



CITY OF GLOUCESTER
Gloucester Historical Commission
MEETING AGENDA

June 29, 2026, at 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Rose Baker Senior Center, 2nd floor conference room
6 Manuel F. Lewis Street, Gloucester, MA 01930

Join from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android: <https://gloucester-ma-gov.zoom.us/j/84446816061>

Or join via phone, US: +1 (929) 205-6099 or +1 312 626 6799. Webinar ID 844 4681 6061

<http://gloucester-ma.gov/remote-public-meetings> for instructions and guidance on how to join a remote meeting.

In attendance: Susan Morreale, Bob Whitmarsh, Tim Quinn, Maggie Debbie, Ralph Pisaturo, Julie Travers

Guests: Sandy Barry, Robin Hubbard

ADMINISTRATION

- Approval of June 1, 2026 Meeting Minutes
 - Maggie moved to approve, Julie seconded, all in favor
- Request to GHC Members by Chair to provide notice to Chair on meeting absence
 - Sending a text or email to Susan ensures that we have a quorum for the meeting.
- Election of GHC officers, candidates: Julie/Secretary; Maggie Debbie/Vice-chair; Susan/Chair
 - Bob moved to approve, Ralph seconded, all in favor
- CANCELLED July 27th GHC meeting, voted 6/1/25
- Website changes
 - Demo-Delay will be added to our website: new list of houses built before 1900, official ordinance
 - Susan updated list of Gloucester's Historic Designations on June 24, Ralph will post to website

DAR BRONZE PLAQUE Update (Susan)

- Sandy Barry attended the meeting to provide information about the proposed plaque and to field GHC questions
- Julie, Susan, and Sandy met June 10 to discuss "Land Acknowledgment" plaque; wording approved by Cheryll Toney Holley (elected Sonksq/female chief of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band), which will be placed somewhere along the Boulevard. The first and last sentences are directly from the Gloucester 400+ land acknowledgement used by the City of Gloucester. The middle sentence was added by Sandy Barry to acknowledge the work of Mary Ellen Lepionka.

Land Acknowledgment

The City of Gloucester is located on the traditional and ancestral homeland of the Pawtucket people and their neighbors the Massachusett, Nipmuc, Penacook, and Wampanoag tribes.

They followed the seasons, hunted, fished, raised families, grieved for their dead, nourished their living, shared the stories of their ancestors, and were caretakers of this land.

We recognize and honor the Native and Indigenous peoples who have lived in this territory for more than 10,000 years, are here now, and will be here for generations to come. We acknowledge our responsibility to include Native people and perspectives in our efforts to share Gloucester's history, including the painful history of their genocide and forced removal from this territory.

MARKER PLACED BY CAPE ANN CHAPTER

NATIONAL SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

- Bob made a motion to approve the plaque, Maggie seconded, all in favor

PRESERVATION RESTRICTION (Susan)

- June 23 City Council Mtg approval: Barbara Lambert, former GHC chair, for her 1640 house at 27 Vine St
 - This is the 11th Preservation Restriction for Gloucester
 - Barbara has maintained the house for 40 years; "ell" portion of the house is the most historic part.
 - The Local History Center at the library will receive a copy of the application once it is completed.

DEMOLITION DELAY

- 5/26/26 City Council approval; 31 days to process before it is official
- Website changes: add Ordinance and list of houses built before 1900
- Black Bess was completely demolished in June 2026.
- Our goal is to create a list of historical/preservation contractors that can be used when a demolition is presented for a historic house.
 - Tim Quinn will create a list of names and contact info of historic carpenters to provide to homeowners who are interested.
- Susan 5/24/26 site visit to 349 Western Ave built in 1651, currently for sale; photos on Google Drive; <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/11pzU08QG2sHggBBDw8ErlbDQGH5tUz51>
 - Bob Booth may do a site visit to determine the year it was built.
- Russell & Melissa Hobbs – researching 126 Lanesville houses city assigned built in 1900, if year of build is earlier than 1900, they will be added to Demolition Delay criteria list

HISTORIC HOUSE PLAQUES, currently 69 on Interactive map (Susan)

- New application for vote:
 - 1245 Washington St, Lanesville – Russell Hobbs 6/12 site visit determined c.1790 yr of build, Capt. John Woodbery & his wife Susanna Lane / c.1790
 - Bob made a motion to accept the wording of the plaque, Ralph seconded, all in favor
- Approved applications, orders underway:
 - 27 Vernon St (1884, John & Frances Bishop, Shipwright/Vincent Cove)
 - 12 Arlington St, Annisquam (Elias and Dorcas Griffin Davis House/ Shipwright, c1835)
 - 6 Pew Ave (Charles H. Pew, John Pew & Son Wholesale Dealers in Fish, 1883)
- Approved/completed applications delivered in May; Susan took house photos+ added to map
 - 505 Washington, 8 Highland (+ 5 Highland St + 1 High Street Place - plaques seen on houses)
 - We will look into 5 Highland Street and 1 High Street Place in the future to figure out the historic information on each building since it didn't appear in Pru Fish's files.
 - Pending application; 150 Leonard St (owner needs to complete research this summer)

2026 MACRIS UPDATES (Julie)

- Stephanie Buck is now volunteering at the Local History Center.
 - She is completing historic research on a list of 6 houses on Eastern Point that would not currently qualify for demo delay
 - Julie submitted new Macris listings to Liz King at MHC: 12 Arlington Street, 6 Pew Avenue
 - Julie will work on adding: 8 Highland Street, 505 Washington Street
- Change needed: GLO.733, 4 River Road house photo is actually the house at 14 River Road

TERCENTENARY MARKERS (Tim)

- Susan added updated historical context language to website
- Tim – to work on QR code for marker posts, size of image and affixing the signs to the post.

CPC UPDATE (Susan/Maggie)

- Susan created new handout explaining qualification criteria for CPC-funded historic projects
 - 5 designations automatically qualify an applicant as historically significant; they are found on MACRIS but being IN MACRIS is not a designation and does not qualify an applicant
 - Local Historic District
 - Local Landmark
 - MA Archaeo/Historic Landmark
 - National Historic Landmark
 - Preservation Restriction
 - Or needs GHC to verify historic significance

- Applications are due on July 1
 - 3 of the 9 applicants have the correct designation
 - 6 need to be voted on

The following 3 meet the CPA designations for historically significant (have 1+ of the 5 designations)

- **Hammond Castle (GLO.1196)** Preservation Restriction (09/14/2021); window update
- **Sawyer Free Library/Saunders House (GLO.344)** in Local Historic District (05/24/1977)
- **Schooner Adventure (GLO.922)** Nat'l Historic Landmark (04/19/1994) and Preservation Restriction (07/18/1997); Phase 3, side planking

6 GHC VOTES FOR BELOW:

- **GLO.1337 North Shore Arts: rehab work**

Statement of Historic Significance

11 Pirates Lane is significant as a rare surviving waterfront industrial building that was adaptively reused in 1922 as the permanent home of the North Shore Arts Association. The property embodies Gloucester's transition from a maritime fishing economy to an internationally recognized center for American art. For over a century it has served as a focal point for the Cape Ann art colony, preserving both the city's maritime heritage and its nationally important artistic legacy.

Bob made a motion, Maggie seconded, all in favor

- **GLO.199 Giles Chapel/Rocky Neck Cultural Ctr: front door protection, floors**

Statement of Historic Significance

The former Giles Chapel was constructed in 1877 by prominent local businessman Augustus Wonson for the Baptist Church and Sabbath School serving Rocky Neck. He named it in memory of his deceased sister, Lydia Giles, and her husband. At the time, Rocky Neck's post-Civil War population had grown enough to support both its own school and neighborhood chapel, reflecting the area's emergence as a distinct village within Gloucester. The former chapel is significant because it embodies several important themes in Gloucester's history: the development of Rocky Neck as a fishing village, nineteenth-century religious and community life, the philanthropy of the Wonson family, Carpenter Gothic architecture, and the successful preservation and adaptive reuse of a historic building that continues to serve the public as a cultural center.

Bob made a motion, Ralph seconded, all in favor

- **GLO.1420 Gloucester Stage: Phase 2 of brickwork**

Statement of Historical Significance

The Gloucester Stage/Twin Lights Garage building, built in 1915, is historically significant because it:

- Represents Gloucester's transition from the bicycle era to the automobile age and the rise of tourism on Cape Ann.
- Is an intact example of an early twentieth-century purpose-built commercial garage designed by local architect Ezra Phillips.
- Is associated with nationally important artist Stuart Davis, who immortalized the building in several paintings.
- Illustrates the adaptive reuse of a historic industrial building into a major regional cultural institution.
- Continues to serve as a prominent landmark at the entrance to East Gloucester's historic waterfront and Rocky Neck Cultural District.

Bob made a motion, Maggie seconded, all in favor

- **GLO.1055 Davis-Freeman House/Wellspring** - siding repair and replacement, restoration of period trim and decorative features, and rot repair

Statement of Historic Significance

The c.1709 Davis-Freeman House is one of the oldest and most architecturally significant properties in Gloucester. Equally important is the human history this house represents. The Freeman family, descended from Robin Freeman, a man who purchased his own freedom in Gloucester in 1769, owned and called this property home for over 100 years, from 1826 until 1931. Wellspring House has done remarkable work uncovering and sharing this once-untold story through the "History Lives Here" exhibit. The Davis-Freeman House is historically significant not only as one of Gloucester's oldest surviving homes and an outstanding example of early colonial construction, but also as a rare place where architectural history, early community development, transportation history, and African American heritage intersect. Its preservation allows visitors to understand more than three centuries of Gloucester's evolving social and cultural history.

Bob made a motion, Ralph seconded, all in favor

- **GLO.BG Manship:** barn restored – **REQUESTED GHC LETTER 6/11/25**

The Manship estate is historically significant because it:

- is the home and studio of internationally renowned sculptor Paul Manship;
- preserves an exceptionally intact early-20th-century artist's compound integrated with Gloucester's granite quarry landscape;
- represents Cape Ann's nationally important artistic community;
- documents three generations of working sculptors; and
- continues to serve as a living center for artistic creation, fulfilling its historic function while preserving an important piece of American cultural heritage.

Bob made a motion, Ralph seconded, all in favor

- **UU Cemetery:** Phase 2, structural engineer for tombs; **GHC LETTER WRITTEN APRIL 2, 2025**

Statement of Historic Significance

The Unitarian Universalist (formerly Universalist) Cemetery on Church Street in Gloucester is historically significant because it preserves the physical and cultural legacy of the first Universalist congregation in the United States, founded in 1779 by John Murray. Together with the adjacent meetinghouse, the cemetery forms one of the country's most intact surviving Universalist religious landscapes.

Bob made a motion, Tim seconded, all in favor

REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

- Central database for the city of all historic buildings
- Subcommittee proposal: Susan, Ralph, Julie
- 1900 and 1920 year of build was arbitrarily assigned, these need to be corrected
- Start with determining actual build year of 3,200 houses listed as 1900
 - Russell & Melissa Hobbs are researching 126 Lanesville houses built 1900 per city
 - Stephanie Buck working on a small list located in or near Eastern Point built 1900 per city
- Benefit, corrected for: Demo-delay list; Tax assessment records; MACRIS
- CORRECTIONS TO CITY YEAR OF BUILD: inform Tim Good of changes
- SUBMIT CHANGES/ADDITIONS TO MACRIS WHERE NEEDED: Julie
- UPDATE DEMO-DELAY LIST: Susan/Ralph to update list and keep Building Dept informed

CONSIDERATION OF A LANESVILLE/Lane's Cove NATIONAL REGISTRY DISTRICT APPLICATION (Ralph)

- June 24 meeting to discuss: Ralph, Susan, Wendy Frontiero
- Based on MACRIS GLO.K LANESVILLE CENTER, October 2016, by Wendy Frontiero + K Boomer, and based on Russell and Melissa Hobbs' Lanesville buildings research, and additional research and photos would be needed
- Several years ago, an attempt was made to designate Lanesville center as part of the National Register; met with critiques from village residents about restrictions and tourism
- Ralph explains that they are zeroing in on a smaller area of Lanesville center, which includes Lane's Cove, the Fish Shack, cemetery and a few smaller buildings surrounding that area that are publicly owned, or privately owned that Ralph will speak with directly.
 - The fish shacks, seawall, and cemetery would qualify for grants to fix them up if the National Register designation was passed.
- If successful, the hope is to expand the area over time once more people from Lanesville are on board.
- Wendy assumes that \$20,000 would be necessary for her work, which could possibly come from CPC funding for next year. Maggie will look into whether this research qualify for CPC funding.

CALENDAR: Thursday July 16, ZOOM, 7:00 pm, Wendy Frontiero; topic: Gorton's Legacy

Registration: <https://jonathanbayliss.org/event-6397589>

Newburyport Model Ship Show: July 25 - August 1, 2026; Ralph has two ships in the show

Next Meeting: MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 2026 Happy summer!

Rose Baker Senior Center, 2nd Floor conference room, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

- Begin thinking of 2027 preservation award nominees.

Susan made a motion to end the meeting at 7:45 pm, Bob seconded, all in favor.