

Gloucester Historical Commission

Minutes of 24 October Meeting

1. **The Minutes of the 26 September** meeting were approved with one spelling change: Sandy Barry.
2. **Report on FY 2016 Survey and Planning Grant.**

The 2016 project has been launched, with Wendy Frontiero contracted to compile the report, based on a survey of areas of Gloucester we determine. Kathleen Broomer will assist her in compiling a list of properties and conducting the surveys. The individual surveys will document requisite architectural, historical and plot data that determines eligibility for inclusion on MACRIS. This year's surveys focus on multiple sections of Gloucester, so properties in each can be represented in MACRIS. The preservation historians will be looking at properties in Magnolia, Bass Rocks, Lanesville, for example.
3. **FY 2017 Survey and Planning Grant.**

Mary Ellen has drafted a letter of intent for Dogtown to be the subject of the FY 2017 Grant. Over 40 former home sites dating to the 18th and 19th centuries are located in Dogtown, primarily lining the Dogtown and Common Roads. In addition, the "Babson boulders," each inscribed with a word for a positive human value, comprise an historical record of a WPA project. Dogtown is full of areas of flora and fauna that are ripe for conservation and artists of merit painted there (Extant paintings depict Dogtown as it was in past periods of time). Being bordered by both Gloucester and Rockport and comprised of a network of trails maintained by environmental groups like Greenbelt and Cape Ann Trail Stewards, Dogtown has many stakeholders. Mary Ellen is meeting with all groups, municipalities and stakeholders in an effort to build a coalition supporting the effort to survey Dogtown, establish its boundaries, list its treasures and establish the area in the [National Register of Historic Places](#).
4. **Report on Landmarks project.** Members of the GHC remain interested in producing a new and updated *Landmarks* publication. Envisioning two versions, one serving educational purposes and another providing information for visitors and residents, we have been in contact with Kirk Noyes, Gloucester Development Team, about funding the project. Noyes supports the project, but he advises funding is not necessarily immediately available. A discussion of authorship ensued; a preservation historian may write the copy, though GHC members remain interested in contributing and expanding coverage to neighborhoods not covered in the 1977 edition.
5. **Report on Veteran's grant for cemetery.** The effort to secure a [SHRAB](#) grant is in process and a positive outcome is likely.
6. **Discussion of grant applications for the Legion Memorial Hall.** The Legion Hall, a central landmark that stands prominently with the Joan of Arc statue in the Square where Middle and Washington Streets meet, is in a sad state of disrepair. The site of Gloucester's first Town Hall, originally called the Town House and built in 1844, the Legion Hall and surroundings represent an important time in the city's history. In addition, the Greek Revival structure is a prime

example of the finest architecture of its era, boasting iconic features and graceful Ionic columns. The home of Gloucester's Legion Post since the 1920's (the Legion leases the property from the City), the building plays an important role in our community. We will meet with the current president of the Legion to discuss the deterioration of the exterior of the building and design a plan of action. We will also meet with city officials in an effort to better understand the maintenance program and how repairs and restoration are undertaken.

7. **Status of ADA parking at City Hall.** Providing on-site disabled parking is a condition of grants that funded the restoration of City Hall. The City Hall restoration committee has been hard at work considering various options for providing disabled parking; a preferred plan has been chosen and the committee is seeking GHC approval of the plan. The plan will be sent and we will review it with a City Hall committee representative.
8. **Development of Stage Fort Park.** Developing a restoration plan. Various Gloucester constituencies are taking an interest in revitalizing the park, particularly in light of the approaching 400th Anniversary of Gloucester's founding. One such group is particularly focused on resurrecting historic sites within the boundaries and restoring the area to the way it looked in the past. Because the area was fortified at different times in history, i.e. the War of 1812 and the Civil War, and was re-built during different eras, one must decide to which era it would be restored. To make this determination, research and surveys will be required. Citizen group is also interested in restoring the beach, so it can be used again.
9. **Vote to install new co-chair of GHC.** In the wake of David Rhinelanders' resignation, GHC members voted to install Robert Whitmarsh as co-chairman in David's place. Mary Ellen Lepionka will retain her place as co-chair.

The next meeting will be held 28 November at 6:30 pm in City Hall's third floor conference room.