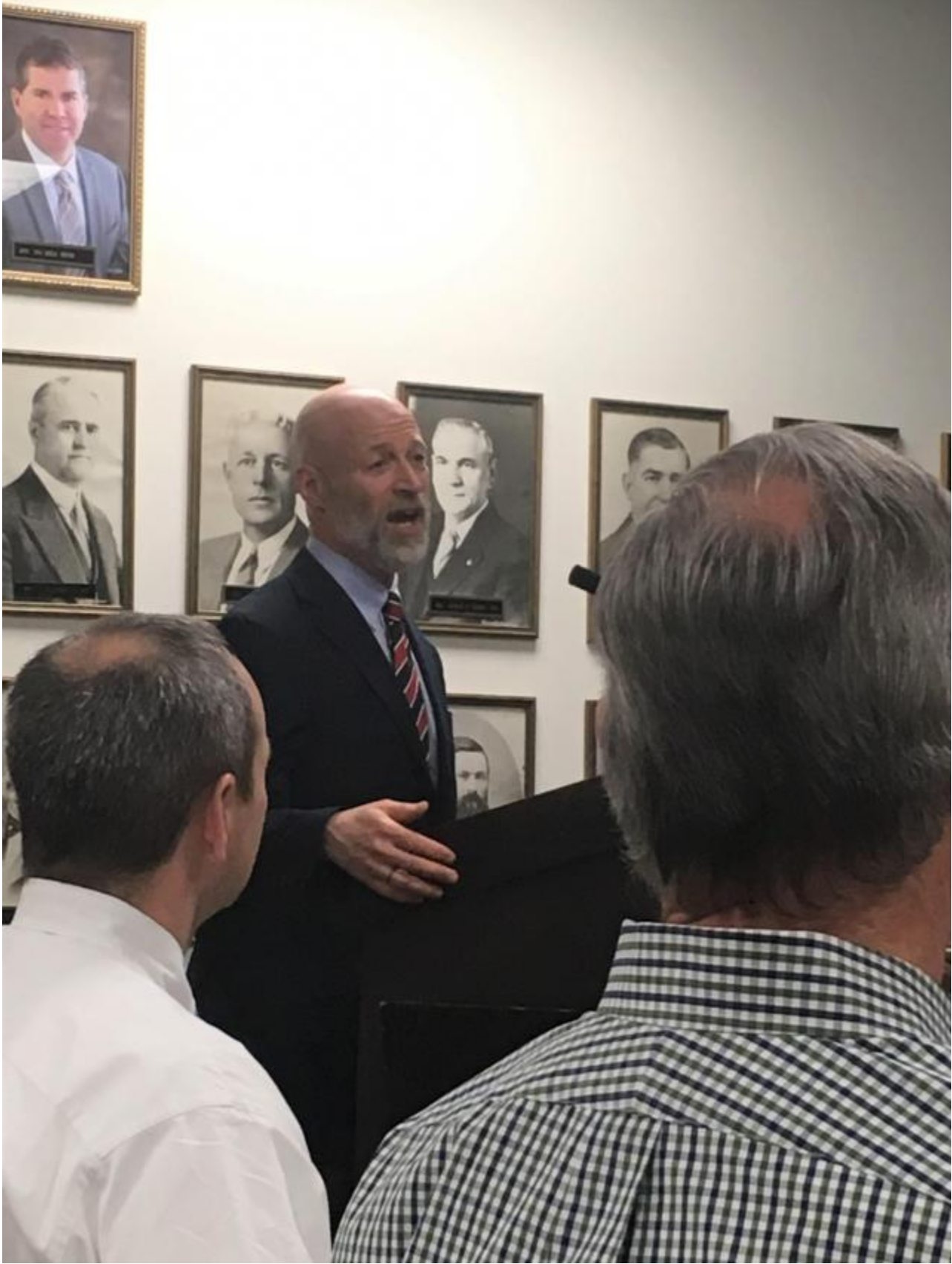




The Colonel Benjamin Stephenson House announces new programs for 2018

by Steven Spencer, Staff Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Representatives from the Benjamin Stephenson House presented their plans for moving forward in 2018 at Tuesday night's city council meeting.



Mayor Hal Patton said each of the special parks helps to make the city a special place making it different and unique from other areas.

"We're fortunate to have so many wonderful parks in our community," Mayor Patton said. "We help support those facilities in the fact that it is city property, but it's volunteers and individuals that actually manage and run the facility that we owe a great deal of gratitude to. In this particular instance we are also funding some of the projects at the special parks through our tourism funds, so we've asked for the special parks over the next couple of months to come in and let us know what they're doing with those funds."

The Stephenson House was the first of the special parks in the city to expand on what they intend to do with the grant received from the tourism funds.

Assistant Director of the Stephenson House, Jeffery Edison, said the grant enabled the Stephenson House to upgrade their programming with new lecture series, period demonstration workshops, summer movie night and a history walk through Edwardsville.

"Last year we actually had over 1,500 visitors who toured the house," Edison said.

The four major programs that generate guest to the house are school field trips, summer camps, a Girl Scouts program called Playing the Past and a mourning for Col. Benjamin Stephenson to demonstrate what the mourning practices used to involve, Edison said.

"For 2018, we are so grateful that we get the hotel tax because we can actually upgrade some of our programs. We want to add more so in addition to our 2017 events we're adding a lecture series for the bicentennial. It's not just about local history, it's about state history."

The new events that will be possible for 2018 include an 1820 painting party, the secrets of tatting, the new lecture series, a colonial medicines program, a turban workshop, a dressmaking workshop, movies on the lawn and a craftsmen weekend.

"We're so thankful that we can do this to show people what the Stephenson House has to offer," Edison added. "We're not just about history anymore. We're trying to drive the community into the house, we're about expanding our programming and opening up to the community to show that we are one big family."

Jason Stacy, Board President of the Stephenson House, said one major goal of the house to become a center for people's passion for history, not just local history.

"A center for passion for history for the community at large," Stacy said. "We have a lot of plans."

New 2018 Events

- 1820 American Girl
- Winter Dinner & Auction
- 1820 American Girl
- Trivia Through the Decades
- Pioneer Summer Camp
- Mrs. Lucy's Academy for Young Ladies
- Ben's Bluegrass, BBQ, & Beer Bash
- 50/50 Antique Auction
- Special Exhibit: Mourning Col. Stephenson
- Christmas Candlelight Tours

Events made possible by Special Parks Fund:

- 1820 Painting Party
- The Secrets of Tatting
- Lecture Series: Local & IL history
- Colonial Medicines & Their Uses
- Turban Workshop
- Dress Making Workshop
- Movies on the Lawn
- Craftsmen Weekend

