

28 November Minutes
Gloucester Historical Commission

Present: Mary Ellen Lepionka, Bob Whitmarsh, Jeff Crawford, David Rhineland, Sandy Barry, Holly Clay, Bill Remsen

Attending: Xenas Seppala, Larry Langley, Bill Gilmore

1. Minutes of October meeting will be approved at one of the next couple meetings, once the Minutes have been retrieved from Holly's computer that crashed.
2. FY 2016 Survey & Planning Grant, Phase I. Prioritizing target properties so the proposed properties number less than 139. GHC agrees with Bob's suggestion that old/historic properties are most significant to include. Consultants Wendy Frontiero and Kathleen Brumo will choose and eliminate properties based on the historic criteria we provide.

The following areas will be prioritized for inclusion in MACRIS:

- Stage Fort Park and the area immediate to it will go into MACRIS.
- Stacey Boulevard area. Documenting properties here, as well as memorials, statues, and Pavillion Beach. Dexter Place and parts of Western Ave and Middle Street are encompassed.

In addition, the following will be examined with an eye to including the most critical properties within each area in the survey (If a few sites in each of the following are entered in MACRIS, the whole of Gloucester will be represented):

- Magnolia. Identify properties to inventory before, or in case, they disappear, especially in the absence of a demolition delay ordinance.
- Houses in West Parish. Currently no properties in this area are in MACRIS.
- Norman Ave.
- Bass Rocks Back Shore Area. Some properties previously inventoried.
- "Save our Shores," a citizen group, bought land on water side to keep it

from being developed. (David says CPC gave money to the effort and developer is contending that CPC contribution could derail the purchase.)

-Brier Neck.

-Paul Manship estate, Lanesville. Being on the Register will help in the effort to convert the 15-acre, two quarry property to Artists' retreat/residence.

The Survey has been forwarded to Dan Smith and Greg Cadematori in City Planning, the end recipients of all related material. The materials are intended for use in City Planning.

+2015 Survey and Planning Grant. Close-Out Report has been accepted by Massachusetts Historical Commission and the City of Gloucester will be reimbursed the \$15,000 it fronted for preparation of the survey. The City was already reimbursed by the Dusky Foundation.

3. Reports on FY 2017 Survey & Planning Grants for Dogtown.

The City of Rockport sent an official letter support our grant application for an expert assessment and survey of Dogtown. Bob and Holly attended the Board of Selectmen meeting where the document was discussed. Rockport is fine with supporting GHC at this, the planning stage. Members did express concern that formal listing as an historic area in Massachusetts, and ultimately on the National Register of Historic Places listing, could be controversial in Rockport. We clarified that this first round of funding will be to figure out a consensual boundary for Dogtown, with Gloucester and Rockport supporting the effort to do so. This stage involves nothing more than an archeological survey to determine boundaries and what will be eligible.

Linzee Coolidge (Dusky Foundation) has agreed to pay for half (\$5,000) of the matching grant amount needed for an assessment of Dogtown. GHC needs another \$5000 matching grant. Collaboration among the numerous concerned groups and citizens is considered key to all aspects of this effort's success. To this end, Mary Ellen has met with all groups that may have a stake, including but not

limited to: Essex County Greenbelt, the Dogtown Advisory Committee, Cape Ann Trail Stewards. Each group has material related to their special interest in regard to Dogtown. Data with Cape Ann Trail Stewards includes information about...rare orchids (GPS) locations. Maps of all kinds exist: of elements, topographical, watersheds, biodiversity, official geology. An Aerial map provides an idea of what the Dogtown perimeter line could ultimately be. Green parcels on one map are the sites previously purchased by the city.

GHC has approached the New England Biolabs Foundation about making a grant. They suggest teaming with an environmentally-oriented non-profit/NGO, which would make it possible for Bio Labs to make such a loan. Bio Labs funds environmental projects where they are based. Therefore, it will make sense for Essex County Greenbelt to underwrite our proposal to New England Biolabs. The Dogtown project will take place in phases, with \$20000 required in phase one, for assessment.

Greenbelt may have property in what could be considered Dogtown. Dogtown is owned in the main by Gloucester (some properties taken by eminent domain, Babson gave huge tracts). A number of old wood lots still exist where the owner cannot be determined. These will have to be excluded (no more eminent domain) from what will be the official Dogtown entry on the National Register.

Mary Ellen, Bob and Holly will attend the December 1 meeting of the Rockport Historical Commission. The object is to determine whether the Rockport Commission will actively collaborate on writing grants relating to Dogtown, its assessment and possible nomination to the National Register. We will explore whether they would be willing to apply to their CPA for a grant.

4. Motion to invite Bill Remsen, architect and archeologist, to join the GHC as an Alternate Member. The record will show Bill will be nominated. His bio follows:

William C. S. Remsen, BA Anthropology and Architecture, M. Arch. Harvard Graduate School of Design. Bill Remsen is Chief Preservation Architect for International Preservation Associates, Inc., a firm specializing in cultural heritage preservation. A registered architect and professional member of the American Institute of Conservation, he has over 30 years experience with cultural heritage preservation projects, including field surveys and assessments, documentation, architectural and conservation design, project management, and long-term planning.

5. Legion Hall. GHC will apply for a Mass Cultural Council grant to hire an expert in architecture and historic preservation to draw up a comprehensive survey of the building's condition. This report will serve as the basis for a grant application for restoration of the exterior. The initial grant for assessment will be written for \$50,000; this will be Phase I of the project. Mary Ellen estimates we will require a \$150,000 grant for completion of the whole exterior preservation project. The grant application for funds assessment is due in January. The Legion administration will apply to the the CPC (CPA) for a separate grant which will serve as the matching grant. An eligibility form is due on February 29 and full grant proposal on April 15.

The CPA is state funding. The Mass. Cultural Council disburses federal funds. See the following for more on CPA, Community Preservation Act.

The **Community Preservation Act** (CPA) is a [Massachusetts](#) state law (M.G.L. Chapter 44B) passed in 2000. It enables adopting communities to raise funds to create a local dedicated fund for open space preservation, preservation of historic resources, development of [affordable housing](#), and the acquisition and development of outdoor recreational facilities.

Funds are raised locally for these purposes through imposition of a voter-authorized [surcharge](#) on local [property tax](#) bills of up to 3%. Several exemptions to the CPA surcharge can also be authorized by voters at the time of adoption. Local adoption of CPA by a community triggers annual distributions from the state's Community Preservation Trust Fund, a statewide fund held by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, which the law also establishes. [Deed recording fees](#) charged by the state's [Registries of Deeds](#) are the funding source for the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund.

Sandra Key, a past Legion Commander represented the Legion at the meeting and will work on the CPA grant. The Legion last applied for a CPA grant in 2014 & 15. One grant request was turned down because of the fire suppression system; plans were “not up to snuff.” Another was refused because only one bid, not three, was included. In general, the problems with the applications were technicalities.

Because the Legion building is already listed in MACRIS, the GHC needs to file a Project Notification Form (PNF) with the Mass Historical Commission to tell them we’re applying for grant. They have the right to review it.

Members and attending builders who assessed the building’s condition, discussed the worn and deteriorating condition of the exterior. Bill Remsen asked if there are existing architectural drawings or elevations from which to work. If these are available, using them as a starting point will save effort. Bob is to call Mike Hale about it. The formal, initial project assessment will most likely result in a Project Manual with specifications and drawings of what’s to be done. This will be included in the Phase 2 bid package, as will Bob’s report (done a couple weeks ago in consultation with Bill Gilmore and Larry Langley, both of Gloucester).

Sandra Key pointed out a number of issues that need immediate attention. Leaking to the inside has merely been patched, for example. The MCC will pay retroactively for work specified for completion under the terms of a grant from MCC. So MCC will be for Phase I (rolling grant times throughout the year); \$9 million to spend this year. WE can choose the expert in advance, just submit his qualification. The MCC offers three levels of grants ... The biggest would be capital grant.

CPA funds have to be expended before you get the money. Thus CPA funds will most likely be used in Phase II to pay for whatever the expert determines.

A Motion for GHC to make MCC grant application and Legion to write CPA grant was accepted. GHC will write a support letter only for the CPA grant proposal being submitted by the Legion.

The Legion rents the Legion Building from the city for a nominal fee. According to the lease the Legion is responsible for the interior. The city has responsibility for the exterior. The lease is renewable on a three-year basis and includes a three-year extension. The Legion is responsible for utilities, etc. The Income general ledger and a Form 990 for a non-profit are available. (required by MCC for grant)

6. Other Business

1. Tom O'Keefe no longer a GHC member. Now a resident of Rockport, he is no longer eligible to serve on the GHC.
2. Gloucester's SHPO at MHC is Chris skelly. 26 different resources are available, but not money. An example of an available resource is gravestone repair.
3. Consideration of the GHC Demolition Delay draft ordinance is again stalled. City Council and O&A never review it. Mary Ellen suggests creating a presentation and slide show for City Council. We will get on City Council agenda. Bill, Mary Ellen and Sandy will work on this project. Need photos of things being torn down like Peter Smith's place, properties on the Boulevard, and houses theoretically under threat. We will also include preservation success stories, i.e. Babson Inn where architects changed plans to retain historical integrity. The presentation should be about 10/15 minutes in duration.

The proposed ordinance simply asks that the city building inspector let the GHC know when something significant is going to be torn down. We follow up by determining if the property meets criteria for historic relevance. If it does, we schedule a site visit, invite owners/builders to meet and communicate to find an alternative. We will only advise. The city decides.

Bill Remsen pointed out the value of conservation easements where conservation is concerned. Easements offer a tax Break for conserving, saving, restoring architecturally and/or historically significant properties. An easement has to be with a non-profit. Easements provide incentive to restore rather than destroy.

Mary Ellen mentioned she doesn't think the city is taking advantage of tax breaks for people with historic homes in the historic district. Bob Whitmarsh will liaise with Chamber of Commerce about this issue. Historic properties on Main Street, commercial buildings, for example, are eligible for federal tax credits (20 percent) for re-developing. Owners of every building in the Historic District should have a copy of this law. Mary Ellen will email David Porper, head of District Commission.

4. The final ADA Parking Plan has been approved. We will receive a request to write a letter of support.
5. Landmarks project. A wide-ranging discussion ensued, initially focusing on producing an educationally oriented paperback with a small run of 1000 copies, for which a grant might be available. Bill Remsen suggested producing a digital version, rather than hard copies. Publisher could do the layout without printing it. Bill will look into how much a digital version would cost to produce. The GHC would have to find and pay web designer. WE can do the content ourselves with the original scanned as a PDF. Bill, Bob, Holly and Mary Ellen will work on updating and writing the contents.

Immediately following this, the December meeting, Kirk Noyes of the Gloucester Development Team, emailed "they" remain interested in republishing the Landmarks booklet. A financial contribution will have to wait for possibly as many as 90 days, while difficulties with the Maplewood School project are ironed out.

6. Cemetery Advisory Committee meeting. In First Parish bodies on top of bodies have been discovered. Committee members have contacted a landscape architect, the person who did First Parish, about Clark Cemetery. Restorations will cost an estimated \$10,000 for First Parish

and Clark will be half that. Mt. Pleasant cemetery is not city-owned but the Committee is staying in touch with owner/manager.

The Committee will apply for a grant to restore Veteran's graves. 32 stones date to the Revolutionary War. Only five or six are left.

Victims of the wreck of the Rebecca Ann: a map designating these grave sites has been found. The graves are designated with "f's."

Ground penetrating radar: Sandy will investigate a group who would do it while training students at no cost. Bill Remsen suggested we might be better off with a magnetometer.

The committee is planning work phases over next 4 years, as Gloucester gears up for the 400th anniversary.

7. Signage for the Meeting House Green has arrived and is ready for installation. The sign will face Ashland street where there's a sidewalk. Rock will be right beyond the sign.

7. Candidates and action plan for the 2016 Preservation Awards:

-Post office annex Lanesville

-Lundberg house, Bridgewater Street, Annisquam

-Ellory house for leaded glass window front door (conservation award?)

-567 Essex Ave

-Pleasant Street House

-972 Washington Street on their own applied for Nat his Register. Sargent Robinson House. Paid to have expert do the form. Rewarded for taking initiative. Corner Ford Road and Washington Street

Next meeting: December 19.

