

**Gloucester Historical Commission**  
**Joint Meeting with Members of the Historic District Commission**  
**(GHC & HDC)**  
**22 May 2017**

**PRESENT:** Mary Ellen Lepionka, Sandy Barry, Jeff Crawford, David Rhineland, Bob Whitmarsh, Jude Seminara, Bill Remsen, Holly Clay  
Prudence Fish, David Porper  
Doug and Gloria Parsons (Phyllis A. Mariane Association, a 501c3 organization which just received a \$60,000 Mass Cultural Council grant for restoring the 1925 wooden sea craft)  
Joel Favazza

**1A. Historic District Permitting:** Local attorney Joel Favazza represents a client whose District property is under renovation. repair bricks on building in His Dis June 4 to discuss his issue. Scaffold up. Can't have scaffold has to come down before May 31. The owners would like a temporary "stay" on a May 31 deadline to remove scaffolding, so contractors can repoint brick work before scaffolding comes down. This would entail lifting the stop-work order. Mr. Favazza will appear at the already scheduled HDC meeting, where this issues will be visited specifically.

**1B. Public Business not on Agenda:**

1. **Meeting House Green Sign:** Mary Ellen solicited comments on the new design and scaled-down version. All agreed with Jude's suggestion to remove the "X You Are Here," because the arrow is in the right place and sufficient to direct the visitor's perspective. Members discussed adding "training field" label and will email Mary Ellen if further corrections and additions are indicated.

2.. **Large Version of 1979 Engineering Department Dogtown map by Odum**  
The large scale map will serve as an excellent support document for 2017 Survey & Planning Grant that is preliminary to nominating Dogtown for the National Register. The Tingley Map (hand-drawn) will be located and included, as will the Tristram Griffin map that dates to about 1917 and the Bachelder map. These maps contain errors, but are useful historical documents (i.e. different family names associated with a cellar hole).

Judy Peterson, who lives in Riverdale, has the original Griffin map and Pru will look into obtaining a copy.

Commission members examined the 1741 Bachelder map of Gloucester's Dogtown area and surroundings that Jude made a few years ago.

**II. GHC greets HDC members**

**III. Accept Minutes of last meeting,** as amended: unanimous vote to accept.

**IV. Awards Ceremony, 2016, Recap.** Thanks to all, especially to Mary Ellen for piloting the event. Next year the GHC goal will aim broadly, including awards in each category, people with ties to Rockport, and suggestions from the HDC. We want comprehensive representation of all of Cape Ann.

Many thanks to Sandy for training to film and use the CATV camera. Sandy will use the camera again, in conjunction with GHC and Cemeteries Advisory Committee (CAC) activities.

#### **V. Status report of GHC Grants and Activities**

**A.** MPPF grant for Old Town Hall/Legion/Town House rehabilitation and restoration. Decisions are announced on June 15.

**B.** Survey and Planning FY 2016 grant is winding down. Wendy Frontiero is writing Phase 4 of the report. The GHC will create a close-out report to get city refunded for its 50 percent contribution.

**C.** Survey and Planning FY 2017: A survey of Dogtown to determine borders of the area to be nominated to the National Register. Bill Remsen has been appointed Project Coordinator. Betsy Friedberg and Ed Bell are coordinating the project on the MHC side. Tom Mikus, Rock port Rights of Way Commission, & Jim Ugone, head of Rockport's Historical Commission and Historic District Commission are collaborating with the GHC on the project.

**D.** National Register Nomination: Rocky Neck. The final meeting, the last stage in the nomination protocol, has been held. A handful of residents who are opposed to the nomination attended. The MHC has only received one properly notarized letter of objection.

The MHC representative confirmed there is no opting out of a National Register district; the boundaries are fixed. Properties can be deemed "contributing" or "non-contributing" by virtue of architectural and/or historical attributions.

June 14: presentation to the State Board for approval of nomination at national level.

**E.** National Register Nomination: Annisquam. MHC is moving ahead with Annisquam nomination, given the positive nature of last summer's meeting with residents. Years ago, Annisquam rejected an initiative to create an Historic District (as opposed to a National Register District), because of suspicions about government interference and restrictions. Current objections center around public access, with no parking, no bathrooms for visitors.

#### **VI. HDC/GHC Initiatives in the current fiscal year: GHC**

**A.** Demolition Delay: The two commissions could jointly promote a proposal for an ordinance and work on a version that is simple and flexible. Examples of properties that might have been saved or committed to re-use abound.

An ordinance would require GHC notification of a pending demolition, triggering a review. The GHC review would lead to suggestions for alternatives to demolition. A short period of delay (initially requiring as few as six months delay) will allow time to investigate options.

Opponents of demolition delay suggest it impedes progress, can raise costs, cost jobs and further encumber an onerous permitting process.

An ordinance might therefore include a requirement that GHC will commit itself to finding a solution or say we will not do anything. If alternatives are not viable, the owners will not be prevented from carrying ahead with original plans.

Those present agreed we should find out Council Members' stances on Demolition Delay.

**B.** Permitting for construction appears to be a second issue because many view it as too expensive and too lengthy.

**C.** Landmarks Pub. Decided to proceed with developing an on-line version.

**D.** Stage Fort Park Restoration: CPC application was submitted by the Stage Fort Retoration Committee. They initially applied for funds for landscaping and we elected not to send a letter of support. We felt an archaeological survey needs to be done first. The restoration committee met with the CPC to change their application accordingly and the CPC is in favor of it.

**E.** other CPC applications for which the GHC wrote letters of support:

Virginia Lee Burton Little House (Lanesville): Reconstruction and restoration so the building can be used for education and writing.

Cape Ann Museum: restoration of historic Walling map

Clark Cemetery: repair of headstones

**F.** Dale Avenue entrance to City Hall and accommodation for ADA entrance and parking was worked out.

**G.** Rocky Neck was nominated to the National Register.

## **HDC**

**A.** Four cases in this fiscal year.

**B.** Case of Middle Street house, near corner of Washington Street. The property has aluminum siding, and the owner wants to replace it with vinyl. Vinyl siding does occur on buildings in the Historic District, but what exists predates the Historic District; thus, the HDC will not approve the owner's request. In addition, the owner changed the door of the house. She put in a request for a new door that conforms to the District code, then without seeking permission, she changed the material of the door. She was reported to the Building inspector who notified her of her error.

**C. 33 Middle Street.** The property belongs to Jessica Mulcahey who's on the HDC. The owners want to do work on their house, and have found clapboard and masonry under the current siding. They're researching photos that show the original appearance of the house and have found an 1880 photo. The house was built around 1850.

## **VII. Benefits of being a CLG**

- a.** CLG status provides access to grants not otherwise available. Such grants benefit properties both inside the Historic District and external to it.
- b.** Tax credits are available for businesses and non-profits.
- c.** In Gloucester two groups, the CLG and the GHC are combined, delivering greater clout to make joint requests...It garners broader influence.
- d.** The CLG brings together the expertise of people on two different commissions that compliment each other.
- e.** Bill pointed out that combined “forces” would reduce confusion about which commission is responsible for what. One commission would take care of all matters historical.
- f.** Pru pointed out that having one commission could lead to a membership with the ability to do survey and inventory work ourselves, thereby

## **VIII. Preparation for CLG Annual Report:**

Mary Ellen summarized report requirements:

- HDC Cases and/or hearings with respect to enforcing Historic District codes,
- Cases and dates related to certificates issued,
- Three sample Minutes,
- A sample resident application.
- Updated resumes, thereby verifying that some members are in preservation lines of work.
- workshops attended.
- Nat Register participation
- Surveys and inventorying

## **IX. Opportunities for Future Interface**

Mary Ellen proposed that members of both commissions discuss merging the two groups, combining functions. All present agreed we would start with a cookout.

## **X. Preservation Awards 2018**

Possibilities include:

- + Ahoa house in Lanesville. Pru noted the documentary about the owner(s) that has been shown at the Cape Ann Museum..
- + 19 Harriet Road, “Houndsmoor Lodge,” a house designed by Henry Davis Sleeper and Halfdan Hanson that is for sale for \$1.8 million. The owners retained original details while restoring the property.

**Next Meeting:** HDC June 9

**Next Meeting:** GHC June 26

Cookout at Stage Fort Park: to be decided

