

TOWN CLERK
TOWN OF SANDWICH

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Minutes of the Sandwich Historical Commission

August 4, 2021

Members present: Lisa Hassler (Chair, LH), Bill Daley (BD), Matt Schimmel (MS), Julia Blakely (JB), Brenda Kelly (BK), Maria Nye (MN).

Member of the public present: Randy Harrelson, Leanne Drake

Call to order: LH called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

1. **Review and approval of minutes:** the July minutes were unanimously approved as written.
2. **Correspondence/statements/announcements:** LH mentioned that the demolition of the boardwalk was appealed and the hearing with the regional Historic District committee was scheduled for mid-August. LH wrote a letter to the chair of the Sandwich Historic District Committee that summarized the history of the boardwalk and historical preservation assessments. LH mentioned that because the town will need federal permits/funding, the Army Corps of Engineers will conduct a Section 106 review. This review allows for the local historical commission to comment. BD made a motion to approve the letter as written, seconded by BK, unanimously approved.
3. **Public forum:** none
4. **New Business:**

Quaker Meeting House preservation work - Randy Harrelson and a guest from the Quaker Meetinghouse discussed their preservation work at the structure. He noted that it's all being done in compliance with Secretary of the Interior's standards for historic preservation. Randy shared a historic photo to show how little the structure has changed over the years. Randy also shared that the structure was built in Maine and then constructed on the present site using old growth lumber. They have been making minor repairs to the trim and the roof is being replaced. BD made a motion to approve of the work and release the Community Preservation Funds that were previously approved for the project, but were on hold pending the completion of the preservation restriction. Motion was seconded by MN, unanimously approved. The members of the historical commission will need to visit the planning office to sign the preservation restriction.



Sandwich history – BD gave a history about the Liberty Pole. On Monday, September 26, 1775 Patriots erected a Liberty Pole, probably somewhere near the home of Melatiah Bourne who had given the timber for the pole. A few days later word arrived that the Sandwich Liberty Pole had been cut down. Twenty-two Patriots were immediately sent to Sandwich to apprehend the perpetrators. Three were captured and forced to help re-erect the Sandwich Liberty Pole. On the evening of October 5, Dr. Freeman, who lived near the Old Town Sandwich Burial Ground, received a somewhat suspicious message that a patient required his attendance. He set out on foot and passing by the Newcomb Tavern on his return he was severely beaten by six men, all Tories, and bleeding about the head from a long cut he was rescued by friends and carried home. Because the culprits were in danger of being lynched, they were immediately tried, fined, and released, but with mob violence against them still threatening, several leading citizens of Sandwich had them re-arrested and brought to the Sandwich Liberty Pole where Dr. Freeman's assailants signed a confession, and the danger of mob violence subsided.

Preservation awards – BK suggested the idea of resurrecting the Preservation Awards ceremony. She said that quite a lot of good preservation work on old homes occurred during the pandemic. Members discussed potential logistics, funding sources for awards and event, etc. BK will do some research and put it on as a future agenda item.

Historic Markers – BD received a request for a historic home marker from 5 School Street, which his research shows has been moved 3 times, Once from the Peters Pond area, then again from Water Street, and then finally to School Street. BD will present the marker for formal approval next meeting.

Sharing info from HDC Agenda – BK suggested that she only research the agenda to share information on demolitions older than 75 years and use her discretion to share information on others, such as significant alterations to homes older than 75 years old. The members agreed that this approach made more sense.

5. Old Business:

Demo by Neglect by-law – Julia shared a draft zoning ordinance to encourage affirmative maintenance for historic preservation. This was modeled after a similar ordinance used in Stockbridge, MA. The members discussed some potential language changes and potential consequences of the ordinance. Leanne Drake from the Planning Office was also in attendance and brief the members on the process to get a zoning bylaw approved.

Historic Preservation Tax Incentives – Julia also shared a draft proposal for a tax incentive that would help save historic properties in town. Members discussed the merits of such an approach and talked about other communities and states that use a similar approach.

Visitor Service Board Grants – BD discussed whether the commission should pursue additional funding from the Visitor Services Board to fund annual expenses incurred by the commission, or whether we should request annual funding directly from the town. Members discussed how previous efforts to secure funding from the town have failed.

6. Public Forum: None

7. Other Business Not Anticipated by the Chair:

BK gave a status update on a historic home on Main/Grove Street that has been neglected because of a previous zoning disagreement with the town. BK stated that the owner's son has indicated that he is interested in improving the condition of the home.

The meeting was adjourned at 7: 54pm.