

Minutes of Nantucket Historical Commission Meeting – February 19th, 2021

Establishment of Quorum

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

Guests: Vince Murphy, Mary Longacre and Trevor Johnson

The meeting was called to order with a quorum present.

3.) Public Comment: N/A

Motion to accept the 3 sets of minutes of the NHC: Tom

Second: angus

All in favor via roll call

4.) Announcements

HDC reviewed draft guidelines for ‘Resilient Nantucket’. The NHC can attend next week’s meeting, and our participation would be appreciated. Once guidelines are accepted, we will be living under those parameters, and therefore our comment/participation is important.

Vineyard Wind: New presidency and new administration at Vineyard Wind. They have released their general comment to BOAM. We will be part of the consultation process with Vineyard Wind and any new stakeholders/companies that enter the fold. The Commissions’ goal is to mitigate adverse effect, and continue to exercise our due diligence.

Update: The review process has taken so long that the technology has advanced enough where they need to “restart” the process. Since they can use less turbines and it was enough of a material change, they need to revisit the proposal.

5.) Discussion with Coastal Resiliency Consultant ARCADIS

About ARCADIS: An international consulting firm hired by the Town to lead the Coastal Resiliency process that specializes in water management.

Discussion: The Natural Resource Department (NRD) has requested funds to update both Madaket and Nantucket Harbor next year. This is an important tool for Nantucket to direct development activity on coastal properties. One of the ideas that resonated with the Commission is what will happen with the current ‘public’ parking lot (Washington Street). Impermeable, hard surface used for parking. With the power of a municipal harbor plan, and as development continues, we want to focus on the sensitive coastal areas that serve the public, especially in the historic district.

Concerns: A lot of this planning is happening in the off-season, but we want to be sure to reach seasonal residents who may not be paying attention to this. A lot of the people who own vulnerable properties are often seasonal residents.

Vincent: CRAC and ARCADIS have an app called IRYS. IRYS is a platform for anyone and everyone can give direct feedback on the CRP (Coastal Resiliency Plan). The app operates 24/7, so comments can be made at any time.

Important Next Steps: Creation of updated Municipal Harbor Plan (MHP) for Downtown and Madaket Harbor. We want to take a closer look at the build environment and the specific proposals to combat sea level rise. We are hoping for a collaborative, island-wide policy rather than leaving each homeowner to their own devices. We also want to take a closer look at roadways in these sensitive areas as well.

Additional Thoughts/Comments: Is there a permanent solution, temporary, band-aid? Thinking about this issue in regard to time - how do we acknowledge the essence of what we are trying to preserve? If we have interventions that sacrifice the feeling of the town, we have not achieved our goals as a Preservation Planning Commission. How do lifted homes in historic areas effect the integrity and character of the Historic District as a whole?

6.) MHC Survey Grant Application

Terrific news, we got everything off as planned. It was not easy, but Holly got it done. Special thanks to Holly. It made it to MHC on time and our grant is being considered.

We have to go through an RFP process which is governed by procurement law. We need as much time as possible because the work needs to be completed in a single year. We have been accepted into this round of funding as a CLG – awesome news!

For the preparation of the RFP, we will need to consider the scope of the grant since we are doing a survey plan as well as a neighborhood study (Fish Lots).

Request that Holly try to have a draft of the RFP for the Commission to review on 3.19 (next meeting).

7.) 2021 Objectives and Key Results

Goals:

- 1.) Increase protection of historic resources by Town Admin and other elected officials
- 2.) Increase support for preservation among key associations (Builders, RE Agents, etc.) and the broadly defined public.

Discussion and Ideas: Buildings from the 50's, 60's and 70's are more likely to be demolished. How do we evaluate what's worth saving? We need a theoretical framework – some of these homes are culturally and architecturally important and others aren't. Nantucket's period of historical significance extends until 1975 – what does that mean as far as evaluating these homes?

Re-use and sustainability: The Commission had a discussion about the curatorial model of preservation vs. the livability and sustainability model of preservation. Some of the more recent

old homes might be preferably preserved for reuse. And, historic interiors – if they are going to be ripped out, can we find a way for historic building material and interiors to be re-used and recycled? (18th century mantles and doorways, for example). A salvage location for buildings material? Could we promote an effort to find a way to re-use these materials, rather than dispose of them?

The Chair requested the Commission consider whether the NHC should put some work into sustainability and building reuse. Response from Commission was yes – this should be an area of work.

‘Madaket Mall for Builders’: suggestion from Tom M.

Working with ‘Sustainable Nantucket’ Susan Handy’s suggestion

Mary Bergman: Supports this idea. Case Studies/Thoughts to consider

- a. ‘Repurpose Savannah: deconstruct instead of demolish.
- b. ‘Deconstruction Ordinance’ in Portland, Oregon.
- c. HDC deny demolitions of historic buildings.
- d. ‘Deconstruction Process Guidelines’ would be appropriate for Nantucket.

Mary Longacre: Challenge for builders to re-use materials unless the owner makes it part of the project. Real Estate Professionals can also assist in this education process.

Hillary: According to a builder I spoke with who is interested in this topic, there used to be much more interest in re-using materials for tax credit purposes. They were not able to take as big of a deduction. IRS started to look at these more closely and issued several audits. Removal of tax deduction, it was the removal of the financial incentive. Owners, in-turn were less likely to re-use materials.

Lexington Case Study: Lexington, MA has put forward a home rule petition for consideration at their Town Meeting. It is a surcharge on demolitions. It is an issue of housing affordability. Fee would fund additional affordable housing in Lexington. We could advocate for something like this on Nantucket. These are creative ways to achieve these goals and financial incentives might be a great place to start.

WPI Students could do this research. We need technical aspects researched. It is a big project and we hope to have a student-led team to explore some options as to how they could help. We need collaboration on this from several groups. Can look into architectural salvage.

8.) Section 106 Review

The NHC has a long way to go. To get to a process where the local HC is able to comment on state and federally funded projects. There is a lack of awareness among Town project managers about the reasons for Section 106 review and even its existence. We have made specific requests to be part of process and have not been adequately briefed on some of these issues. The Commission agrees that this is straight forward. Any information project managers send to the MHC, should be copied to the NHC. There is going to be an education process to get all of the

different folks (airport, planning, sewer, transportation planner, planning commission) We want these projects to come to us at the same time that MHC reviews things. There is a model bylaw developed by the MHC that some towns have adopted – similar to the local bylaw we have about wetlands. This might be an option if we can't get cooperation.

9.) 'Complete Streets project on Sparks Ave, Pleasant and Williams Streets.

Mickey Rowland updated the NHC about the review of this project. Hillary, Ben, and Mickey met to discuss. Mickey read a letter summarizing NHC comments proposed to send to the MHC (letter is in the packet). Priorities are protecting and retaining curbing from 1830 – 1970 and Protecting the rural and distinctive qualities of the road (landscaping, native plants/trees, curbing, street artifacts). The proposed path along ivy path is particular sensitive due to its' rural setting. At ivy patch we would like to drop sidewalk to natural grade and wind through existing trees.

Dick Phelan joined the conversation, reviewed the structure of his property along Pleasant Street. Also that the "Ivy Patch" used to be a meticulously maintained garden. The family is united in the fact that safety is important and all agree that a sidewalk is important. But they don't know how the town would construct it. They like Mickey's idea of having the walk stay at grade – he is concerned that any grading through the property would damage remaining trees. It's not a simple solution to just cut down the trees and put a sidewalk in. He would like to see a permeable surface, and not asphalt. In summary, they are for a sidewalk. He is personally not in favor of cutting down the trees on Pleasant Street – it's important to try to restore and maintain those trees. It's a special area.

Members of the Commission thanked the Phelan's for the preservation of their beautiful property as open space.

Holly Backus asked about what surface would be appropriate for the sidewalk on Pleasant Street. The Chair recommended that the recommendation for something other than asphalt stand and that the Town engage with the property owners (the Phelans) to work out a surface that would be appropriate. Mr. Phelan commented that he does not want asphalt but would be fine with other surfaces including dirt.

We have a placeholder in the letter to add information about the historic properties to the letter.

Angus made a motion to approve the letter to the MHC with additions about historic properties added. Tom seconded, and all were in favor via roll call.

Chair asked the Phelan family what they would like for next steps. Dick Phelan said he thought they would have more contact from the Director of the DPW and did have a couple discussions some time ago, but Rob McNeil has not reached out recently. The family would like to be more involved in the discussion. Mr. Phelan said he would like to get members of the Phelan family to continue to talk with the Historical Commission about what the path on their property could look like.

The Chair spoke a bit about the importance of review from a historical and aesthetic perspective. She shared pictures of goose pond before the construction of the bike path, and

that the pond looks much worse now, with a steel sheeting edge. The discussion about the bike path when it happened was fraught. The NHC got a black eye. But, looking back, the NHC was right and its unfortunate that the pond could not have been more sensitively preserved and also achieve a bike path. Tom, Georgia, David, and Susan also opined that the pond looks worse now and it was a shame that there could not have been more success with the way the path was created. Susan shared that it is extremely difficult to influence these projects when they have momentum – so it's important to be vocal early. Our challenge on Nantucket is how to we update infrastructure so it's stable and accessible but doesn't lose its aesthetic value and historic character.

10.) Sewer Main Project.

We have plans reviewed for the Sewer Force Main from Vesper our Surfside. There is an archeological review completed by Richard Grubb. We have the report and it is unlikely that we will have any other comment except to ensure that the large Elm tree by the high school is not going to be damaged. Susan Handy will review the archaeological report and comment if she has any comment.

Question remains about the in-town work. The excavation going on on North Liberty is not part of the sewer project – that is a water project. The rest of the sewer project is from Sea Street out to Vesper Lane. Holly said she has not seen the plans – only the conceptual layout. Holly has let the engineers (Weston and Sampson) know that the NHC will need to review any disturbance. The phase II (in town) part of the plans are at 60% now and they will come to the Commission and the engineer has confirmed that they will discuss this with the Commission and it will need to be reviewed by the MHC. The Chair asked again if we can be confident that anything that is sent to the MHC will also be sent to Holly and copied to the Commission. Holly said that was something that we can expect.

The Chair summarized that for the sewer project from Vesper our Surfside, the NHC will send comments to the MHC which might be “no additional concerns” and that she would communicate with Susan and Holly about these comments. Tom moved this motion, Clement seconded, and all were in favor by rollcall.

The Chair also summarized that we would work with Weston and Sampson about comment on the in-town portion of the sewer force main work.

11.) Sidewalks Downtown: The Select Board asked for a policy in April of 2019. How long should a policy take to come up with? They said they were going to do it and they haven't done it. There is a draft letter in the packet with 26 letters of support and the Chair would like to know if the Commission would like to send it. Clement and Georgia commented that the letter was very good and the Select Board should pay attention to this. Tom, Angus, and David all agreed.

Resolved: send letter to SB with attached 26 letters from concerned island residents.

Question about street furniture. The Town manager has asked for a policy about street furniture. Hillary told the Commission that she had volunteered to organize a work group to discuss this.

The work group includes Janet Schulte, Henry Terry, Ken Beaugrand, Kevin Kuester. Question is would the Historical Commission like to comment on the recommendations to be adopted by the Town Manager. Angus, Holly, and other commissioners commented that the NHC should weigh in on any policy about street furniture that is developed.

11.) Preservation Month 2022: History of Preservation on Nantucket Exhibit

This is being led by Esta-Lee. James Russell has suggested hiring a curator/academic from Boston or Philadelphia (or other historically sensitive communities). A contemporary take on what Preservation is on Nantucket now, and what will it look like it 50 years. Follow-up discussion will take place with working group for the exhibit. Clement endorsed the idea of hiring an outsider for a fresh look. Angus also liked the idea and thought it would help with the appeal to a wider audience and an impartial view. Susan, David, and Clement agreed.

12.) Other Business

- a. Future meeting dates (March 19th)
- b. Appointments – three positions expiring in June 2021 – please review and remember that you will all reapply. If you don't wish to serve another term please let the Chair know. In the interest to raise volunteer involvement, the Chair asked if we might wish to have a volunteer fair or some kind of information session to know how to get involved. Also to attract newcomers and people of color. Georgia asked about an op-ed piece. Discussion of an event. Angus thought it was a good idea to raise awareness and have an event. Clement suggested that if there was going to be an event it would be better to have it for all the boards and commissions. People don't understand how to volunteer. Suggested talking to Ann Scott at the atheneum about hosting it. Vince suggested that an ad in the paper would be a minimum of \$500.00 and there is no budget for that. There is potential benefit to a volunteer session but there are 55 boards and commissions and it would be hard to include everyone. Also if you had to have a posting for an open meeting would be a problem. The Chair asked if anyone was opposed to organizing something like this. All were supportive.

Motion to adjourn: Angus

Second: Georgia

All in favor via roll call

~meeting adjourned~