

News from

The Jamesport Meeting House

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July 10, 2017

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For Immediate Release

Jamesport Meeting House Awarded a Grant from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation

The Jamesport Meeting House has been awarded a grant of \$32,125 from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation according to Richard Wines, President of the Board of Directors. Wines made the announcement on July 2 at a performance of the Meeting House Chorus followed by an old-fashioned ice cream social. “We are thrilled by the generous support of the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation,” said Mr. Wines.

The grant will be used to install an air conditioning system and to restore an early twentieth century kitchen. Mr. Wines said, “Our Puritan air conditioning, i.e., open windows, served us well for 286 years, but contemporary audiences and modern street noise necessitate more. And historical kitchens apparently require renovation every century or so.”

The Jamesport Meeting House, built in 1731, is the most significant historic structure in the town of Riverhead. It is not only the oldest building in Riverhead, but is also the oldest church or public building on the East End of Long Island and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Since 2008 when a group of local residents came together and arranged financing to buy the building, it has become a vital not-for-profit venue for a broad range of events: classical concerts, Broadway performances, bluegrass, folk music, Shakespeare, civic association meetings, lectures, community spelling bees and weddings. “The Jamesport House has been the center of its community for over 280 years. These improvements will keep this important structure a vital public place,” said Kathryn M. Curran, Executive Director of the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation.

Established in 1987, the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation primarily supports the study of New York State history, with an emphasis on Suffolk County. Its mission is inspired by Gardiner’s lifelong passion for New York history. Until his death in 2004, he was the 16th Lord of the Manor of Gardiner’s Island, N.Y. Since 1639, the Gardiner family and their descendants have owned Gardiner’s Island by way of a royal grant from King Charles I of England.