

Minutes of the Sandwich Historical Commission October 7, 2020

Present via Zoom: Members: Maria Nye, Jennifer Madden, Lisa Hassler, Matt Schimmel, Ellen Carlson, Carolyn Crowell, Greg Antman, Joanne Richardson. **Members of the public via Zoom:** Ralph Vitacco, Tao Woolfe, Julia Blakely, Dean Coe, Ray Howland, Susan Scheible, Donald Critchfield, Lyndi Wade.

Call to order: Maria Nye called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

- 1. Review and approval of the minutes:** The July and September minutes were approved as written.
- 2. Correspondence/Statements/Announcements/Follow up:** Maria shared an email she received from the Massachusetts Historical Commission letting us know that they have matching grants available.

Maria introduced Julia Blakely who is interested in becoming a member of the SHC. Mary Lynch is also interested; she was introduced later in the meeting.

3. Public Forum: none

4. Old Business: none

5. New Business: Ray Howland introduced himself as the Chair of the Friends of the Sandwich Boardwalk (FOSB). This group was formed in the spring after seeing the engineering firm plans for the new boardwalk. They feel their role is to provide a historic advocate in the redesign process, and they welcome feedback from the community regarding the boardwalk redesign. Ray provided the SHC with a working document (copies available on their Facebook page and at the library).

FOSB would like the support of the SHC to have the boardwalk designated on the National Register of Historic Places. It meets the criteria, during the process the boardwalk would be thoroughly documented in case it is lost, and it would add strength to the historic argument as the town goes through the redesign process. There are two ways to list it – either expand the Jarvesville National Historic District to include it, or it could be individually listed.

SHC members were surprised that the boardwalk was not included in the Jarvesville National Historic District. It was included in an earlier historic district survey, but during the process the district got smaller and it was omitted. This seems to have been an error.

(At this point, the meeting was interrupted by a windstorm that caused some attendees to lose electricity and drop off the call. Most returned shortly).

SHC members agree that the boardwalk is a historic asset in town, but it is in a precarious place. With sea level rise, what is the benefit of building it at the same level? What will the appetite of citizens be for continual rebuild if it keeps getting washed away?

Greg suggests that the current design may reflect the town's interest in increased safety; the selectmen have been clear that jumping will be allowed on the new boardwalk. Joanne asked what would happen to the planks in the event of a rebuild; Ray stated that the FOSB would assist in returning the planks to the owners.

In the redesign process, even if the boardwalk were listed in the National Register, there are no variances for the Americans with Disability Act, so the whole boardwalk will be ADA accessible, including

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access from the Town Neck parking lot to the beach. FOSB is suggesting a 4x4 inch curbing along the edge of the boardwalk to act as a curb stop for wheelchairs (instead of the current proposed railings) which is the ADA recommendation for fishing piers.

The boardwalk does have some protection because it is in the Old King's Highway Regional Historic District.

Lisa agreed to contact Chris Skelly at the Massachusetts Historical Commission and ask his opinion about adding the boardwalk to the Jarvesville National Historic District since it seems that it was left off by mistake. This will need the town's approval since they own the boardwalk. A motion passed unanimously to do this investigation.

Local Comprehensive Plan – SHC Priorities: Ellen led the discussion about which items the SHC would like to see included in the Local Comprehensive Plan (LCP) which is being revised now. Listed below are the four goals from the Sandwich Historic Preservation Plan from 2002, which were carried over to the long term local comprehensive plan in 2009. Are these the right "baskets" for the goals we want to accomplish?

Goal 1: Increase Public Awareness and Support for Sandwich's Historic Resources

Goal 2: Increase Preservation and Documentation Activities

Goal 3: Protect the Historic Character of Sandwich

Goal 4: Strengthen Heritage Tourism Activities

Areas in which this plan is not in line with state goals: climate change, diversity, sustainable development, and economic development. The SHC's goals are not required to be parallel to it, but that plan raises some interesting points that we may not have considered before. We will devote half of the next meeting to this discussion. Each member should think about how what we are doing now fits into these baskets, and if these baskets will fit for future goals. Ellen will put a chart together that compares each of the plans.

Community Preservation Committee – Appointment of a new liaison: The SHC provides a member to act as part of the Community Preservation Committee to provide input on historical preservation applications they receive, and make recommendations to the BOS and Town Meeting about whether to approve an item for CPC funding. Mary Lynch volunteered to be the representative. Lisa will serve temporarily until Mary Lynch is made a member of the SHC.

Carolyn recommended two homes currently under construction that need to be photographed for their historic asset files, one on Main Street and one on Route 6A.

6. Old Business: None

7. Public forum: None

8. Other business not anticipated by the chair: None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Y. Madden