

Gloucester Historical Committee
Monthly Meeting
5-26-15

Members Present:

Mary Ellen Lepionka, David Rhineland, Thomas O'Keefe III, Robert Whitmarsh, Jeff Crawford, Amanda Nash, Leon Doucette, Michelle Bader Mustone

Invited guests:

City of Gloucester Building Inspector, Bill Sanborn

Meeting called to order 6:35p.m.

1. Minutes of April 27 Meeting Approved. Michelle Bader Mustone agreed to take the minutes, as this is Amanda Nash's last meeting with the GHC. Amanda, a valued member of the Commission who will be much missed, is moving to Vermont and has resigned her post. Michelle and the GHC will send letters to the Mayor requesting that she be appointed to the Commission as a full member.

2. Public comment on items not on the agenda.

a) Discussion of Mr. Rhineland's suggestion that the Historical Commission (GHC) write a letter to Dick Prouty in support of the Unitarian Universalist Church's request for CPC (Community Preservation Committee) funds to install a sprinkler system to help prevent damage in the event of a fire. David Rhineland had toured the site and supported the UU's request. Some discussion as to whether or not the GHC should selectively endorse grant proposals. David reminded the Commission that we are supposed to advise the CPC on the historical significance of properties they are evaluating for funding approval. By statute, a member of the GHC is a sitting member of the CPC and that member currently is Mr. Rhineland. It was decided that the GHC would write a letter stating that that the UU Church is a historically significant building and supporting the goal of installing a sprinkler system.

b) Tom O'Keefe reminded the GHC that it should have a small operating budget from the City to cover such things as copying expenses and the cost of creating the awards for the Preservation Awards ceremony. The matter will be on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled GHC meeting

3. Old Business:

a) Review of demolition permitting process and demolition delay ordinances
Bill Sanborn, City of Gloucester Inspector of Buildings, was invited to give his perspective of the proposed draft of a demolition delay ordinance. Mr. Sanborn highlighted areas of the ordinance that would need to be changed or clarified to have any hope of passing. The steps for compliance must be made crystal clear to ensure property owners/contractors/developers would easily understand what steps to take during a delay. The building inspector also suggested shortening the delay, narrowing the definition of demolition to complete destruction, and excluding

waterfront properties in light of the City's plans for commercial development of the waterfront. He also questioned the proof of age restriction, noting that in the absence of data most older structures in Gloucester are listed as having been built in 1900. Bill also suggested that we supply a list of addresses to which a demolition delay would apply, which would make such an ordinance easier to administer. He agreed to read and comment on the draft of the ordinance, and left the meeting at 7:40.

Bob Whitmarsh volunteered to head a subcommittee to make inquiries of nearby towns and report back to the GHC on their success rates with their demolition delay ordinances. Michelle Bader Mustone and Tom O'Keefe are also on this subcommittee.

Jeff Crawford and Amanda Nash pointed out that lists of addresses do exist in the City's Architectural Index, the state and national registers, in the Mass. Historical Commission's MACRIS file, and in survey updates conducted by Wendy Frontiero. The creation of a composite list of addresses will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

b) Review of proposed Memorandum of Agreement to the Historic District Commission for the purpose of obtaining Certified Local Government status.

David Porper of the Historic District Commission (HDC) was invited to come to the meeting, but was unavoidably detained, so the MOA was tabled to another meeting to be scheduled.

c) Decisions on proposed content of a new GHC web site.

Mary Ellen Lepionka reported that Kathleen Valentine agreed to create a web site for GHC on a pro bono basis if we are clear on exactly what content we wanted. There was discussion on how such a site would link to the GHC page on the City's web site and if a separate website is needed in light of efforts underway to improve the City's web site. Either way, there is need for content. A subcommittee headed by Jeff Crawford and including Mary Ellen will start to assemble proposed content and then the GHC will decide what would best serve the needs of the public.

d) Follow-up discussion on a Cemetery Commission and Archives Staffing.

Mary Ellen Lepionka stated that so far there appears to be little interest from the community in joining a Cemetery Commission. She will check with the Mayor's office to see if there have been any inquiries. She also noted that the Mayor stated publicly that the City is looking into hiring a part-time professional archivist to staff the City Archives. David Rhineland will inquire of the City Clerk as to the likely future status of Archives staffing.

4. New Business:

a) Report on Survey and Planning Grant progress

Mary Ellen updated the Committee on the status of the S&P Grant. As Project Coordinator she will attend an all-day meeting at the MHC on May 28th in Boston. At that time she will turn over required documents from the City Auditor and Procurement Officer and the GHC-approved "Scope of Work" to officially launch the project. Mary Ellen will update the GHC at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

b) Reports on 2015 Preservation Awards ceremony status.

Everyone was pleased with the Preservation Awards ceremony. The event was filmed by Cape Ann Cable and should be aired soon. Jeff Crawford reminded everyone to start looking for projects that would qualify for an award next year. Ms. Lepionka asked everyone to bring in any clippings they had of GHC events etc. Michelle Bader Mustone agreed to scan them and store them on a zip drive. Jeff Doucette suggested that we make a "Year in Review" for each year. A record of our accomplishments will also aid in our ongoing quest for Certified Local Government status.

c) Report on progress with signage for Meetinghouse Green.

Jeff Crawford reported some frustration in being unable to access the map he was seeking, Assessors Map #85 and a map drawn in 1741. Mary Ellen Lepionka will make inquiries to help locate the maps. Jeff agreed to draft some text that he would propose for the sign. Money would have to be requisitioned to have the informational panel made, which the DPW would then install on the site.

d) Discussion of inter-commission contacts and collaborations.

Was not discussed, tabled to next meeting

5. Next meeting is on June 29, 2015, 6:30 PM, 3rd Floor, City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Bader Mustone
May 29, 2015