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**Minutes of the Sandwich Historical Commission  
January 6, 2021**

**SHC Members present via Zoom:** Matt Schimmel, Ellen Carlson, Maria Nye, Jennifer Madden, Greg Antman, Lisa Hassler, Carolyn Crowell. **Members of the public present via Zoom:** Julia Blakely, Mary Lynch, Ralph Vitacco, Tao Woolfe, James Webb, B. Treffeisen

**Call to order:** Maria Nye called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**1. Review and approval of the minutes:** The December minutes were approved as written.

**2. Correspondence/Statements/Announcements/Follow up:**

Members discussed a recent post on the SHC Facebook page regarding 18 Water Street. Samantha Hendy responded, strongly favoring the saving of historic structures in town. Commission members suggested that she consider creating a non-profit to do this kind of work.

Matt reported from the CPC that the Friends request for repairs to the Quaker Meetinghouse was approved. It next moves to Town Meeting. First Church also requested funding for work on the church. The CPC did not vote because there was previous CPC funding approved for the building which required a preservation restriction which was never filed. SHC will invite First Church to come before us at the next meeting to discuss their application.

Ellen reminds all that the SHC has a special meeting scheduled for January 20 from 6:00-7:30 to discuss significant goals and objectives for the SHC to represent in the Long-Range Comprehensive Plan for the town. Any proposed actions should conform to the SHC mission statement.

**3. Public forum:** none

**4. Staff meeting:** none

**5. Old business:** none

**6. Public forum:** none

**7. New business:** 18 State Street and 25 Water Street are both coming before the SHDC. The SHC should weigh in and advise on the history of the buildings and provide support. The SHDC and HDC went on a joint site visit to 25 Water Street, and afterwards they walked around the outside of **18 State Street** where they could without trespassing. There is a hole in the roof that the preservation consultant believes was intentionally placed to hasten deterioration of the building. At this point the building inspector doesn't want anyone going in the building. Lisa mentioned that other towns use drones to inspect the interiors of buildings in these situations.

At this point member of the public Jim Webb addressed the commission regarding 18 State Street. He owns the properties at 19 State Street and 33 Church Street. He had a glass factory era house on his property for which he obtained a demolition permit. He stated that the shingles missing from the roof were blown off in a storm and the previous owner didn't want to complete the repair, and that the hole in the roof was chewed by racoons. He believes 18 State should be demolished.



Regarding **25 Water Street**, the preservation consultant feels that the house retains a great deal of historic material and should be saved. Right now the house doesn't show well, and those issues should be corrected. He feels the price is about right based on the amount and location of the land. The realtor has shown it many times with no success. The possibility of moving the house was also discussed.

The SHC will send a letter to the SHDC regarding 18 State Street with historic information about the house and a request to have a historic preservation consultant visit. If it is not possible to go inside, request a drone inspection. This house is part of a streetscape in a factory village, and should be preserved as contributing to that streetscape.

The SHC will send a letter to the SHDC regarding 25 Water Street with a history of the house and information about its architectural style; they already have the preservation consultant's report.

What happens if the demolition permits are denied? There are plenty of historic houses in town that could have been demolished, but were saved instead. How can these two houses be saved as well?

The SHDC does have the power to delay a decision and ask that the homeowner try and sell the houses at a more competitive price for one year. It was felt that the SHC and SHDC need more tools to address these issues. More funding is needed for preservation consultants and structural engineers to look at these properties. A Minimum Maintenance bylaw and/or a Demolition by Neglect bylaw might also be useful (both discussed later in the meeting). The Abandoned Housing Initiative may also come into play in certain scenarios. Situations in which homeowners can't afford to make repairs were also discussed. The SHC agreed to have a subcommittee made up of Ellen and Julia work on researching possible ways to make progress in preventing houses from falling into disrepair and becoming demolition candidates.

As part of the tools the town might adopt to address the demolition of historic homes, the SHC discussed two bylaw possibilities. **Demolition by Neglect bylaw** – this is different than the Demolition Delay bylaw that failed at Town Meeting several years ago. Demolition by Neglect addresses situations in which homeowners stop maintaining their house. Building Inspector had more tools where he can enforce building maintenance. The town might also consider a Minimum Maintenance bylaw – Sandwich doesn't have this and the building inspector doesn't have the authority to require these repairs. To adopt each of these, the town would need to commit to historic preservation to preserve community character. We need to protect those assets that make Sandwich different from other places. Each of these would need to go through the Planning Board, Zoning, etc.

**Sandwich Boardwalk:** Ray Howland from Friends of the Sandwich Boardwalk sent Lisa information he received from a consultant, regarding designating the boardwalk as a cultural landscape. It was recommended that they check with the Cultural Landscape Foundation in Washington, D.C. as well.

**8: Other business not anticipated by the Chair:** Carolyn noticed that in the Sandwich Town Report the Greenville-Forestdale Schoolhouse on Route 130 is referred to as "The Little Red Schoolhouse." This is an incorrect name for this building and she asked the town to change it.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Y. Madden