

Gloucester Historical Commission  
Minutes of Meeting  
25 June 2018

Present: Bob Whitmarsh, Mary Ellen Lepionka, Peter Lawrence, Bill Remsen, David Rhineland, Jude Seminara, Sandy Barry, Holly Clay  
Guest: J.D. McEachern, Beth Welin

1. Beth Welin, Director of the Manchester Historical Museum, presentation, Power Point: "Gloucester Lost: Urban Renewal: Harbor Loop (1960's and 1970's) Part I"
    - The changes rendered Rogers Street. wider and connected it to the Rt. 127 throughway.
    - The majority of buildings on Harbor Loop, except the Fitz Henry Lane house at 5-7 Ivy Hill Court, were torn down.
    - The "reclaimed" area was historically largely residential, though businesses existed side-by side with houses.
    - Lost Buildings: (the names of properties' last owners can be found in eminent domain files). The following are examples:
      - Fisherman's Institute 10 Duncan
      - Police Station 22-23 Duncan St. 1880's (initially armory & flu hospital) (torn down early 1970's)
      - Frankie Davis Company Building late 1800's (mail order business of tinned and boxed fish products)
      - 137-39 Rogers St. probably sail loft, then storage
      - 121 Rogers \_ George Noyes (moving co.)
      - 3 Ivy Ct. Ekborg residence
      - 7 Locust St. Martel residence
      - Ivy Court, Mel Mason House
      - 1-5 Locust St (fog horn manufacturer)
      - 60 Duncan St, "Hydaway" Bar
      - 80-86 Duncan St. MacDougall residence
      - 88-92 Duncan , Sawyer residence
      - North Shore Furniture co
      - 6 Ivy Hill Court Thompson residence
      - 8-10 welder's workshop
      - Railway Avenue was destroyed now on Coast Guard grounds
      - 3 Wharf Street, old Gas Works and former New England Fish Co.
      - Parkhurst Railways
      - Hotel Savoy corner Water and Main St. (across from Elm St.)
- Beth presents her power point programs the last Mondays of the month at the Rose Baker Senior Center at 10 am.

This particular program on "urban renewal" shows what Gloucester demolished in direct contrast to Boston's Quincy Market buildings that were saved and repurposed.

2. Demolition Delay:

Mary Ellen examined meeting notes and minutes from past years and decades, while creating an Index so GHC files can be stored by the City. The current proposed ordinance, which Mary Ellen drafted, is the 5<sup>th</sup> attempt to write, propose and pass a demolition delay ordinance. The most recent attempt was in 2007.

Mary Ellen reviewed arguments opposing demolition delay.

The current proposed ordinance would benefit from a section that defines terms. The MHC provided definitions in 2007.

Among the papers was a list of triggers for a demolition delay used by communities; most use 50 years or older (the state's default). Some towns operate on a categorical basis, working from a list of structures they want to preserve.

Jude suggests we propose a categorical "watch" list, in addition to requesting 50-year trigger for demolition delay.

**ACTION list:**

Bill will scan documents from our files that are related to demolition delay.

Bob will draft a written piece on the purpose of delay.

Jude will draft a "watch" list of significant properties.

GHC will outline what happens during the delay period, when numerous alternatives to razing may be developed.

Proposal's defense can include information on conservation easements that gives developer serious tax break.

GHC will anticipate and craft responses to objections to demolition delay and add a bibliography. For example, one demo-delay counter argument says towns with demo delay are avoided by developers. GHC can counter that reasoning saying, responsible developers will appreciate the contribution that a demolition delay ordinance makes to a community.

Note: The Department of the Interior standards now allow modern materials.

Bob sees selling the proposal to the public as critical. Most people don't want anybody to tell them what they can do to their own properties. Remind people want to keep community feel but also don't want to block progress.

Bob wants to communicate that the Commission is here for the community, not to serve its own interest or an academic interest.

Mary Ellen points out realtors need to be addressed as well.

Peter went to the Assessor's Office. About a third of Gloucester's housing would fall into a category of 75 years old or older.

- The GHC decides to list 75 years for the proposed ordinance; the delay will be up to one year.
3. Minutes for April accepted
  4. Message from Barbara Lambert, previous GHC Chair  
A private developer has purchased the Riggs Corridor that used to be pasture and is currently forested and a wetland. He intends to build condos  
GHC anticipates a conservation issue will arise because of the lowlands and marsh.  
The new owner came before Planning Board; neighbors are distressed and don't want building.  
The Riggs houses are safe.  
GHC will write a letter of concern and ask if we can observe excavation, in case archaeological remnants related to Native Americans exist.
  5. Dogtown: The GHC has received more record requests from Dave Brown about Dogtown because he doesn't want Dogtown on National Register. PAL group will return to do a final walk through on 27 June.
  6. Stage fort Park archaeological survey group (UMass) will be working at Stage Fort Park the second and fourth weeks of July.  
Canons: A broken fence at the site of the old powder magazine has been observed. GHC will let Jim Hale know.
  7. 1623 Studios: The GHC is slated to start History Shorts program with Cable Station on 16 July to create a Podcast about the Legion Building. GHC will contact Jim Destino to make sure we understand the City's plans for the building. Holly to look into details of their grant application to the CPC.
  8. CLG report has been submitted.
  9. Historic District information: In 1998 the GHC tried to expand the Historic District. Mary Ellen says it was an "excellent" plan. B

**Next Meeting:** 30 July at 6:30 in the Third Floor Meeting Room of City Hall