

## September 14, 2015 GHC Meeting Minutes

**Present:** David Rhinelander, Tom O'Keefe, Mary Ellen Lepionka, Leon Doucette, Michelle Mustone, Bob Whitmarsh, Jeff Crawford, and members of the public, including Lois McNulty and Laura Tarantino of *Enduring Gloucester*, and Frank D'Amico, member of the public. The visitors were present in the Kyrouz Auditorium to encourage us to seek a demolition delay ordinance for Gloucester.

- 1) Accept Minutes from Aug 31 meeting. Unanimous.
- 2) Public comments on items not on Agenda
  - a) Question from Lois McNulty re: Certified Local Government. Told her we are working toward that with the HDC.
  - b) In discussion of the Inn at Babson Court, Ms. Tarantino asked why we would not ask for more than just preserving the façade. David said his understanding is that a P&S has been signed. He would like to write a letter to the attorney for the potential purchaser, Joel Favazza of Seaside Legal Solutions, to ask that the new buyers voluntarily preserve the façade of the building and by extension the Stacy Blvd. streetscape.

Discussion ensued about GHC involvement in the case, which may not be in the purview of GHC and may be matters for the City Council or Zoning Board. Jeff suggested wording of the request to the buyers should be to "preserve the historical structure, the original structure, or at the very least, the façade or streetscape". The building can be seen from the ocean, and everyone who visits Gloucester goes to this street to see the fisherman's monument, which is in front the Inn at Babson Court. Mary Ellen's letter of concern appeared in Good Morning Gloucester and Enduring Gloucester but not the Gloucester Times.

**Decided:** A subcommittee of Bob Whitmarsh, Mary Ellen Lepionka, and David Rhinelander will draft and review a letter to send to Joel Favazza. Jeff reminded GHC members to be sensitive to the current owners' need to sell the property. All were in agreement. According to the owner in residence, they would have needed a \$500,000 mortgage at 3% to stay, but bankers were not interested, and no one else stepped up with an adequate offer.

### 3) Final Planning for Workshop Demo Delay

The workshop will take place in the Kyrouz Auditorium on Sept. 28 at 7PM. At 4:00 James Pope will deliver the projection equipment and will show Mary Ellen how to use it. At 6:30 members of the GHC will appear, but we will not officially convene a meeting. Leon will bring coffee from Dunkin' Donuts (paid for out of pocket) and Mary Ellen and Leon will see about providing some kind of handout for attendees.

Mary Ellen will open the program and introduce Chris Skelly of the Massachusetts Historical Commission. He will give a slide lecture for one hour. In the second hour,

other invited speakers will from Ipswich (John Fiske) and Beverly (Bill Finch) will present examples of their experiences with demo delay.

**Decided:** Mary Ellen will see about getting additional speakers from nearby towns and has invited Rockport and Manchester to the workshop. Tom also has contacted Rockport, and Bob is inviting participants from Salem. Question and Answer periods will be interspersed throughout the presentation. Speakers will be reminded beforehand that this workshop is intended to be educational for the public generally and is not about our proposed ordinance per se, nor about any particular properties. Mary Ellen is asking GHC members and speakers to send slides to include in a slide show. She will close the program with slides showing preservation efforts in Gloucester—a few examples of what has been lost, what has been saved, and what may presently be at risk.

Some City Councilors and the head of the Chamber of Commerce have said they are coming to the workshop. The City's legal dept. also has said they are coming and will work on the ordinance afterwards. Mary Ellen will create a final draft for them based on workshop input and the Miller article that Bob Whitmarsh introduced in the last meeting. Mary Ellen also reported on what Sally Zimmerman of Historic New England and Chris Skelly had to say about our draft ordinance, and on that basis we are changing the wording to reflect their expert concerns.

**Decided:** We will call the ordinance Demolition Delay rather than Demolition Review. We will make the qualifying age 50 years rather than 75 years. We will delete reference to trees and glacial erratics and refer only to man-made structures. We will ask for a one-year delay period rather than 6 months. We will add time to the turnaround times in the review process to realistically allow enough time for our research, hearings, and deliberations.

4) Meeting adjourned at 8:30. We will skip the September 28 meeting in order to conduct the demolition delay workshop in Kyrouz Auditorium on that date. **Our next regular meeting will be on Monday, October 26 at 6:30 PM in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor conference room in City Hall.**