continue to fall and a new cycle of events returns to New Bridge Landing. As is par for the course, the past month saw the site buzzing with activity, from multiple volunteer clean up events, to our Harvest Homecoming celebrations. November is no exception, with a unique lecture focusing on the origins of the Meadowlands to the Retreat Weekend, which will take place Saturday evening, November 21st and Sunday November 22nd. This is a pivotal moment for the Revolution, the site and the state. As Kevin so eloquently says, how many democracies existed when Washington and his men not only retreated over the bridge and down what is today Main Street, but also fought the British advanced guard? The answer is none. And yet this is just the beginning of the amazing story of Historic New Bridge Landing.

I would like to recognize and thank Eric and the DEP for the work on the gate near the Steuben House. This will go a long way to regulating access to the heart of the historic corridor. With the moving of the fence line to the turn around, we would effectively control access to

the site, which is critical. Do we need to have the brick pathway extension go all the way to the turn around or, instead, should visitors approach the house, the way visitors would have in the past, by walking past the new gate, on the old road bed, to the front door? This is something we should discuss in the future. I will also mention that in the last two weeks I did receive information concerning a grant for the Historic New Bridge Landing Commission. We should definitely review this and we can establish a committee to review this and ultimately come to a decision.

To wrap up, I would also ask that everyone keep Vice-Chairwoman Mary Donohue in your prayers as she recently had a fall and is in the hospital. Mary continues to be an amazingly inspirational individual and a wonderful force on this Commission. We wish her a speedy recovery. To all of you, again, I thank you for your volunteer service and I wish you and your families a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday.

VI. Continuing Business

A. Teaneck

Commissioner L. Bauer reported Mitzvah Day was phenomenal, we had a great turn out. Cub scouts planted bulbs. The Chamber of Commerce's community awards dinner was also a success and Jim Smith, who received an award, created a splash. Chairman J. Smith responded, saying it was an honor he received the award and he shared the credit with all the volunteers that work with and through the Bergen County Historical Society and the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission. He also appreciated the opportunity to send out the message about Historic New Bridge Landing and what we are accomplishing here. Chairman J. Smith also thanked commissioner L. Bauer for his assistance in getting permission to use lower Brett Park for part of the reenactment on the Retreat to Victory Weekend of the skirmish fought there on November 21, 1776.

B. New Milford

Commissioner M. Putrino is out of town and unable to attend this evening's meeting. Chairman J. Smith noted that in response to our meeting with the DPWs of Teaneck and New Milford, we were able to better define responsibilities along Old New Bridge Road with the immediate result that streetlight bulbs were replaced. We again thank everyone for his or her cooperation.

C. River Edge

Vice-chairwoman M. Donohue has been hospitalized after a fall and we all wish her a very speedy recovery.

D. County of Bergen

Commissioner A. Strobel reported he had more information dealing with drainage issues. Working with the drainage engineer, he reported 20-inch and 30-inch outflow devices that prevent backflow of water need to be repaired or replaced. They have put together a preliminary cost estimate of \$60,000 to do that. County drainage engineer Christos Kavvadas is working with grant writers and capital funds to address this project. Major sections of pipes may be collapsed. Happy to say we have some magnitude of the possible expense in the cost estimate, which is not a large sum in the public works' world, but which we will pursue as economically as possible. Next month we hope to have more information and possibly an action plan. Chairman J. Smith thanked commissioner A Strobel for his report.

Secretary K. Wright reported he has discovered the Bergen County Historical Society granted a drainage easement, 10 feet wide, across its property, to the County of Bergen in 1955, for the purpose of constructing and maintaining therein an open ditch and conduit connecting with the Hackensack River and connecting with cross basins, catch basins and future storm-water drains along Main Street. Secretary K. Wright noted this is why the drainage ditch between the Demarest and Campbell-Christie Houses follows along the property lines of the Bergen County Historical Society as it wraps around the state-owned land surrounding the Steuben House and empties into the Hackensack River near the modern bridge on New Bridge Road. The underground storm drainage conduit, connecting with the catch basins along Main Street, also discharges into the Hackensack River through the old river landing in front of the Steuben House. There is a map of the system accompanying the easement, a copy of which he found in the records of the Bergen County Historical Society.

Commissioner D. Powell reported she found the condition assessment report for the mechanical systems at the Campbell-Christie House, but she said it didn't include an evaluation of the efficiencies of these systems. Commissioner A. Strobel noted he spoke with Kurt Leasure (HMR Architects) after our last meeting and there doesn't seem to be any action plan regarding the mechanical systems to follow through on. Chairman J. Smith concluded we need to look thoroughly through the condition assessment report and proceed with evaluating the condition and efficiency of the mechanical systems, such as the heating and air-conditioning systems, which are now approaching 40 years old. We also need to work out a routine maintenance schedule for the Campbell-Christie House. Noting the age of the mechanical systems in the Campbell-Christie House, commissioner A. Strobel said he

would engage county architect John Terreri to get his thoughts on the maintenance or replacement of these old systems.

E. DEP – Steuben House

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis reported the bid proposals for the Steuben House masonry project are complete: the low bidder is Steve Ferrari, Works in Stone (610-294-3026, www.worksinstone.com) of Upper Black Eddy, PA. The other bidders are Andrew deGruchy, Lime Works (215-536-6706; www.limeworks.us) of Telford, PA; and Neil Curry, Curry & Co. Stone Restoration & Construction, (908-996-6952, www.Stone_Work.com) of Milford, NJ.

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis reported his procurement limit is \$46,000 and he is hell bent to get started before temperature falls to 32°. Once they begin demolition (i.e., removal of old mortar), they have to do injection. When they receive the mortar, it is already mixed to color for the building based upon a sample. If they are unable to complete the entire project before the onset of cold weather, then we will pay them for what they accomplish and resume work in the spring. He also said historic restoration architect Michael Margulies shall be allowed to bill the DEP for every inspection visit he makes during the project. Commissioner's designee S. Ellis also reported that the State Historic Preservation Office has approved the use of a composite material for the bases of the porch columns.

In response to questions, Commissioner's designee S. Ellis stated the newly installed gateposts would be cut so that they are even with the fence posts on the landing and around the park. He also said they will install four-rail fences around the roundabout to prevent vehicles from driving around the new gate or from parking on the lawn. Secretary K. Wright reported that a youngster accompanying a family who came to picnic on the grounds got away from his father and fell into the hole between the roadway of the roundabout and the storm drain. This hole, where a River Edge police car got stuck, is an ongoing hazard and should be filled with stone or rip-rap to prevent further mishaps.

Commissioner's designee S. Ellis reported on the electrical-panel project, saying they need to get permission from PSE&G to put meter on the pole.

Lastly, Commissioner's designee S. Ellis reported Mark Texel has been named Director of the Division of Parks & Forestry (instead of his former title as Director of the State Park Service). Commissioner D. Powell reported that there was low water pressure

in the bathroom sink in the second floor of the Steuben House, so that guests could not wash their hands. Commissioner's designee S. Ellis said he would send a maintenance worker from Ringwood State Park to correct the problem.

F. Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation

Re-enactors will conduct a children's military drill with wooden muskets in front of the Demarest House for the Retreat to Victory Weekend.

G. Bergen County Historical Society

Commissioner D. Powell noted we had a great turnout for our Harvest Homecoming despite chilly temperature. She noted the telephone line, which had been damaged from the burst water heater in the attic, has been repaired: John Heffernan found the line was good but the clip-jack had corroded and so he replaced it. Thus we were able to re-establish the security system. She noted that our email newsletter mailing list had hit 2,051 recipients after sign-ups during our fall events. The Society's Museum Committee and Buildings & Grounds Committee, and Events Committee continue their work on improving the site, protecting and displaying the artifact collections and improving programming. She also reported the plaster model for Albert Jaegers' statue of Baron von Steuben, which stands in Lafayette Park, opposite the White House. Damaged in Hurricane Sandy, this plaster model, dating to about 1906, was restored through FEMA funding. BCHS volunteer Manfred Wegner recently completed a wooden base, 36-inches high, on which to display the restored Steuben statue upon its return.

VII. New Business

A. Discussion of Assessment of Mechanical Systems in Campbell-Christie House

Discussion included under report for the County of Bergen above.

VIII. Public Comment

IX. Adjournment

Chairman J. Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:18 pm.

X. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission will be held in the Steuben House at 7 PM at Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey, 07661 on December 3, 2015. Future meetings are scheduled for January 7, 2016.

**Meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission
December 3, 2015**

I. Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Secretary K. Wright read the Open Public Meetings Act statement and Chairman J. Smith opened the meeting at 7:03 PM.

II. Attendance

E. Pain; D. Powell; M. Putrino; J. Smith; A. Strobel; K. Wright
(Secretary and Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation Alternate)

Excused: L. Bauer; J. Bellis; M. Donohue; W. J. Oddie.

Also; J. Heffernan; John G. Trontis, Assistant Director, Division of
Parks & Forestry, DEP.

III. Review of Minutes

Review of the Minutes of the Meeting of November 5, 2015: Motion to approve: D. Powell; second, A. Strobel. **Motion carried.** M. Putrino, abstained.

IV. Calendar

V. Chairman's Report

Good evening everyone and thank you for attending tonight's meeting. With our last meeting of 2015 upon us, I want to thank everyone for what they do for this Commission, but I also stress that it is *our* Commission and encourage new ideas and movement for 2016.

Again, for 2016, I would stress ways to improve the visitor's experience, reducing 21st Century intrusions and further branding Historic New Bridge Landing. This could be done in the short term with signage on or near Route 4 and with telephone-pole banners, welcoming people to HNBL, as well as new interpretative signs and finding a proper home for the third HNNL blue sign. Another long-time goal for the site is obtaining a proper bathroom facility.

As you may have already noticed the recent work accomplished when you walked into the Steuben House this evening, I want to thank the NJDEP for replacing the sawhorses with a wooden gate! This really does help to protect the core of the site and creates a great entryway into heart of New Bridge Landing. We also had the opportunity to meet at the site with Ringwood Park staff prior to Thanksgiving and to discuss moving the split-rail fence close to the turnaround. This will

finally prevent unwanted traffic onto both BCHS property as well as state land and from approaching the County swing bridge. It also gives the park a more “finished” look. I also want to thank Steve Ellis for providing the information on the masonry contractors, which I shared with the Commission, providing Steve with our suggestions.

I also want to recognize New Milford and Teaneck for their assistance with this year’s *Retreat to Victory* Event at New Bridge: Mike Putrino for getting the New Milford Police Department to ensure that no one parked near the bridge and Larry Bauer for facilitating the paperwork to allow for a reenactment skirmish of November 21, 1776, to occur on the grounds where it actually happened in what is now Brett Park. People were really moved by the event. Being closely involved with organizing and managing the event and being on the east side of the river in Brett Park, you realize what an important component that section of Historic New Bridge Landing really plays. For 2016, it would be great to see continued cooperation between New Milford and Teaneck, including the trimming of overgrown weeds and trees, along with Mike Putrino’s idea of placing lamppost banners to solidify the area as an integral part of “Historic New Bridge Landing.”

The Society continues to do well and to put on unique programming for packed audiences. I want to recognize Deborah Powell for spear heading the redesign of the 1776 Retreat Map, which emphasizes how New Bridge was the “first object” of the retreating American garrison of Fort Lee and how the Zabriskie-Steuben House is the only extant house still standing along the route of the 1776 retreat through Bergen County.

And again, from my family to yours, all the best this Holiday Season!

VI. Continuing Business

A. Teaneck

Commissioner L. Bauer is unable to attend tonight, but Chairman J. Smith thank him for working with the Bergen County Historical Society and the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission during the past year and helping to coordinate our volunteer efforts in Brett Park.

B. New Milford

Commissioner M. Putrino announced he would no longer be New Milford’s representative on the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission as of December 31st when his term as Councilman runs out, but he said if there is anything he could do beyond that point to help us, then just call. Chairman J. Smith said it has been a real pleasure working with him during his tenure as chairman.

Commissioner A. Strobel thanked him for all his efforts. Everyone concurred in appreciating his valuable service and offered best wishes for the future.

C. River Edge

Vice-chairwoman M. Donohue is recovering from a broken ankle. Kevin and Deborah have visited her and she is in great spirits and anxious to move ahead with our plans and projects. Everyone wished her the very best for a full and speedy recovery.

D. County of Bergen

Commissioner A. Strobel reported he had no recent update from County drainage engineer Christos Kavvadas on the storm drainage system. After our discussion of the report on the mechanical systems at the Campbell-Christie House, he did contact and speak with county architect John Terreri and forwarded a copy of the report to Director of Public Works Ray Dressler. Since the building is under the County Parks Department, he also initiated a conversation with Parks Director James Koth. Secretary K. Wright noted he met with an employee of General Services at the Campbell-Christie House that morning to look over the mechanical systems and to report back on their age and condition. Commissioner A. Strobel said he would advocate for updating the equipment and for finding the money for it since it is the County's building and the County has a responsibility for it.

E. DEP – Steuben House

Assistant Director of State Parks John Trontis announced that Acting Northern Regional Superintendent Steve Ellis, who served as the NJDEP Commissioner's designee, had retired after being elected mayor of Phillipsburg in November. Everyone wished him well and thanked him for his service.

Commissioner's alternate designee, Ringwood Superintendent Eric Pain, provided the following report:

Masonry Project

Status update not currently available. Full update to be provided to Chairman Smith within 5 business days.

Electric Meter

Status report not currently available. Full update to be provided to Chairman Smith within 5 business days.

Gate

Ringwood State Park Maintenance employees finished the installation of the new gate in front of the Steuben House. RSP maintenance employees met with Chairman Jim Smith to discuss the installation of the fencing to accompany the gate to eliminate vehicles from driving around it and further damaging the lawn. Fencing installation to begin next week.

Water Pressure

Based on reports of low water pressure in the bathroom sink, Ringwood State Park maintenance responded and determined that the faucet was clogged. The screen was removed and cleaned. It has been reported the issue has been corrected.

Snow Removal

Winter maintenance contracts have been returned and the low bid vendor was again TJK Landscaping. The contract is available for review and upon approval by the Commission will be returned to the vendor and approved for the season. Once approved an onsite meeting will be held with the contractor to ensure we are on the same page with what we expect.

Storm Drain

Ringwood State Park maintenance employees will visit the site Friday, December 4th to address the concerns associated with the hole in the roadway and the storm drain. Interim repairs including the placement of “rip rap” will be performed while seeking a more permanent solution.

General Maintenance

Ringwood State Park employees continue to respond to the Steuben House to perform general cleaning of the building monthly or more frequently as scheduled events require.

After discussion of the various items in the report, the Commission took the following actions:

Resolved, the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission, acting in good faith, approves the snow removal agreement and contract for the winter of 2015-2016 at the rate of \$560 (1-6 inches of snowfall) and \$800 (6-12 inches of snowfall), payable in monthly invoices, as negotiated between contractor TJK Landscape Inc. and the State of New Jersey through Ringwood State Park, on condition that the walkways around the house will be hand shoveled.

Motion, D. Powell; second, M. Putrino. **Motion carried.**

Resolved, the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission, acting in good faith, authorizes the contract selection of the responsive low bidder Steve Ferrari, Works in Stone, of Upper

Black Eddy, PA, to do the repointing project on the Steuben House as per the specifications approved by this commission and the State Historic Preservation Office, determining that the project should have no negative impact on historic resources.

Motion, A. Strobel; second, D. Powell. **Motion carried.**

Commissioner A. Strobel asked that copies of the executed agreements be provided to the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission.

Through Chairman J. Smith, the members of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission extended their thanks and appreciation to Ringwood State Park carpenter John Livesey for his excellent craftsmanship and hard work on the new gate across the roadway at the Steuben House.

Assistant State Parks Director John Trontis said he attended the Naturalization ceremony in the Steuben House and found it very moving. He thanked commissioner M. Donohue for her work in putting the ceremony together and Secretary K. Wright for his appropriate remarks as a speaker. He noted a similar ceremony had been conducted a week earlier at Liberty State Park, but it is always a remarkable occurrence to witness.

Secretary K. Wright reported that BCHS volunteers clean the first floor windows of the Steuben House for the first time in many years and also clean the bathroom, exhibit cases and floors as required. He also raised the matter of the availability of a \$100,000 grant, which Director Mark Texel had communicated to Chairman J. Smith about a month previously. Chairman J. Smith said he was reviewing the material sent to him and would put together a list of questions.

Assistant State Parks Director John Trontis announced that under a recent reorganization of the Parks & Forestry, Mark Texel had been named the Acting Director of the Division.

F. Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation

Chairman J. Smith reported he installed LED flame-tip bulbs in the Demarest House. Secretary K. Wright reported volunteers had thoroughly cleaned the Demarest House and that trained volunteer interpreters staff the house during events. He noted that Sinter Klaas would be in the Demarest House on Sinter Klaas Day, December 6th, along with a display of Dutch holiday foods depicted in the 1660 painting of the *Visit of St. Nicholas* by Jan Steen.

G. Bergen County Historical Society

Commissioner D. Powell reported we had a successful Staff Ride of the route of the 1776 British Invasion and American Retreat in October, when we conducted a bus tour of the places associated with this military campaign. As a follow-up, our Retreat to Victory Weekend on November 21-22, 2015 was a tremendous success. Overall, we had a very ambitious but successful fall program schedule, gaining over 85 new memberships. We are likely the largest historical society in the state. She also reported that sculptor Albert Jaegers' plaster model for the Steuben Monument, commissioned in 1906, which stands opposite the White House, has been wonderfully stabilized through FEMA funding by conservator Gary McGowan after suffering flood damage in Hurricane Sandy. It will be returned to the Steuben House as soon as proper transport can be arranged, where it will stand on a wooden pedestal made by volunteer Manfred Wegner.

VII. New Business

A. Calendar of Meetings for 2016

Resolved, the Historic New Bridge Landing State Park Commission, acting in good faith, agrees for the upcoming year to meet at Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, NJ 07661, on or about the first Thursday of each month, namely, on February 4, 2016; March 3; April 7; May 5; June 2; July 7; August 4; September 1; October 6; November 3; December 1, 2016; and January 5, 2017, and authorizes the Secretary to advertise the meeting schedule in the newspaper of record and elsewhere.

Motion, M. Putrino; second, D. Powell. **Motion carried.**

VIII. Public Comment

IX. Adjournment

Chairman J. Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

X. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission will be held in the Campbell-Christie House at 7 PM at Historic New Bridge Landing, 1201-1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey, 07661 on January 7, 2016. Future meetings are scheduled for February 4, 2016; March 3; April 7; May 5; June 2; July 7; August 4; September 1; October 6; November 3; December 1, 2016; and January 5, 2017.