

Gloucester Historical Commission
Minutes of Meeting
City Hall
February 23, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

Present: David Rhinelander, Mary Ellen Lepionka, Bob Whitmarsh, Tom O'Keefe, Jeff Crawford, Leon Doucette, Amanda Nash

Guests: David Brooks and Megan Merlin of Action, Inc; Randy Jones possible candidate for GHC

1. Minutes

Minutes for the December meeting were reviewed and accepted. (January meeting was called off due to snow.)

2. New Business

GHC personnel

Randy Jones, who may be a candidate for GHC commissioner, introduced himself. He has lived at 21 Church Street for 15 years, and is renovating this property as well as a Center Street property (K9 Kuts building). The Church Street property is a Hopper house (which he did not know when he purchased it).

Steve Pardee has submitted his written resignation due to changing his legal residence to Florida, although he will still be in Gloucester during the warmer months. Leon Doucette will be advanced to full commissioner.

Amanda will have the City website contact info updated to reflect personnel changes, also will inquire into why we do not have our agendas and minutes posted on line (Mary Ellen said other commissions do. Update: Some other commissions do, but many don't). Will also inquire as to whether it is okay for us to have our own website and just have the City website link to it.

Action, Inc's plans for the Woolworth Building

David Brooks and Megan Merlin presented Action Inc's plans for the Woolworth Building on the corner of Main and Pleasant streets. They are seeking CPA funding to repair the façade.

Historic information: When McCann of the Sleeper-McCann house came to Gloucester to buy Beauport, he discovered there was no Woolworth's. Since the Woolworths were part of his extended family, he convinced them to build one there. The Mass Cultural Resource Info System (MACRIS) dates the building back to 1937; it opened February 19, 1937. The Woolworth's was shut down in 1971.

Plan was presented with drawings, photos, etc. They want to repair the top section of yellow bricks; the bottom section was done some time ago but the top has never been done. It needs to be waterproofed, particularly around the windows. They are hoping for a fall start date. They are trying to locate more of the yellow brick. They are also looking for other funding besides the CPA.

They have a quote of \$97,850 from Chapman to do waterproofing and repair three courses of brick. David said he would forward a copy of the quote. All windows will have rust-jacking repaired. Work will be both restorative and preventive.

Amanda made a motion to deem the property historically significant; it was passed unanimously.

3. Certified Local Government

Mary Ellen asked that all commissioners file a resume or letter of interest with the City (city clerk?) because it is required for Certified Local Government. Historic District Commission members will have to do this too.

We also have to make sure we all have up-to-date ethics tests on file. Need to be re-taken every two years.

Mary Ellen talked to David Porpor at the HDC and he agrees we should re-establish our CLG status.

The State gives the top 15% of federal funds to CLGs. Gloucester was dropped in 2001 for non-compliance; no annual report was submitted.

Mary Ellen has a form that details what is required for a CLG, she will forward it to us.

4. City Cemeteries

Apparently there was once a City Cemeteries Commission but it somehow went away. Melissa Cox and Steve LeBlanc said that they need three to five people to re-establish it. Not clear on our role in this. Do we just wait? It is a separate commission so we would not expect our members to serve on it, but perhaps we can help find people for it? Not sure where the question of budgeting for cemetery maintenance stands, if there is supposed to be a commission and there isn't...

We need to send thank you letters to people who donated to the cemeteries. There are four people. David said he would ask Barry Pett for their addresses.

5. Meetinghouse Green

We discussed the pannier (plaque) for Meetinghouse Green. Price will be around \$400. Mary Ellen sent her proposal around, but some folks hadn't gotten it. We will need some images. Jeff said he would run it by Sarah Dunlap. Leon wondered if it should have QR codes that bring viewers to a City website (as the Harborwalk sites do).

The Meetinghouse Green subcommittee will meet to figure out what should go on the pannier.

6. Demo Delay

Mary Ellen has provided a draft based on the Ipswich/Newbury/Beverly DD ordinances. The only difference from theirs is that she added in some verbiage about properties other than buildings, which we were all in favor of, except as Jeff pointed out, the more that is IN the proposed ordinance,

the more resistance there will be. We would all also like to make sure that in the event the ordinance is violated, there are then restrictions on developing the property.

7. Miscellaneous

David and Mary Ellen gave a recap of the \$15K grant the Dusky Foundation via Linzee Coolidge agreed to make for updating the street inventory. This will hopefully be the match for the MHC Survey & Planning grant, which we should hear about by March 11.

Leon said he would check with the Cape Ann Museum about reserving the auditorium for the Preservation Awards. Proposed date is May 17. We plan to have fewer awards than in the past.

Received letter from the MHC regarding the start of the Blynman Ccanal wall reconstruction by the Army Corps of Engineers.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 pm. The next meeting will be March 30th at 6:30 in the City Hall first floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Nash