

Gloucester Historical Commission
Meeting Minutes
27 March 2017

Present: Mary Ellen Lepionka, Bob Whitmarsh, David Rhineland, Bill Remsen, Holly Clay, Sandy Barry, Jude Seminara,
Visitors: Katelynn Vance, Stephanie Buck, David Dow (Chair, Stage Fort Park Committee), Patti Amaral (Cemeteries Advisory Committee), Donna Polizzia, Christopher Wagner, Ross Alexander Burton, Denise Donnelly, Zenas Seppala

1. New City of Gloucester and Sawyer Free Archivist: Katelynn Vance attended and we discussed ways we will collaborate in the future.

2. Letters of support for CPC applicants:

A. Cape Ann Museum (Stephanie Buck): The Gloucester Historical Commission members unanimously supported The Cape Ann Museum (CAM) application for CPC funds to restore and conserve a comprehensive and detailed map of Gloucester by Henry Walling, which dates to 1851. Stephanie Buck, CAM Librarian/Archivist, selected this map because of the wealth of information it displays. For example, homeowners' names appear clearly. Approximately 3' X 4" in size, the map is expansive, incorporating East Gloucester, Rocky Neck, Central Gloucester, West Gloucester, Annisquam and Rockport.

Stephanie Buck noted a series of William Saville maps that belong to the City also need conservation. These will not be attended through this current grant application.

B. Gloucester Cemeteries Advisory Committee (Sandy Barry & Patti Amaral) – The GHC also voted in favor of submitting a support letter for a grant application for funds to repair headstones in Clark & First Parish Cemeteries. This grant will follow up on restoration funded through the SHRAB grant aimed at veterans' headstones. Damaged stones include seven in First Parish dating to 1755 – 1789. Clark Cemetery dates to about 1835; stones have been tipped and several toppled by branches and roots. The grant application is in the category of preservation and is for \$9,500.

C. Lanesville Community Center (Ross Alexander Burton & Christopher Wagner) – The Lanesville Community Center (LCC) is applying for a \$50,000 CPC grant to resurrect, restore and re-use the Virginia Lee Burton "Little House", a writer's retreat that stood at the end of Folly Point Road during her lifetime. Having learned about the proposed project from LLC President Christopher Wagner and Burton's nephew, Alexander "Sandy" Burton, who prepared a slideshow, the Gloucester Historical Commission is convinced this proposal deserves funding and voted to submit a letter of support.

Bought pre-fab at the Building Center and measuring 20' X 11,' the Little House was destined for demolition in 2009, when Sandy Burton interceded, having the house dismantled and moved to storage on his own property. Having gifted the structure to the LLC, he looks forward to its revitalization as center for children's arts and literature. He and

Wagner also envision adults taking classes and children's and adult's book authors meeting and working on the premises.

Virginia Lee Burton produced and illustrated numerous titles, winning the prestigious Caldecott Metal for her children's picture book The Little House. In it she tells of a country cottage, submerged by urban growth, then eventually saved by its owners' descendants who return it to a rural setting.

The LCC intends to raise funds from other sources, as well as applying to the Gloucester CPC for support. As a 501C3, the LCC hopes to develop a wide array of programming, once the writer's/artist's cottage has been relocated to the LCC grounds, erected and restored.

D. Stage Fort Park Advisory Committee (David Dow & Donna Polizzia)

The GHC voted to support a CPC application for funds to restore cannons at Stage Fort Park and to contract a professional archeological survey. A CPC grant would cover the rebuilding of four cannons and the construction of their carriages according to the original design. GHC members will help them develop a scope-of-work document to give to firms who would be engaged to do the archaeological survey.

The grant application is for \$32,944.00. \$20,000 of the request will be allocated for an archeological assessment, which must be carried out in advance of any proposed landscape design. The remainder will be for the cannons.

Stage Fort Park is on the National Register so a PNF has to be submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Society before any project can begin.

The Advisory Committee has contacted a landscaping firm, the BETA Group, but this aspect of the project will wait until the survey is complete.

Bill Remsen suggested a reasonable landscape improvement plan that could be accomplished in time for the Gloucester 400th anniversary: an outline in plantings that demarcates where forts would have been.

E. Sargent House Museum. GHC received a letter about the cedar shake roof needing work. As the Museum is in the Historic District, permission must be obtained from the Historic District Commission (HDC). As the House is on the National Register, a certification of eligibility and letter of support from the GHC for CPA funding is not needed.

3. Status Updates on grants

A. Dogtown (2017 Survey and Planning Grant) and Matching funds.

Gloucester has been granted the requested funds by the MHC, but the City will not accept the grant until all the matches are in place. The Dusky Foundation has promised \$5,000 and Greenbelt (a 5013c) has applied to two foundations for \$5,000 each. Gloucester has to accept the grant officially by April 14 and the closest City Council Meeting will be April 11.

B. Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF), granted through the MHC & Matching Funds, a grant application for the restoration and preservation of the exterior of the Town Hall/Legion Memorial Building. The grant application has been submitted.

C. Legion CPC application for repair and restoration of windows of the Legion Building/Town Hall - The application was rejected; the eligibility form was not submitted on time and it did not indicate an estimate for the windows.

D. Proposed LCC/MCC grant for Powwow: Discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

4. **GHC protocol for responding to MHC requests.** Discussion vis a vis the Open Meeting Law ensued. Members voted for the following: If we vote to send a letter endorsing or disapproving of a project, we do not have to vote again after the letter has been penned. We will, however, share a draft of any such letter among Commission members. A copy of said letter can be posted on line with Minutes.
5. **Planning for the 2017 Preservation Awards ceremony**
 - Candidate list contacts, and photos
 - Award certificates
 - Program and slide show
 - Publicity and promotion
6. **Other assignments and initiatives**

Parsons School (Friendship House) photos for the MHC. Holly will follow up with Jeff, who will be taking the photos.

The following will be taken up at a future meeting:

- Landmarks publication project
- Demolition delay
- Meetinghouse green Signage placement
- New house plaques
- Historic preservation plan for municipal properties.

7. Other Business

A. Legion Building/Town House. The Remsen report points out several matters that need immediate attention, because they threaten health and/or safety. Bill will draft a letter to the City and to Mark Nestor of the Legion.

B. The Rocky Neck National Register nomination is being considered by the State Review Board on June 14. The MHC will now send letters to all Rocky Neck residents, and we must supply the addresses. The letter will inform them of the decision and request responses from anyone who objects. The address labels deadline is Apr 5. The GHC and MHC will set a date for another public meeting with Rocky Neck residents, in advance of June 14.

C. Sawyer Free Library. The Monell building will not be demolished. It will be renovated. The library board is moving ahead on obtaining 501C3 status for stewardship of the Saunders House. In the meantime money in museum coffers is designated for Saunders house, so it is adequately maintained.