

Gloucester Historical Commission (GHC)
26 March Meeting

Present: Mary Ellen Lepionka, Bob Whitmarsh, Bill Remsen, Jude Seminara, Sandy Barry, Peter Lawrence

Guests: Peter Parsons, Kenneth Hecht, Kevin Martin, JD McEachern

1. Accept Minutes- Commission members voted to approve the Minutes of the February meeting.
2. Public Business not on the Agenda
 - A.** Demolition Delay. Kenneth Hecht, the Ward 2 City Councilor, attended the meeting to learn more about demolition delay and the Historic Commission-drafted, proposed ordinance. An engineer by training and a developer by occupation, he expressed interest in helping to usher in an ordinance that incorporates recently developed modifications. He would like to create a vision for downtown and visit with stakeholders, property owners in the downtown area. Mary Ellen responded by explaining the purviews of the GHC and the Historic District Commission (HDC) and inter-workings of the two. By meeting together the two commissions qualify Gloucester as a Certified Local Government (CLG), a status which deems Gloucester eligible for certain types of financial grants. Peter said that Councilor Paul Lundberg has also expressed interest in demolition delay and suggested that interested parties explore ways to make it acceptable to broader range of people.

Commission members resolved to review (suggest changes additions) a demolition delay ordinance Mary Ellen previously crafted and disseminated. Mary Ellen will forward the amended, proposed ordinance to Kenneth who will formally propose it, hopefully garnering support from other City Councilors: Paul Lundberg, Jen Holmgren, Val Gillman.

In addition, Bob will head a committee to draw up a list of properties worthy of preservation. The committee will start with the Assessor's list, going back to about 1945.

Sandy suggested devusing MACRIS and properties that have been nominated to the National Register to develop a list. Such a list will provide concrete references for City Councilors, with information in a relevant, quantitative format, i.e. with annotations about how many buildings were built before 50 years ago, and/or 90 years ago, etc.

Peter Parsons suggested identifying properties on FEMA maps, those threatened by flood and velocity zones, as well.

B. Survey and Planning Grants: 2019 Survey & Planning Grant. The GHC will apply for Stage Fort Park as a separate entity from Stacy Boulevard; the committee will decide which Stacy Boulevard properties to document for possible nomination to the National Register. Sandy suggested nominating properties that are already entered on MACRIS first.

C. Community Preservation Act: 2018 Grant Requests

1. GHC members voted to support the Cape Ann Museum's (CAM) request for a Community Preservation Committee (CPC) grant to stabilize the barn (1740) on the White Ellery House site. A letter under Mary Ellen's and Bob's signature will be sent to the CPC. The CAM is consulting with architectural historian Bill Finch and will consult an archeologist, if site work so indicates.

AT the next CPC meeting Holly will mention the importance of documenting the barn's existing condition and then the final restoration condition for the public record.

2. Old Town Hall ("House") American Legion Building: The Legion has applied for a CPC grant for renovation and restoration. The CPC has denied grants in previous years. The GHC was also denied an MPPF grant for Legion Hall renovations last year; among other contingencies, the MPPF requires a city architect's involvement. Gloucester's designated architect Kevin Buckley does not satisfy the requirement as he is not on retainer. Nevertheless the GHC will meet with him in hopes of his supplying architectural services and plans and specs, thereby launching the project management stage of the proposed renovation. Bill will meet with them as well. It was suggested that the MPPF would look more kindly on making a grant if the Legion membership demonstrated support. Mark Nestor (Legion Commander) might solicit member donations, particularly in view of next year's 100th anniversary.

Kenneth also suggested soliciting donations of qualified labor-in-kind, to relieve costs of prevailing wage mandates (three times the market rate).

Jason Groves is looking for permanent location for his photographs of veterans.

D. National Register. The GHC received a request from the Manship Estate for a letter supporting nomination to the National Register. For the nomination, Historic Preservation Specialist Wendy Frontiero will expand research she did previously under a Survey & Planning grant. The GHC will also submit a completed CLG eligibility form that verifies historic details and includes a Statement of Significance for the property.

E. David noted the positive *Sunday Globe* article on Dogtown that features Mary Ellen, Bob and others.

3. Update on Public Archaeology Lab (PAL) meeting. The Dogtown survey is proceeding well. PAL is applying to do Stage Fort Park survey as well. Mary Ellen reminded those present about Dogtown Days, Saturday May 5 and Sunday May 6. Archeologists from PAL are intending to attend and share new information.
4. Update on 3/1 meeting with Community Development Department and stakeholders interested in preservation and future of Stage Fort Park. DPW and CPC representatives attended. Participants reviewed the plan for re-landscaping the park. The discussions will help guide what area will be the focus of the archaeological study, potentially the area between the Fort,

- south of the existing Visitors' Center. An extension of the parking lot is under consideration.
5. Report on Status of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for an archaeological survey of Stage Fort Park (City project). Two bids have been received: one from PAL & another from the University of Massachusetts Archeological Services (UMAS) (Eric Johnson). The latter offers opportunities to use field schools with students, which might make future explorations easier and less expensive. Bids are in Mike Hale's hands. Bill suggests offering to review the bids with Mike Hale and render an opinion.
Bill suggested making archaeological surveys tourist and resident attractions, something in which citizens could be involved.
 6. Discussion of progress and plans for 2018 Preservation Awards in May. All appears to be on track.
 - + Bill will approach Kenneth about nominating him for work on the Trident Gallery Building.
 - +Jude officially recommended Leland Crawford for preserving the shipwreck. His Masters is being done through the University of Southern Denmark. Jude will contact him about more information, photos etc
 - + Mary Ellen received a letter from Edward Pasquina stating he is happy to receive an award for restoration of his 75 Middle Street property. This nomination suggestion came from David Porper.
 - + CAM will accept an award for the windows in the White Ellery House. T
 - +GDT Newspaper chronicled the PERFECT STORM and Gloucester: AMERICA'S OLDEST SEAPORT. Sandy says the editor is happy to accept the award.
 - + Charlie Low, photographer, was suggested for an award.Holly will do certificates and send out working list.
GHC needs to find someone else to video as Sandy will be away.

7. Other Business

- a.** Landmarks and Website: Peter and Mary Ellen. A mock-up and table of contents is with Peter now who will review it.
- b.** CPC: eligibility forms received
- c.** The Saunders House and Sawyer Free Library. Lyn Spencer from Spencer Voigt architects in Boston has been hired to do a special analysis, an updated condition and structural capacity survey of the interior of the Saunders House. Disagreements between factions remain.
- d.** Mr. Martin brought a Dogtown map that shows all the boulders. He served as guide for the Boston Globe reporter. Jude will have an electronic copy made.
- e.** Jude is recording data about Civil War era carvings on boulders in West Gloucester. He will photo document them and get GPS coordinates.

Next Meeting: Monday 30 April 2018