

**Gloucester Historical Commission
Minutes of Meeting
City Hall
March 31, 2014, 6:30 pm**

Present: Steve Pardee, David Rhinelander, Jeff Crawford, Amanda Nash

Guests: Donna Polizzia, Helen McCabe

1. Minutes

Minutes were reviewed and accepted.

2. Correspondence (attached)

- **Emails between Steve Pardee and Sarah Dunlap regarding Edith Sparling material**
Sarah wanted to give the GHC a heads-up regarding imminent arrival of the material described below, and Edith Sparling's request that the GHC complete the historic landmark application for Fishermen's Rest / Fishermen's Memorial.

- **Package of material assembled by Edith Sparling regarding the Fishermen's Rest / Fishermen's Memorial at Beechbrook Cemetery, West Gloucester.** This application for historic landmark status has been in process for 15 years; Sparling is unable to complete it. John Hays Hammond funded the cemetery; initially it was for indigent sailors. Howard Blackburn, who died in 1932, is buried there. Sparling began the application when she worked for the City as Cemetery Clerk under the DPW. **Amanda** will look into completing the application.
Helen McCabe told us she has a three-ring binder that Sparling sent. It needs to be in the City Archive, where Sarah Dunlap will have oversight. Sparling thinks we should get the endorsement of Bruce Tarr, Ann Margaret Ferrante, the Mayor, and the City Council. We do need a consultant in order to complete the application. MHC has funds for this; we should coordinate with them. Martha Lyon was the consultant for First Parish Burial Ground and may be able to help us with this too.

- **Letter from Commonwealth of MHC regarding Birdseye Building / Beauport Hotel**
MHC requires additional information (Form B Inventory Form) and additional current photos of the interior and exterior in order to give an opinion to the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the historical significance of the [Birdseye / O'Donnell-Usen Fisheries] building.
The hotel proposed would be three stories, 96 rooms. The Army Corps of Engineers must comply with the National Historic Preservation Act. O'Donnell-Usen Fisheries Factory is on the Mass Historic Inventory.
Jeff feels, and other agree, that the most significant aspect of the building is the tower. The building is not the original freezer factory.

David stated that it can't be preserved and restored. It was originally a beautiful building but it has been changed many times since then.

Steve will write a letter asking that they allow people in to document the building before demolition, and insisting that we be notified of the demolition schedule. Owners should document as well, both interior and exterior.

- **Amanda** will take over filing correspondence. Will check with Joanne Senos to find out where it should go.

3. First Parish Burial Ground

Helen and Donna came to report on the FPBG. The City had some work done on it last year but they left all the brush on the wall between Clark and FPBG.

It used to be possible to drive down to Clark; now someone has put up a fence – the RR?

The maintenance issue was brought up to the City Solicitor a few years ago and s/he (?) said they would look into it but nothing happened.

The stone wall by Centennial Ave has been damaged, presumably by the neighbors' snow plough.

Jim Duggan killed the letter from Steve requesting funds for maintenance that was sent prior to the February budgeting this year.

Someone (?) expressed the belief that there is a law that says cities have to take care of city property. (Apparently Maine has a law saying that if you have revolutionary war vets – which we do – you have to take care of their graves.)

Amanda agreed to contact Ward 3 city councilor Steven LeBlanc to try to get him to do something about it!

Also: DPW has a National Register plaque that needs to be installed – Mark Cole has it.

Helen wants us to get the website manager to put the cemetery inventory on the website.

Donna has the disks. **Jeff** will talk to the IT guy.

Chris Skelly heard from Mr. Twining from Fitchburg, the fellow who was upset about the condition of the Cemetery. Steve called Twining and explained it is the City's responsibility but they have no funds or employees to do it. Can we get MHC to lean on the City to clean it up? **Amanda** said she would look into this. FPBG may be the oldest cemetery in the country!

4. Gloucester 400th Anniversary party

Steve will let the Mayor know that we are forming a subcommittee to organize the 400th anniversary party, which should include a week of festivities, city cleanup, a book, a website. A motion was passed to have Jeff head up the subcommittee.

5. CPA business

A motion was passed unanimously to have Writers' Center deemed historically/culturally significant. **Steve** will write a letter to the CPC.

David discussed the new GHC proposal to the CPC, and told them their funding would qualify us for other funding, which they liked. David will call Wendy to complete the process. Pitch night is April 14 or 16?

6. Awards?

Are we doing awards? CAM will still be closed in May. City Hall? Library? If we do it, here are some possibilities. The Island Woods book. Walking Gloucester. House on Prospect (Jeff). House on Washington (David). Place near Poseidon's (Jeff).

7. New commissioners

Barbara Lambert? Who will call?

8. A Piatt Andrew Bridge

David confirmed that CAM has agreed to display the repaired bronze doors before they are re-installed on the bridge. Mass DOT will put this in the contract.

9. Conflict of Interest filing

Reminder to **all commissioners** to do conflict of interest filing. Info on City website.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm. The next meeting will be Monday, April 28th at 6:30 pm at City Hall. This and all future meetings will be in the first floor conference room, unless we are otherwise notified.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Nash