

Minutes of Nantucket Historical Commission Meeting – May 21th, 2021

Establishment of Quorum

Commissioners Present: Hillary Rayport (Chair), Angus Macleod (Vice Chair), David Silver (Secretary) Mickey Rowland, Georgia Raysman, Susan Handy, Clement Durkes, Tom Montgomery and Holly Backus (staff).

Guests: Kimberly Rose, Sarah McLane, Rita Carr and Dawn Hill Holdgate

The meeting was called to order with a quorum present.

3.) Public Comment: none

Motion to approve minutes of April 16th, 2021 Meeting: Tom

Second: Angus

All in favor via roll call

4. Announcements

Arthur Cooper Monument: unveiling of the Arthur Cooper memorial will take place at 4 pm on August 12th.

Preservation Exhibit and Symposium: Press Release is in the packet. We will also be on the SB's agenda to let them know that this will be happening. There will be participation from all of the Preservation groups on Nantucket. Holly is our representative from the HDC. She will update them at their next meeting so that they are informed as well.

Survey Grant RFP: Holly participated in the Local Project Coordinators' workshop for all recipients of MHC survey grants. Hillary joined for a portion of the meeting. MHC presented the process and requirements for a successful execution. RFP will go out in July.

2 Mayflower Circle: We decided in our last meeting that we would write a letter in support of the project. The letter was drafted and sent to MHC (in packet).

In-person Meetings: State of emergency will be lifted on June 15th. It is possible that remote meetings will continue. It's unclear if, should we have to meet physically in June, the town will have meeting space available. We will monitor the situation.

5.) Protecting Historic Pavement

Kim Rose: Co-director of the pavement study downtown funded by CPC funds (joint NPT and PIN project).

Summary: A team of students will be on Nantucket this summer. Looking at the materials, condition and assessment of integrity. They are looking for input from the NHC before they define their mission/finalize project plan.

Scope of Work:

- 1.) They want to focus on most sensitive areas. Create maps of historic streets and historic sections. The streetscape data will be integrated with interiors data. Ratings for pavement on a 1-3 scale. Identification of missing bricks, sections of sidewalks where roots have disrupted sidewalk. They will use laser scanners as well as photogrammetry. This is for the town and the GIS. Orthographic images will help assess condition as well.
- 2.) Identify streets that are threatened by work, or historically sensitive will be. Archival research to determine the evolution of streets (changes in materials, methods, etc.). Prepare a summary and timeline of those findings.
- 3.) Two Workshops to present the outcomes of the survey and research. Preliminary thoughts of rehabilitation/preservation and different standards of treatment. Second workshop will be a presentation of the draft. Recommendations and priorities will be developed between August and October. We will provide feedback along the way.

Questions/Comments:

Policy from DPW: We are waiting for a policy/standards of treatment for historic pavement from the town. We hope it will reflect our standards of treatment and process as outlined in the booklet we produced. Holly will be working with the DPW on this, and we look forward to reviewing the policy. Kim's team will be reaching out to the DPW as part of this project.

Hillary recommended the project team meet with the Roads and Rights of Way Committee. They are a stakeholder on this project and know the sidewalks very well. We would like to see Kim present to them as well to inform them of the project. Kim agreed to present and Holly will coordinate.

6.) Stantec Report

Rob McNeil received the SGH preservation engineering study and forwarded to Stantec, the global engineering firm whom the town has engaged as a consultant on sidewalk projects and AAB compliance. Stantec commented on the report.

Hillary said that there are two important themes in Stantec's response. The first is methodology around construction of a cobblestone road. While the NHC has received advice on construction specifications and passed it on, ultimately the DPW and their advisors must settle on specifications. The second theme is identification and protection of the historic artifacts in the street. Preserving these artifacts in their location is extremely important and something the NHC will advocate for as being protected in the Nantucket National Historic Landmark. The Stantec report implies this is impractical in places.

Summary of Report:

Cobblestones: from Stantec argues the cobblestones should be set in an impervious bedding, whereas we have been advised the opposite... meaning a pervious bedding is the better methodology.

Dirty Sand: Stantec does not know how to specify the native sand. Dirty sand is a naturally occurring combination of well-graded material packed together with some coarse material that makes room for water to pass through. We want to analyze the native material and create a specification for it, and test the specification by establishing test sites and monitoring them in the field.

NHC has reached out the MA DOT Department of Cultural Resources to explore whether the DOT would sponsor a research study on this topic. Waiting to see if they will take an interest.

Stantec points to work on brick crosswalks that has held up for three years. But this does not indicate whether or not a cobblestone road specification will last for 30 years.

Curbs: Stantec disagrees that there should be a sacrificial barrier between the concrete and the curb.

Agrees restoration and rehabilitation of streets should be done in congruence with the streets and the sidewalks/curbing, but points to areas on Main Street where the historic curbs will not be able to be reused, because the street level is too low.

Comments: A non-pervious Main Street contributes to storm water problems. Maybe the Conservation Commission could get involved and get behind the idea of using a pervious surface. Stantec will likely continue to defend their work, but the NHC wants to have an open-minded dialogue with all of the stakeholders to determine the best specification. The best way to do this may be to try test sites with different methods/materials.

Easy Street Road Work – Comments:

Land Bank is doing work on Easy Street to install a park before the stop sign at Steamboat Wharf. Angus and Clement joined Rob McNeil on a site visit several months ago. He ensured the Commissioners in attendance that the bricks and curbs would be re-used.

Clement, Tom and Angus reported that now that the work is almost complete, many of the bricks appear to be new, and the curbing has been replaced with new granite along the Land Bank park. Commission was told that it would be replaced with the materials were there.

7.) 6 Gull Island Historic Tax Credit Application

Summary: Sarah McLane (owner of 6 Gull Island) is hoping to use state and federal funds for her project in restoring the property. Because it is an extensive restoration, federal tax credits may be available. She is working with a consultant to help her gather some preliminary information about her project and the application process. The Commission reviewed the project

plan and had a productive discussion regarding the work/how we can assist in moving the application along.

Commentary and Concerns: A rear L was removed in 2017 per HDC approval, but the advising consultant (Epsilon) is concerned that because the project is ‘underway’, the tax credit application process may prove to be challenging. Will the state look favorably upon this project despite the fact that work has begun? How can we gage the state’s temperature on this project? Sarah will be submitting the application with the HDC for the letter of historic determination. Would it be helpful to have a letter from the NHC, at that point, supporting the determination?

The interior condition of the building has been meticulously documented. All the contributing features have been identified and documented. All of the plaster is original and will stay. Rooms/floor plan will remain. An 1830’s mantle has been restored. All of the doors and transom windows will stay. Floors were taken up, mapped and will be replaced in kind. A small dormer in the rear stair is one of the few changes to the interior. Finishes are the same. Chimney mantles are the same. Bricks are all there. Everything has been documented, properly stored or have remained at the property.

Sarah told the Commission that she has decided to prepare the application for tax credits, regardless of the uncertainty around the MHC’s determination. Sara will share the application with the NHC for a letter of support at that time.

8.) Historic Tax Credit Course for Realtors

Hillary and David are leading this project. Realtors have to take 12 credits every two years. We hope NAREB will choose to offer a MA RE licensing board approved course on ‘selling historic homes’ in the fall. Hillary spoke with licensed trainer Anita Hill, who also serves on the state subcommittee on education, and that they recently updated the course of ‘selling historic homes – she will share the draft outline next week.

Idea is NHC could work with Anita and NAREB to customize the course for Nantucket, with local speakers. We would like to put together a panel of people who have used tax credits on Nantucket and invite NPT to talk about architectural history. There are a lot of exciting possibilities. Dawn will reach out to Marion Connely, who coordinates NAREB education, for us to encourage more preliminary conversations.

9.) WPI Project Proposal

Hillary put together a project summary with a list of goals. We left it somewhat open-ended so that the students can make this project their own. We also listed various questions that we want to see the students delve into; however, they will decide which questions they ultimately want to answer.

Motion to accept drafted proposal: Angus

Second: Georgia

All in favor via roll call

10.) Sewer Force Main #3

Meeting on June 4th to hear from Sewer Department and their engineers regarding the sewer force main project. This project will affect historically sensitive areas, so this meeting/review is highly important.

11.) ATM Article Discussion

Discussion: The Commission discussed the different articles regarding relevance to historical concern. The Commission found it appropriate to comment on relevant citizens warrants.

Planning Board sponsored article to ban on pools on lots under 7500 square feet in a number of zoning districts: The HDC will accept or require a tall hedge or berm as screening for pools, which can be the only way for a homeowner to hide a pool on a very small lot in a densely populated neighborhood. With an increase in pools comes an increase in screening. The NHC feels that that berms and tall non-native hedges in the areas outside of town affect the views, terrain and character of neighborhoods, which is part of the cultural landscape of Nantucket Island. Holly Backus remarked that the HDC struggles with this as well.

The Commission wrote a letter to the Select Board last year, in support of this article. The commission found it continued to support the article, finds it to be of historical concern, and will comment via a letter in support to the Inky.

Article 82: Minimizing signs

The Commission has already deliberated and decided to support this article.

Roundabout Article: Dawn Hill Holdgate asked if the NHC would like to comment on the citizens warrant opposing roundabouts within a certain proximity to schools. The Commission discussed that traffic control is not directly of historic concern, but we should make the community aware of our paper in support of mini-roundabouts.

Article 90: Limitation on short term rentals. Some individual commissioners said they believe investor owned short term rentals put pressure on historic structures and island character. Overall, there was not support for this article being of historical concern.

Proposal: *Write a letter to the editor that we will comment on articles that are of historic concern (pools, roundabouts, road signs)*

So moved: Georgia

Second: David

All in favor via roll call

12.) Other Business:

Outreach to builders, people of color and other residents to encourage an application for alternate commissioner, to take the seat vacated by Don DeMichelle. All three incumbents will be re-applying for their seat as commissioner, and the Commission supports their reappointment.

~Meeting adjourned~