

28 December 2015 GHC Minutes

Present: Mary Ellen Lepionka, Leon Doucette, Bob Whitmarsh, Tom O'Keefe.

Visitors: Sandy Barry, Zenos Seppala

1. Minutes of the November 30th meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes of the November 30th meeting. Approved as corrected.

2. Welcoming of guests and public comment on items not on the agenda.

- a. The City Council has not yet approved Sandy Barry as an Alternate on the Historical Commission. Mary Ellen will make inquiries after the new Councilors are sworn in on January 1.
- b. Mr. Seppala of Rockport had praise for the GHC and lamented the Rockport HC's lack of interest in historic preservation.
- c. Bob Whitmarsh will be away until April. More alternates and prospective new members are needed.

3. Update on Cemetery Subcommittee projects and needs.

Sandy reported that the DPW has said it will be glad to remove brush from the Second Parish Cemetery as a winter project. Rachel's group has been working on the Second Parish site and is embarked on a "Stones and Homes" research project in which old homes and old headstones are being matched up, potentially for use in a slide show, tour, or online exhibition. The Cemetery Subcommittee is also locating and mapping headstone fragments, including ones found in the Second Parish Church and neighbors' homes, and moving them to the Veteran's Center for evaluation and possible repair. Sandy will develop a budget for the GHC to submit with a grant proposal to the CPC for a stone restoration project.

4. Discussion of the revised Demolition Delay Ordinance proposal and action plan for bringing it before the City Council.

There was some discussion of the time provisions of the re-revised proposal, but it was decided to stick with the 50 year qualifying age. It was clarified that the GHC will be responsible for doing the research to determine qualifying age for eligibility as well as for determining historical significance and calling for public hearings to determine whether historically significant structures are preferably preserved. The Building Inspector only has to forward to the GHC all requests involving demolition.

The point was made that we need a budget to pay for newspaper notices as well as preservation awards. Sandy will find out exactly what can go in the papers for free and what needs to be paid for. Mary Ellen will check that the GHC budget request is on the docket for the City Council.

The re-revised demolition delay proposal and cover letter were voted on and approved as written. They will be sent to the Mayor and City Councilors after Jan. 1 along with a request for sponsors and an invitation to attend the February 29 GHC meeting, when the proposal can be discussed and questions answered. Leon will develop a list of taking points and answers to frequently asked questions. In the meantime, Sandy will talk to Val Gilman, and Mary Ellen will talk to Scott Memhard as possible candidates for sponsoring the proposal. Mary Ellen will also make an appointment with the Mayor for a separate introduction.

Relevant to a presentation on Demo Delay to the City Council, Sandy and Pru are working together on a list of old Gloucester homes that have been lost to demolition, including addresses and photographs. Sandy checks addresses against the listings in MACRIS. The photos could be part of the slide show. Also, Josh Gerloff sent compelling photos of the demolition of 73-75 Western Ave., which was historically significant according to Pru.

5. Publicity for preservation awards nominations and responses so far.

The GHC received a call for nominations for the 2016 state preservation awards, which are due by February 12. We talked about nominating Pru Fish for a local preservationist or lifetime achievement award and must decide before the January meeting in order to meet the deadline. The state requires a lot of information to go with a nomination—a statement of achievement, a list of contributions, letters of support, and photographs. The hope was expressed that Jeff Crawford and Pru would be willing to gather information in support of her nomination.

Mary Ellen reported on suggestions from Pru, Helen McCabe, and Rachel Meyer for Gloucester's preservation awards. Pru recommended 33 Peasant St. and 1135 Washington St., both of which are in MACRIS. We need to research the owners and photograph these houses. Helen recommended the Public Landings Committee for the restoration of Brown's Mill Landing in Riverdale as an example of landscape preservation. She sent pictures. We decided that municipal agencies probably should not receive awards and decided to nominate Helen instead as the citizen whose action is responsible for the restoration of a historically significant landscape.

We discussed giving an award to the developer of the Inn at Babson Court for voluntarily redesigning the project to respect community sentiment about preserving the Stacy Blvd. streetscape. We need to find out the name and contact information of that person.

Rachel recommended Sarah Dunlap for lifetime achievement as a 35-volunteer in the Archives. She also suggested Awesome Gloucester for funding historic projects and the Eagle Scout Robert Trout for restoration of the war memorial in Riverdale, written up in the Patriot Ledger <http://m.patriotledger.com/article/20150612/NEWS/150618228>. Bob had also suggested the Eagle Scout. Mary Ellen suggested Amanda Nash for her contributions to the GHC as a former member, although she is no longer a resident.

Leon recommended Jeff Weaver for his series of paintings on the demolition of the Birdseye Building and preservation of other old structures and architectural features in his paintings. Leon will talk to Jeff to find out his views on historic preservation and also will ask if the GHC can use photos of his Birdseye paintings in our slide show in aid of the demolition delay proposal before the City Council.

All in all, we are off to a good start for our preservation awards, May 14. Mary Ellen forgot to ask if we should advertise the categories for preservation awards in the papers to solicit nominations from the public.

6. Updates on the Survey and Planning Grants and new grant opportunities.

Mary Ellen reported on her meeting with Wendy Frontiero, Kathy Broomer, and Michael Steinitz on December 1 to launch Phase 2 of the project. This phase involved narrowing down the areas to be inventoried. The team decided to focus on Rocky Neck, Lanesville, the 3 historic buildings owned by the Annisquam Assn., and selected harborfront commercial properties, such as Gorton's. In aid of this effort, James Pope supplied detailed maps of these areas, and the Assessor's office was asked for and promptly supplied Excel spreadsheets of the addresses in these areas and related data.

The GHC was encouraged to apply for the next round of Survey and Planning grants, so Mary Ellen got a promise of a match from the Dusky Foundation, submitted the eligibility form, and received a formal invitation to apply. Mary Ellen will write and circulate the grant proposal in time for the deadline of February 29.

7. Report on status of train bridge salvage, Civil War coat, and railway antennae.

Leon reported he has all the contact information regarding the train bridge but that there is nothing further to do at this time except try to interest the cable station in doing a documentary videography of the work while it is underway.

David was not present to report on the status of the Civil War coat. Mary Ellen reported that she and David responded to the railway communications antennae project in a letter confirming that according to the GHC the project would have no known detrimental impacts on historic properties or landscapes.

8. Discussion of development plan for *Land Marks* republication project with the Gloucester Development Team.

Mary Ellen reported that Wendy sent a proposed budget estimate of \$26,000 for her role in the revision and republication of *Land Marks* under the aegis of the GHC and Gloucester Development Team. We all agreed that the budget request is out of line. Mary Ellen is digitizing the narrative text and will provide a first revision, proposing new content and noting where expert input and updating is needed. The needed content will then be commissioned on a work-for-hire basis at an hourly rate. Wendy was asked to respond to each point in the initial revision plan and to break down her budget, e.g., to show separately the time cost of redoing the photographs, the maps, the architectural drawings, etc. She has not replied, but we hope she will at least affordably consult on

what buildings to drop and add in the new publication. We will give her right of first refusal after she responds and when the new revision plan is ready. In the meantime Sandy is scanning the book so that we can all have copies and the file can be preserved as a historical resource on our new website.

9. Action plans for Meetinghouse Signage, Scenic Roads, and GHC Web Site.

Leon showed us his design for the Meetinghouse Green sign, with map overlays showing the location of historic structures. In lieu of input from Jeff, Leon wrote a historical narrative to accompany the map. We all loved what Leon did and voted to approve it. He will send it to us as with a separate word doc for the text for our final review/edit. Then Mary Ellen will bring the files and hardcopy to Mike Hale.

Our planned road trip to follow up on Jackie Jamieson's research on Scenic Roads is postponed until spring. Because of state restrictions on designated scenic roads, we decided to choose the three most scenic roads we can find that would be least impacted by state restrictions and nominate them for the status and signage. We would promote these roads to educators and the Tourist Commission.

Sandy and Mary Ellen will meet later in January to work on web site development.

10. New Business:

- a. Request for GHC support of Annisquam Historical Society.
- b. Other

Mary Ellen announced that the steering committee of the Annisquam Historical Society, of which she and Tom O'Keefe are members, will be applying for a CPC feasibility grant for the restoration of the Deluge 8 firehouse, and asked if it would be appropriate for the GHC (with the exception of her and Tom) to provide a letter of support.

This plan was approved, and there was no other new business. Mary Ellen forgot to mention that there are now two plastic crates of GHC documents in the Sawyer Free Library that will need to be catalogued and indexed, and also two records boxes of documents from David R. in her house to be sorted through. A sorting-through party will be announced soon.

Next Meeting date: Monday, January 25, 2016, 6:30 p.m. in the 3rd floor conference room of City Hall.

