

Gloucester Historical Commission
Meeting Minutes
25 September 2017

Present: Sandy Barry, Jude Seminara, Bill Remsen, Bob Whitmarsh, Mary Ellen Lepionka, Holly Clay

Guests: Tom Mikus (Rockport Rights of Way Committee), Jim Ugone (Rockport Historic commission)

- 1. Minutes of August 28 Meeting:** Minutes accepted.
- 2. Public Business not on the agenda:** no discussions
- 3. Status Updates**

a. Salt Island. Chris LaPoint of Greenbelt met with the seller's agent. The seller will entertain a deal with Greenbelt, but from Greenbelt's perspective, the asking price will have to be lower.

b. Stage Fort Park. David Dow got grant that will pay for an archeological survey of the area the Stage Fort Park committee hopes to re-landscape. In addition, Mike Hale has "put in" for \$20,000 to expand the archeological survey to the whole park. If the surveys find excavation is indicated, GHC will investigate raising money to finance it.

c. Survey & Planning Grant 2016. Grant closed. State will reimburse Gloucester the \$15,000 for its half of grant.

d. Survey & Planning Grant 2017. Bill received positive references on Public Archeology Laboratory (PAL), the only firm that submitted a proposal to undertake the archeological survey of Dogtown. Betsy Friedberg of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) will be the point person on the survey, since the survey is preparatory to nomination to the National Register.

Members' responses to the PAL proposal are positive; the proposal is thus accepted. GHC needs permission from MHC (contact Betsy) before contacting PAL. Donna in procurement has envelope with the proposal's price specification. Mary Ellen and Bill will review it. A formal meeting (including GHC, Dogtown Advisory Committee, MHC, and PAL) will be scheduled, once a contract with PAL is signed.

A discussion about potential complications on the Rockport side of Dogtown, which has many private abutters, ensued.

Jude suggests extending the survey boundaries as far as possible, hopefully including areas between the Common and Mill River.

e. Dogtown Advisory Committee (DAC) meeting Sept 16. Mary Ellen reported. DAC paid \$3,000 out of its funds to have stumps that block a trail removed to an off-site location. DAC reached an agreement with Mike Hale on the removal; once the funds are in place, Mike will commit staff to do the work. Putting an end to dumping on conservation land and creating a "welcome center" in place of the dumping ground are long-term goals. DAC will continue to collaborate with Greenbelt's Tim Simmons, investigating areas for landscape restoration.

Two high school shop teachers have organized students to build bridges to ford streams. Charlie Crowley and Noel Mann are updating a 1985 Dogtown security report that will be submitted to the State.

Friends of Dogtown (Mark Carlotto) are planning a Spring event.

f. Cemeteries Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting Sept 25.

- + An environmental site study of Clark Cemetery concludes that Clark is not in a wetlands area. Thus, herbicides can be used to eradicate Japanese Knotweed. DPW will review the report & the CAC will consult Ken Whittaker (conservation agent for the City).
- + The CPC awarded \$9500 for professional preservation of special/notable headstones in First Parish and Clark.
- + Accessibility: A volunteer carpenter will lay steps from the oval field into Clark using DPW-donated materials.
- + Clark Cemetery & the First Parish Burial Ground have Facebook pages.
- + CAC uses Google sheets to keep track of "in kind" hours
- + Fisherman's Memorial at Beechbrook. CAC will follow up on Edith Sparling's nominating the Memorial to the National Register.

g. Zoning Board meeting Sept 14. Building inspector Bill Sanborne requests the GHC (Holly Clay) contact him so GHC is in the information loop about demolition proposals. Eight Wonson Street, Rocky Neck (owners Judith Hughes & Michael Malyszko) is set for demolition and will be replaced by a modern, energy efficient house. The design resembles the original house (Gothic Revival). MHC Betsy Friedberg confirmed the property owners in a National Register District do not need to file a project notification form (PNF). These are required only when government funds are used in conjunction with a renovation or demolition of a National Register District property.

Jude suggests if preservation of the built environment remains the aim, GHC would be better served advocating for local historic districts where ordinances require compliance with established preservation standards and historic guidelines.

h. Demolition Delay. Mary Ellen wrote City Counselors about their stances. She will ask those, who acknowledged receipt, to sponsor an ordinance proposal.

i. Saunders and Sawyer Library. Postponed until next meeting.

j. Candidates for Preservation Awards. Pru Fish (Historic District Commission {HDC}) has suggestions. Holly will look into the T.S. Eliot house restoration.

k. Other: recruitment strategies for more GHC members.

4. Historic District Commission Action Plan for CLG Status. GHC members will attend the 14th October Historic District Commission meeting. This will constitute the joint meeting. Watch them and see how operate. Recruit one or two of them because archit on it.

How do we add historic districts?. What about expanding existing HD.? What happens when flaunt a regulation. How do we deal with demolitions? Does Bldg inspector what role in their activities. When we get on their agenda we will ask these questions to be on agenda too.

5. Educational Outreach and Land Marks: postponed

Next Meeting: 30 October 2017, third floor meeting room, City Hall, 6:30

