

Gloucester Historical Commission

Minutes, Regular meeting, October 26, 2015

Present: Mary Ellen Lepionka, Jeff Crawford, Bob Whitmarsh, David Rhineland, Leon Doucette, Tom O'Keefe, Michelle Bader-Mustone

Meeting opened at 6:30 p.m.

Moment of Silence to recognize the passing of Bob's son.

Motion to approve meeting minutes of September 14th meeting as amended.

Motion approved.

Public Comment on items not on the agenda:

Mr. Zenas Seppolo, present, spoke to the effectiveness of the demolition delay workshop, and that he would support an ordinance that saves the specialness and uniqueness of Gloucester. He also expressed that we should somehow get the gears or other materials from the train bridge that is being demolished. He believes the MBTA said they have no interest in the parts and the City could have them if they wanted. A "Strauss truss" was used (Strauss designed the Golden Gate bridge).

Decided: Leon and Bob will take photos of bridge and gears. Michelle will call Bruce Tarr's office to find out info about contacts at MBTA and look at what could be preserved from the bridge and where it could be stored.

Old Business

1) Outcomes of Demo Delay workshop

Consensus workshop was excellent and informative.

Aprox. 50 people attended the workshop.

Bob was asked to speak to the Chamber of Commerce. Chamber wondered about using the 50-year criterion for eligibility for demolition delay. Feeling among GHC members was that we should try to get the 50 years and if that becomes a barrier then go for 75.

Leon mentioned he saw more clearly that demo delay is a two-step process. First a property must be determined to be historically significant and then it must be determined by the community if it is in the community's best interest to preserve it.

The demolition delay ordinance will not be taken up in this legislative session. The process will have to be done all over again after elections. Mary Ellen gave the ordinance to Chris Payson, the City's solicitor, to check the wording, but Chris passed the document along to Jim Destino, who did not act on it. Mary Ellen has a meeting with Mr. Destino on October 27th at 10:00

in his office in regard to the ordinance. Next step will be to determine next steps.

2) Inn at Babson Court

There has been considerable response to this issue in the media, including social media, in which people expressed a desire to retain the traditional appearance of Stacy Blvd. Attny Joel Favazza sent a schematic of revised floor plans for the Babson Court property. At this time there is no proposed change to the façade. Looks like the façade will remain the same and the height will stay at two floors. There will be 4 family units rather than 8 condos. Good news.

A new process is to have all communication from the GHC discussed and approved by the group and sent from the co-chairs. Of course individual members will be able to speak/write their own opinions under their own name as long as membership on the GHC is not referenced. Motion made, seconded, approved to make this an official policy of the GHC.

3) Update on Grants

The Survey and Planning grant for 2015 is underway. We have received a Survey and Planning grant for 2016 as well—A matching grant for a total of another \$30,000. The City covers the whole amount up front and then requests the \$ 15,000 matching funds each from the Dusky Foundation and the Mass. Historical Commission. The new grant will add another 150 properties to the inventory of historical resources for Gloucester and will include National Register nominations.

Linzee Coolidge said the Dusky Foundation would not offer additional funding after the 2016 grant. Suggestion was made to go to the CPC to request a grant to get Dogtown added to the National Register of Historic Places.

4) Update on the MOA

MOA between the GHC and the Historic District Commission is still in limbo.

5) Republication of *Land Marks*

At Pru Fish's suggestion, Mary Ellen will talk to Kirk Noyes about re-publishing this book with its principal author, Wendy Frontiero. Mary Ellen will invite Kirk to the next meeting and bring books to look at and discuss for possible republication, funded by the Gloucester Development Team, under the aegis of the GHC.

6) Signage for Meetinghouse Green

Leon and Jeff will continue to discuss and design this signage.

7) Scenic Roads

Jackie Jameson sent information to Mary Ellen on her research on in “scenic roads” in 1927 and what they look like now. Decided: A Scenic Roads committee will drive on the roads and photodocument them to propose to the state what we would like to have designated as scenic roads. The information will be given to the Tourism Commission. Mary Ellen will look at rules from state regarding scenic roads and will send the MHC criteria to the GHC members.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Gloucester Committee for the Arts requested help in restoring a Civil War era coat that exits at the Gloucester High School. David will request more information about the coat, its provenance, how it will be used/displayed in the future.

- 2) Suggestion was made that we should look at the Mass. Curriculum Framework with the idea of putting together a curriculum on historic preservation for the schools.

Next Meeting: Monday, November 30, 6:30 PM, 3rd floor conference room, City Hall