

Minutes

Gloucester Historical Commission

September 24, 2018 6:30 PM

3rd Floor Conference Room

City Hall

9 Dale Ave.

Gloucester, MA

Present: Mary Ellen Lepionka, Jude Seminara, David Rhinelander, Holly Clay-Smith, Robert Whitmarsh

Absent: Sandy Barry, Peter Lawrence

Guests: Val Gilman, Pru Fish, Susan Morreale, Kristal Pooler

Items were considered out of order to accommodate guests

I. Acceptance of minutes of August 20, 2018 GHC meeting

Mary Ellen motioned to accept the minutes of the September 24 GHC meeting minutes. Bill seconded. All voted in favor. Minutes accepted as amended.

II. Certified Local Government meeting in Boston

Bob, David Porper of the HDC, and Mary Ellen attended the meeting in Boston. Mary Ellen will request copies of the slide show. The GHC and HDC will have a joint meeting to review. Mary Ellen notified the Commissioners that there are only 25 Certified Local Governments in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In the next few days, we should get notified to apply for the FY 2019 Survey and Planning grant. The GHC will need to identify private donors. The GHC should also apply for Community Preservation grants. National Register prospective properties must be submitted by the GHC as part of the requirement to retain CLG status. Additionally, there should be a Memorandum of Agreement between the GHC and HDC. Each group must meet at least quarterly, and there is a requirement for at least one joint meeting of both bodies. An annual report must be filed each year. In the past, Gloucester lost CLG status as a result of the failure to file an annual report.

III. Demolition Delay Ordinance proposal

Peter was spearheading this. Several Commissioners suggested changing the name to "Demolition Review."

Mary Ellen motioned to change the name of the proposal from "Demolition Delay" to "Demolition Review." Bob seconded. All voted in favor.

Peter and Mary Ellen are coordinating efforts on the slide presentation. Pru might have photos of previously demolished historic properties. Jude will photograph the new house that is in the location of the First Period house demolished in the 1960s or 70s that poet Charles Olson tried to save. Mary Ellen will send Jude information on the precise location. The GHC will do a presentation for the City Council. Pru suggested that the Building Inspector could notify the GHC about demolition permit applications. Even short of an ordinance, the GHC could contact

property owners on an informational basis. Mary Ellen advised the Commissioners that the Demolition Review Ordinance proposal is of the highest priority. Once feedback is received from Peter, we should move on it quickly.

IV. Brief Status Updates

a. Annisquam NRHP nomination postponement

Mary Ellen sent two documents: a spreadsheet and a narrative. Annisquam residents were primarily concerned with the effect that the NRHP nomination would have on traffic congestion. Val noted parking is a complicated situation and that it is a valid concern. Jude noted that it is an enforcement issue. The Commission is concerned with the sheer volume of misinformation clouding the NRHP nomination for Annisquam. Val suggested brainstorming ideas for regrouping. She noted that Senator Tarr was looking for ways to work diplomatically. See the four points put forth in Val's email of September 21. Val also suggested the biggest concern of the Annisquam residents was that they felt that the nomination was being pushed on them, and thus turned them off. Mary Ellen clarified that the Massachusetts Historical Commission is not obligated to notify residents but does so as a courtesy. "Opt out" is the Federal Government's policy. She also noted that the MHC wanted to include more than just the Village Center, and that a NRHP nomination has no other impact on the community than the pride of being recognized as a historically significant place. Bill remarked that he is concerned about the boundary inasmuch as some historically-significant buildings were omitted. Mary Ellen said that it was an imperfect nomination, and offered the Commission's assistance to the Village Hall when they do their nomination. 501C3 buildings should take priority, and are the "path of least resistance." Bob reaffirmed that people are misinformed about the NRHP status -- that they think it is regulatory rather than honorary. Val said that the feedback that she received from Annisquam residents was that they wanted it to be from the bottom up, and that the GHC should give it time.

b. Library Building Committee meeting

Mary Ellen hasn't heard back about a meeting, and the final report hasn't been received.

c. MHC phone conference on Phase 3 of PAL's Dogtown

The MHC sent a letter to PAL with a generally positive review of the paperwork. The MHC sent a memorandum. Phase 4 must be submitted by October 26. Bill and Mary Ellen participated in a conference call. Bill sent his edits to PAL with changes he suggested. Questions were raised about the Bennett and Dennison houses regarding whether they were truly First Period houses.

d. Stage Fort Park Archaeological Survey

Ed Bell, archaeologist with the MHC, sent a letter to Steve Winslow of the Community Development Committee. The Completion memorandum was received, and Mr. Winslow was notified to review the report. Any work involving digging should be closely supervised to ensure that cultural material is recorded and preserved.

e. History podcasts with 1623 Studios

The Stage Fort Park podcast is completed. On October 12 at 4Pm, we will record a podcast on Gloucester's historic cemeteries.

f. Cemetery Advisory Committee

Postponed until next meeting due to Sandy's absence.

g. Dogtown Advisory Committee

Tim Simmonds and Mary Ellen are meeting to apply for landscaping grant to restore blueberry patches and artists' motifs.

Mary Ellen motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 PM. Bob seconded. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned.

The next meeting of the Gloucester Historical Commission will be held in the City Hall 3rd floor conference room at 6:30 PM on October 29, 2018.