

SPARTA TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT TO SPARTA TOWNSHIP BOARD FOR 2022/23

2022/23 was a very productive year for your Sparta Township Historical Commission. We accomplished numerous goals, improved on our ongoing events and started work on important new projects. Below is a list of our accomplishments this past fiscal year.

- We have added 3 new Commissioners that have been great additions to our team
- Our Monday morning public openings have been full to capacity from 9am to 12pm and invariably include the public coming in to view collection items or to conduct research.
- We have been working with our new computers to upgrade the Past Perfect software and are on the cusp of having the public be able to do most researching from the comfort of their homes. Loretta Baughan has continued to upgrade our website, Spartahistory.org and it's garnering thousands of visits from all around the world. We encourage everyone to visit it if you haven't already.
- Our new contractor has been diligently entering our new collection items into the computer program and placing them in storage for future display. It's noted that only items that are germane to Sparta are accepted.
- We have recruited a grant writer (Sue Blackall) to write all future grant requests, except for ones we submit to the Friends group.
- We are in the process of digitizing all the 1950's high school football films, which is being done by a Sparta grad.
- We continue to maintain the Memorial Garden behind the Research Center and plant flowers in the window box. We also have a landscaping plan for the refurbished schoolhouse.
- We continue to have various window displays that are changed to reflect the season or an upcoming town event. We also have utilized the Library, at their behest, with various displays. Most recently a WW2 display that was well attended over a 5 day period.
- We continue to do research for requests that come to us via email or telephone.
- We have various Commissioners who write articles for Sparta Today and contribute articles to community Facebook pages as well as our own.
- We are again revising the By-Laws that pertain to the Commission, with the assistance of the Township Board to current with ongoing practices.
- We attend local historical consortium meetings to stay informed about what our neighboring townships are doing.
- We help plan the Memorial Day activities at Lamoreaux Park and assist as needed. With the unfortunate demise of the American Legion post, we have accepted the responsibility of supervising the placing of flags on graves. The flags are always purchased by the Village.
- We are responsible for the Grand Marshal at the Town and Country parade. We host their families prior to the parade. After the parade our Research Center is open and we

have a coloring book competition for children along with punch and cookies. We also have the Schoolhouse open during these festivities.

- We conduct Walking Tours for the public and separate ones for 6th Grade school children. As well as a 5th Grade tour of the Schoolhouse.
- We had a private tour for the Little Flower Guild at the schoolhouse and later at the Research Center.
- We are having a 6th Grade tour of a working maple syrup making “sugar shack” where each student will receive a small sample bottle of fresh maple syrup.
- We continue to have the school house open during Apple Fest. This year we gave away free cider and apple fritters to our Museum visitors.
- We continue our community service by showing our videos to MeadowLark.
- We continue to work closely with the Chamber of Commerce and have contributed numerous items for their gift bags that they hand out.
- For Veterans Day, we held a film event in the Civic Center that was attended by over 60 people, including vets for all wars since WW2.
- The Commission again entered a float in the Christmas Parade and garnered a 2nd Place finish in the judging!
- Numerous Commissioners and volunteers manned the ice skating booth for WinterFest. We gave out free “smores” to the public and kept the campfire glowing.
- We commissioned a new mural for the south exterior wall of the Research Center. The theme was our famous “Sparta Builders” visit our website for more details. It was painted by Dixie Olin.
- We have begun working on this Nov’s Notable event.
- We assisted in the building of a new bench at the High School. The bench foundation is built with foundation blocks that were salvaged from our original high school located on N. Union St.
- We are going through the application process for a state approved Historical Marker for the Schoolhouse.
- We had the dedication of new flagpole and memorial marker for Bub Hale at the schoolhouse that was well attended.
- We initiated needed repairs at the schoolhouse with the assistance of the Township Board. As well as have the property paved for year around parking. We have initiated a “creature control” process to contain the mouse and mole problem we’ve facing. The alarm system was also repaired.
- We continue to work on grants and donations to help us meet the financial needs to accomplish our plans for community service.
- The American Legion has gifted us their memorabilia for our future military museum.
- The Village has agreed in principle to a lease agreement for us to occupy the Am Legion space as soon as they vacate it.

It has again been a busy year for your Historical Commissioners. We continue to be alert to various ways to participate in more events and provide more community service as the opportunities present themselves. We want to thank the Township Board for their invaluable

financial assistance in making these efforts a possibility, as well as the other assistance and advice each of you give us so generously. Your efforts on the Commission's behalf are deeply appreciated!

SPARTA TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Michael Metzger

Chairman