

**Historic District Commission  
Gloucester Historical Commission  
Joint Meeting  
14 November 2017**

**Present:** Bob Whitmarsh, Jude Seminara, Mary Ellen Lepionka, Bill Remsen, Charles “Chuck” Nazarian, Pru Fish, David Porper, Paul “Pete” Shea, Steve Goodick, Rob Chandler, Nancy Goodick  
Guest: Kimberly Voltero (sight-seeing company owner)

- I. Gloucester Historical Commission (GHC): Mary Ellen Lepionka, Co-Chair.  
Summary of Activities: GHC is taking a proactive stance to bring money into the city for preservation.
  - A. Survey and Planning Grants (Massachusetts). Properties documented and proposed for inclusion in MACRIS & in some cases nomination to the National Register.
    - +2016 Project: ON the basis of survey work by a specialist in historic preservation, properties representing different areas of Gloucester were added to MACRIS.
    - +2017 Project: Dogtown archeological survey and nomination to the National Register. Rockport Historic/Historic District Commission Collaborated with GHC on Dogtown Survey, since Dogtown is in both Rockport and Gloucester.
    - +Certified Local Governments, like Gloucester, are favored for annual \$30,000 Survey and Planning Grants.
  - B. Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund, MPPF grant. GHC applied unsuccessfully for grant to restore and preserve old Town Hall/Legion Building exterior. Will apply again in 2018.
  - C. National Register & National Register District nominations: These listings are non-restrictive, in contrast to a state historic district listing. Rocky Neck was included on the National Register in 2017  
Annisquam is in the midst of the proposal process
  - D. Preservation Awards Ceremony. Annual. The awards afford opportunity to the City’s history, and/or sustainably preserve architecture. Mary Ellen noted that this year GHC will honor CAM for the windows they replaced, an idea from David Porper. Suggestions for honorees from members of HDC would be wonderful and members are invited to participate in the award ceremony in May.
- II. Historic District Listings: Ordinances restrict exterior treatments but incentives also exist:

A. Property-owner incentives for commercial properties in historic Districts

+Break on state and federal taxes

+Protection and preservation for posterity of historic sites and neighborhoods

B. Historic properties can be proposed for Historic District Status via:

1. a formal survey and application process for a stand-alone feature, building or area, or
2. application for a single property or group of properties contiguous to an existing Historic District to be governed under the auspices of the extant Historic District Commission (effectively enlarging the Historic District footprint). GHC welcomes suggestions for properties to be surveyed for nomination.

IN the case of a sale, a deed restriction requires new owners to abide by renovation & restoration standards.

III. Historic District Commission (HDC)

1. Closely adhere to charter and mission to maintain character of the Historic District and to advise property owners on best practices with regard to compliance with historic district ordinances.
2. Meet on an as-needed basis, which can mean more than once a month or every few months only. At one time the HDC met once a month and members found they did not always have business to discuss.
3. Pete said the statutory charge of the HDA is to care for the Historic District. In accordance with ordinance and with City of Gloucester. Deal with problems as come up, meet when a building permit is pulled for a property in the HD.  
We have our job to do, and you have yours. Yours is to broaden the number of historic preserved properties.
4. HDC endeavors to be “friendly” to owners and business owners while helping them to comply with restrictions. The Commission is sensitive to people of lower income who live in the historic district and encounter difficulty in meeting stipulations.
5. The issue of expanding the Historic District or creating more historic districts is political issue, “deeply fraught.” It is noted that residents can protect property they own without joining the historic district.

IV. Long-term Preservation Planning and Gloucester’s 400<sup>th</sup>.

Chuck (HDC) said it would be “nice to have Gloucester shine” for the Anniversary, noting contrast between condition of houses in Historic District and others in its proximity which have been maintained without regard to architectural or preservation standards. “Gloucester would be more of a ‘destination’ if well-preserved. Bob suggested education process with before and after photos would encourage preservation.

Mary Ellen reminded those present that the City is compiling a list of municipal properties which GHC will review for properties to be nominated.

- V. Historic House Plaques: David Porper said these should be continued. Pru Fish has taken charge of orders for 30 years, hiring a sign painter in Providence. Some of the original signs are being replaced now. The home owner pays for the sign. David suggested soliciting a *GDT* story about the plaques, so more people know they are available. As a corollary, David suggested attaching Historic District signs to street signs. He said, "We could work on that."

VI. HDC Official Business:

Commission members opened and discussed two items. A motion to continue and return the business at next meeting passed:

+46 Middle Street. Remove business sign and replace with another

+37 Main Street. Multiple repairs and renovations. Dormer windows, repointing brick.