

Gloucester Historical Commission
Minutes of Meeting
City Hall
October 27, 2014, 6:30 p.m.

Present: Steve Pardee, David Rhineland, Mary Ellen Lepionka, Jeff Crawford, Bob Whitmarsh, Tom O'Keefe, Amanda Nash

Guests: Wendy Frontiero; Jacqueline Jameison and Lois Hamilton regarding Meetinghouse Green; Rachel Meyer and Joshua Gerloff of the First Parish Burial Ground subcommittee; Leon Doucette, possible commission appointee.

1. Minutes

Minutes for the September meeting were reviewed and accepted .

2. Correspondence

We received a letter from the FCC regarding a T-Mobile installation at Addison Gilbert.

David distributed some information on Ipswich's Architectural Preservation District and some MHC pamphlets about Local Historic Districts and National Register.

3. Continuing Business

Website

The GHC page of the City of Gloucester website has been updated to reflect our 6:30 meeting time. However it says our meeting is on the fourth Monday of the month, but it is actually the last. Amanda will have this corrected, as well as her own address.

MHC Grant

We discussed applying for an MHC grant. It is a matching grant; 50% match is paid after the fact, so we would need to have 100% up front in order to apply. Donated time can be credited at minimum wage up to 25%. Minimum grant is \$5K, up to 25K. Usually in the \$10-12K range.

We discussed with Wendy what part of the inventorying/listing project could be covered by such a grant. We decided on the same items that we'd hoped to have funded (but didn't) by the CPA – Harbor Loop (Duncan's Point), Rocky Neck, Annisquam. The work for these areas has already been started.

What is needed is: architectural description, historical narrative, photos, data sheet that includes every property in the district (a multiple submission form can be used).

There are other areas that could also be included: Lane's Cove, Folly Cove, Meetinghouse Green. Wendy felt we might want to consider which areas could added onto later. She felt three area forms was a reasonable project.

First period houses are already on the NR, as is Annisquam Light.

Mary Ellen went over what is required in the LOI, which is due 11/17. The decision as to who can apply will be made by 12/10, and then the final application is due by February. Mary Ellen said she would do first draft and submit to us for response.

Wendy had a hard copy of the CPC application, which she gave to Mary Ellen, and said she would email her an electronic copy.

National Register has four themes and our project qualifies under several of them.

Betsy (? at MHC? I forget who this was, not even sure name is right) advised us to finish the partially done areas (the three listed above) and then do Dogtown later.

Certified Local Government

We briefly discussed getting our CLG status back, in part because this would give us priority on the MHC grant. The GHC and GHDC would have to work together. We'd also have to produce an annual report. David Porper of the GHDC was discouraging to both DR & MEL. We can co-apply and GHC could spearhead. MEL said she would send a link to the CLG guidelines and we can read up and discuss at next meeting. [Note: I'm planning to talk to Nancy Goodick, who is a friend and on the GHDC, to see if I can get more background. -AN]

Meetinghouse Green

Jackie Jameison of 4 Ashland Place (across from the Green) gave a presentation about the condition of the Meetinghouse Green. There is a marker in the park, but it faces into the park, rather than out toward Ashland Place where people might notice it. This park used to be known as Pocket Park A77 by the city in 1965. She gave us a list of the things that need to be done to restore and maintain the park, and told us about some of the issues there. This meeting house was the first in America!

Jackie also feels that the crosswalk is not clear enough. Many folks from this street walk to work; she feels a brighter green stripe would make it more apparent. (Not sure this is our purview.) The City does mow the park.

Jackie spoke to the abutters. There are parking issues. There's not supposed to be any parking within 124'. Apparently some neighbors were permitted to park there when their house was being repaired, but they have continued to do it.

David suggested a CPA application for funding to clear the park, move the plaque, etc.

A subcommittee consisting of Bob Whitmarsh, Mary Ellen Lepionka, Tom O'Keefe and David Rhinelanders was formed. Bob will organize a trip to the park (to include the subcommittee as well as Jeff Crawford, Amanda Nash, and Wendy Frontiero, if available) to consider the list of what needs to be done. Next meeting Bob will bring copies of Jackie's proposal, and maps.

First Parish Burial Ground and Clark Cemetery

Budget for cemetery. Rachel wants to come to us for approval, then she can go to Shirley at DPW to ask for funds. (Note: Procedure for this has since been outlined in an email to the GHC from Shirley.) Rachel will develop a monthly budget.

There is about \$2200 in the account, with \$750 budgeted for the spring gravestone repair workshop and \$600 yet to be paid out for the goats. AN will check with Shirley Hendrickson at the DPW to find out the exact balance and the procedure for getting expenses paid. There is also \$100 in the Gloucester Fund account donated by Ed Pasquina.

Report on what happened with the goats: They arrived a week early, and then had to be evacuated after just a few days because of the storm. The goats were endangered and the goat handler did not come for them until Helen called her and insisted. Helen wanted nothing more to do with them and was going to let it go at that as she felt that the publicity for the cemetery effort was “mission accomplished.” Rachel and Amanda felt that it was not sufficient since, of course, there was plenty more to be done, but also because the dates the goats were supposed to come had been publicized, and the goats had come and gone before they were even supposed to arrive. People came to see them and brought their children and were disappointed. So Rachel called the company and arranged for the goats to come back in the spring at a \$500 discount (so \$250 for the week). (They will still be paid \$600 for the period they were already here – also a discounted rate). Apparently the goat handler has been fired so perhaps, hopefully, it will go more smoothly in the spring.

Jeff also mentioned that he knew some people with goats locally, so that is another option we could explore.

DPW has a National Register plaque for FPBG. No one seems to know where it is. Also the Clark sign is decrepit. Rachel will look into getting another one made.

Rachel reported that FP is 7/8 cleared, and Clark is ¾ cleared. She is hoping they will be finished by Veteran's Day.

Spring Gravestone Repair Workshop: Cheryle Caputo, the instructor for the workshop, has been sent a \$200 deposit. The workshop will be conducted entirely in the cemetery. They plan to clean 20 stones. The price we will pay for the workshop will cover ten students. There are seven on the subcommittee team. Rachel is going to ask at the Archive if they want to send someone. There will be two funded spots left – maybe one for one of the neighbors? Bob and his wife would like to go. After the ten people, additional people will be \$75/each. Rachel will ask Cheryle what the maximum number is. The workshop will be on Saturday, May 30th, with a rain date of Saturday, June 20th.

Regarding locking the gate: Only DPW and Rachel have key [correct?] DPW says the gate cannot be unlocked, even during the day when the volunteers are there. It is easy enough to pedestrians to visit the cemetery by coming around the gate (tho' not very welcoming). Steve felt we need to put a gate through the ballfield to let the DPW trucks in. [I don't quite follow this. It is not the DPW trucks that can't get in, they have a key, no? It is only visitors who can't get in, and they don't need to drive in, but it might be nice if they didn't feel like intruders.] Need to clarify this.

The property is being encroached by some of the neighbors and by the railroad, which put up a chain-link fence. It really should be surveyed. We should talk to the City about this (legal counsel?) Steve feels it needs to be entirely fenced and locked. Much discussion, no conclusion.

Rachel is concerned that any such decisions should not alienate the neighbors. They are helpful in many ways – some volunteer, some just look out for the volunteers, some keep an eye on the cemeteries and report problems; it would be difficult if they were alienated. [I think some of Rachel and Josh's equipment is stored with neighbors now?]

A motion was made to permit Rachel and Josh to buy a chain saw was made and passed. [Was there a \$ amount?]

Demo Delay

Sally Zimmerman is willing to come and put on a demo delay workshop. We need a good crowd. Will discuss this and other event ideas next time.

Archive

We can store our archives in the Post Office basement. Get key from City Clerk. Amanda will look into this.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm. The next meeting will be Monday, November 24th at 6:30 pm at City Hall in the first floor conference room. Steve will be away for November, December, and possibly January.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Nash