

Dighton Historical Commission
1111 Somerset Ave
Hybrid Meeting – Old Town Hall and Zoom
Minutes of April 11, 2023 Meeting
6:00 PM

Present: Pat Gales, Pat Olsen, Rafa Delfin, Irene Allie, Ron Smith and Dave Marvill

1. Call Meeting to Order at 6:04 PM
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Secretary's Report
 - Minutes of March 14, 2023
Motion to accept the minutes as amended/submitted. Moved by Olsen. Seconded by Smith. All in favor.
4. Budget
 - FY 23 Budget balance/expenses -Invoice for \$18.99 paid leaving balance of 1387.91
 - FY24 Budget - Gales met with the BOS and the Finance committee on March 28. No questions about the submitted budget.
5. Unfinished Business
 - Discuss/Review James Briggs Garden sign – Gales said that Bristol Plymouth Regional Technical Highschool (BP) has finished the sign and it is now at the Building Inspector Jim Aguiar's office. Aguiar and Highway Superintendent Tom Ferry will work on getting it installed. Gales met with Jenna Monteiro regarding location of the sign: it will go outside the garden to the right of the gate. Even if people are not inside the garden, they can see the sign. Waiting for invoice from BP for materials.
 - Nat Crane House Memorial – we will continue working on the information needed regarding property owners and family history. Gales has some information from DHS (Dighton Historical Society) regarding previous ownership of the house. It seems that Nat Crane's family is from Berkley but Gales will have to do more genealogy research to make sure it is correct. There was also a Crane shipyard out of Berkeley. Crane's biggest claim to fame was that his ship with Stout George Briggs was in Cuba when the latter had his cudgel and went after the British soldiers who wanted to imprison him.
 - 2120 Water Street – No change in status, though Gales suggested if we could find a listing of people that do historic building salvage; she asked Ron Smith if he could find a listing.
 - Review/Discuss/ Act Historical Commission 50th
 - Mass History Commons – Revolutionary Commemoration in Your Town. Gales found out that the Heritage Committee was formed in 1964 and consisted of Elaine Varley, Helen Lane, Charles Harris, Martha Campbell and Helen Brown. During the 1973 Town Meeting on the motion of Helen Brown, they established the Historical Commission under Chapter 40 Section 8D general laws to consist of seven members appointed by the Selectmen. Delfin said that he will start looking into past annual town reports to see the commission's first original members and the commission's accomplishments in the last 50 years. Delfin proposed that the town bury a time capsule to be opened 50 years from now; the size and the contents of the capsule will be determined later as well as its burial place; who will be responsible for opening the capsule 50 years from now; the contents must reflect things (positive and negative) that have happened in Dighton in 2023.
6. Preservation Planning
 - Discuss/Review/Act - Area Forms – Stacy Spies updated the area forms for three Dighton areas that have the potential of becoming national historic

districts - Brick Area, Lower Four Corners and South Dighton Village. These forms have to be submitted to the Mass. Historical Commission (MHC) for evaluation; submission is free, but it will cost when we start applying for national historic register. Gales will reach out to Ben Haley of MHC and ask him about the cost of submitting a form once MHC determines that a district is eligible for the national register of historic places. Delfin asked if we could send letters to the property owners asking them if they want their properties to be part of a historic district; Gales said that MHC has to determine first if the area is eligible before we can engage the property owners. Olsen, and Smith thought it was a good idea to start with the Lower Four Corners.

- Motion by Ron Smith to submit the area form for the Lower Four Corners to MHC as the “trial balloon.” Seconded by Olsen. All in favor except Allie. Gales suggested that the second form we submit is the South Dighton Village, whereas the Brick Area will be the third. Gales sent copies of the forms to the Assessor’s office, to the archival department of the Town Hall, to the Public Library and the Planning Board.
- Discuss/Review Community-wide Survey Update – Phase 2 (Mount Hope and North Dighton). We received a request from Stacy Spies to extend the contract to September 1st; per TA Michael Mullen, we can extend the contract. The draft forms for Phase 1 will be done June 30th and the ones for Phase 2 will be done by July 28th. The deadline for all final products is September 1st.
- Historical Markers – Delfin said that we received a marker application from the Standish House located at 28 Center Street and owned by Bristol Aggie (Bristol Country Agricultural High School). Motion by Delfin to approve the historical marker application for the Standish House. Seconded by Allie. All in favor.
Olsen asked if we have already approved the two pending applications for 150 and 158 Chase Streets. Delfin said more research have yet to be done because he did not find any information regarding the history of ownership of both houses. He will return to the Bristol Registry of Deeds and check the book “Grantors and Grantees.” Gales asked Delfin if he has heard back from the sign maker, Robert Peach; Delfin said no, but that he was able to find another sign maker, Honan Signs, located in Winthrop, who is charging \$125 (same price as Peach) per marker. Delfin said that Honan had made a mock-up of a marker which looks virtually similar to Peach’s design. Delfin will send an e-mail to Derek Costa, the superintendent of Bristol Aggie and contact person on the application form, to advise him that a marker for Standish House has been approved and that Delfin will hook him up with Honan Signs to arrange the payment and delivery of the marker. Ron Smith asked what the marker will look like; Delfin described the marker as it is shown on the application form. Delfin said that so far we have 8 approved markers and 2 pending ones.
- Review/Discuss/Act Segreganset Schoolhouse – several members of the Commission visited the schoolhouse on Friday, April 7, 2023, to reassess the current condition of the building. Gales spoke with Bldg. Commissioner Jim Aguiar to fix the dilapidated sign of the school house and also to install the James Briggs sign and a sign for the Town Hall. Gales said that the school house could be power-washed and painted, but there is no budget for painting. Marvill asked what kind of paint should be used; Gales said that it should be white as it was historically white. The school yard could need some sprucing up; during the visit Marvill suggested that the clean-up could be a Boy Scout project. Marvill commented that we could get volunteers to paint but then we have to be concerned with “prevailing wages”. Gales brought up the question, “What does the building need”? New windows? A new roof? When she was a Commission member, Jo Ann Racine Ferreira began asking for quotes from various contractors back in 2016 and compiled them in a folder that she handed to Delfin; Delfin will review the quotes and the work that needs to be done. Gales commented that the building is lacking ADA compliance, parking, and bathroom. Delfin said it lacks security and safety; Allie said it lacks a second egress for emergency. Smith asked what the school

house will be used for. Marvill asked what do we do with the current furniture (desks, chairs); should we do the same thing as Rehoboth's Hornbine School where we put everything back into place? Allie said that we had talked about using the school house as a community room and museum with 30 occupants (though the number should be verified per Gales). Allie said that parking is also a problem; it took us a while to get across the street because of the busy intersection. Marvill asked if we could bypass the ADA compliance; Gales said that any building open to the public should be ADA-compliant. Delfin said that every town-owned building should be ADA-compliant. Delfin said that perhaps it would be cheaper to move the school house to where James Briggs house used to stand. Smith suggested to sell the school house to someone who can turn it into a mom and pop store; Allie commented that the majority of the people would likely be upset with this idea and they would rather preserve the building. Delfin said that it is the only remaining school house owned by the town. Gales envisions the building as a living museum with school programs run by volunteers. Gales will consult with Dave Downs, the caretaker of Rehoboth's Hornbine School, to see if he could help us with our goal of rehabilitating the Segreganset School House. Marvill will also reach out to Dave Downs. Olsen said that she is very happy that someone is finally doing something with the exterior condition of the school house.

7. New Business

- Discuss/Review/Act - CPC Historical Commission Representative. Gales nominated herself. Smith also nominated himself. Allie made a motion to make Gales as the commission's representative to CPC; seconded by Delfin. Olsen made a motion to nominate Smith, but the motion failed for lack of a second. Four voted for Gales (herself, Delfin, Allie and Olsen); Smith voted for himself. Marvill could not vote because he has not been officially sworn in yet as the new member. Gales has now been elected as the Commission's representative to CPC.

The next CPC meeting is on May 18, 5-6 pm (regular meeting), 6-7pm (public meeting)

- Discuss/Review/Act – Volunteer Application of David Marvill. Marvill shared his work and volunteer experience with the town. He was involved with the Cemetery Commission, CPC and Cable Commission. Marvill's strong work background will certainly benefit the Historical Commission. Motion by Gales to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that Marvill be appointed to the Historical Commission. Moved by Smith, seconded by Allie. All in favor.
- MHC Vision Statement, Goals, and Objectives, State Historic Preservation Plan 2023-2031. MHC is looking for feedback. Gales said that she likes the program offered such as ongoing education, preservation trades programs, sustainability, documenting and more. This made Gales think about our own goals and vision. We can go to MHC's website to get ideas in preserving local history. Marvill asked if the commission members have a group e-mail; Gales said yes but we cannot deliberate via e-mail because it's against Open Meeting Laws. We can only provide information via e-mail.

8. Correspondence

- PAL report/letter – Application Notice for a permit to conduct an intensive archaeological survey for the Taunton River Trail at Sweets Knoll Park. Included in notice is a Technical Proposal by Mass DCR. Gales said she can make copies of the survey for those interested. The survey will serve as informational for DHC and we will get the final report at the end. Olsen asked if PAL is looking for anything in particular or looking to see what they can find. Gales said that they are looking to make sure that they don't disturb anything because it's a highly sensitive area for the early periods for the Native Americans.
- Email from Ken Pacheco, thanking us for his certificate of appreciation

"I would like to thank the Historical Commission for the certificate of appreciation. I enjoyed my time with the Commission and will continue to support your future goals."

9. Public Input – Dave Marvill said he's very interested in joining the Commission. Olsen commented that Stacy Spies is doing a wonderful job documenting and footnoting the forms but the personal history is a loss because she doesn't know the personal histories of things. What makes Dighton Dighton is the little stories about things and none of that is being included. Gales stated that this is where our role comes in; we can fill out a continuation sheet for more detailed stories (real, lore, legend). The name of Kelsey Murphy was brought up by Gales; Kelsey wrote a thesis on Mount Hope Finishing Company and gave a presentation in Dighton on April 22, 2018 entitled "Milliken's Mill Village: A Radical History of the Mount Hope Finishing Company." Olsen would like for Stacy to reach out to Kelsey to gather more personal stories about Mount Hope. Delfin asked if the Dighton Historical Society keeps journals of previous Dighton residents; Gales said there are some. Marvill said that he wishes there were stories about the cemeteries. Olsen mentioned the "rivalry" between North Dighton and South Dighton. Marvill briefly referenced Joseph Milliken and how he ran the mill. Olsen suggested that we interview the oldest resident of Dighton (Dorothy Perry) to find out what she remembers about the past. Allie suggested that we hand Perry a list of questions so she can prepare herself for the interview. One good way of preserving history is recording the oral histories of old residents. Smith suggested that we interview the Town Historian, Myrna Santos herself. Gales will add this continuing discussion on the preservation and memories of town on the next agenda.

10. Other

- Mass History Alliance
There will be a Conference on June 5 in Devens, MA and a virtual conference online on June 6. There might be a registration fee. More information to follow. Gales said we have money in our budget to attend conferences.
- First Baptist Church is seeking financial assistance to have its roof repaired. Ron Smith had done some research about the church which Gales will share with them. If we declare the church historically significant, it would probably attract donors. Smith said that the real "First Baptist Church" is what is now known as "West Dighton Christian Church". The Baptist Church split and somehow the "First Baptist Church" managed to walk off with the title. On the next agenda, Gales will make a motion to identify the First Baptist Church as locally significant in the history, archaeology, architecture or culture in the town of Dighton.
- Open Commission position – 2 with the appointment of David will be 1 open position
- Next Meeting Date: May 9, 2023 6 PM

11. Adjourned at 7:50 PM

Submitted by Rafa Delfin, May 1, 2023