

HYANNIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

JFK Hyannis Museum

May 4, 2024

The annual meeting of the Hyannis Historical Society was held May 4, 2024, at the JFK Hyannis Museum. Secretary Ed Maroney welcomed more than 20 attendees and thanked the museum's executive director, Wendy Northcross, for hosting the session. Mr. Maroney also thanked Hyannis Public Library Executive Director Antonia Stephens for providing the Society's meeting room there.

Approval of the minutes of the May 20, 2023, annual meeting was moved and approved.

Secretary's Report

Mr. Maroney highlighted a series of First Tuesday Open House events in the Society's meeting room at the library. Sessions were held Oct. 3, Dec. 5, Feb. 6, and March 5 (13 people attended the March event). At one meeting, the Society welcomed Cynthia Maki Kaplan, granddaughter of Dr. Charles Harris, author of the invaluable "Hyannis Sea Captains."

President Pam Brown has continued to work with the library and the town on a self-guided nautical symbols walking tour. Also, the Society was invited to participate in the making of a graphic novel about the history of Hyannis Public Library.

Donated materials were received, including Jeffrey Crocker's second edition of his comprehensive "Crocker Family Genealogical Sites in the Town of Barnstable, Massachusetts."

The Society continues to contribute a monthly column to the Hyannis Public Library newsletter (go to hyannislibrary.org to sign up). One entry reported our contacts with members of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Hyannis regarding the sale of their building. The purchaser has agreed to move part of the building to another church's campus.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Brown reported that the Society's cash balance of \$1,178 is similar to last year's, with income from dues and expenses that include the annual report filing and website costs.

New Business

Pam Brown, Ed Maroney, and John Richmond were nominated and approved for three-year terms on the board of directors.

Mr. Richmond spoke of his continuing work on a video walking tour of historic Hyannis properties. "Much of Hyannis history is about what used to be here," he said, underlining the

need for preservation efforts. He asked that members and guests share photos they may have of historic buildings, including their interiors, by sending them to [hyannishistorical@gmail.com/](mailto:hyannishistorical@gmail.com) On behalf of the Society, Mr. Richmond will screen a presentation of colored postcards of Hyannis waterfront scenes Aug. 16 at 5 p.m. at a Cape Cod Maritime Museum History on Tap evening.

Member Dominic Alessandra spoke of his decades-long labors to preserve and display the history of the village at his historic sea captain's house on Pleasant Street. He noted also the perilous state of 151 Pine Avenue, the S. Alexander Hinckley House listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Following a fire in 2023, the building, parts of which date to 1710, was boarded up and slated for demolition. The historical commission has scheduled a hearing on the matter May 21.

These remarks, and mention of concerns about the future of the unique octagonal residence, the Capt. Rodney Baxter House on South Street, provided grist for the mill of the Society's guest speaker, Ellen Briggs, founder and president of Protect Our Past. "I'm moved by your dedication to protecting the history of your area," she told the audience.

Protecting our architectural heritage has been a lifelong goal of Ms. Briggs, who grew up in a pre-Revolutionary home on the Hudson River. She spent summers in a "guest windmill built out of beams from old shipwrecks found along the coast of Cape Cod." After settling on the Cape, she and her family rescued the historic windmill her great uncle had built, moved it to his former property, and restored it.

Those were the roots of Protect Our Past, the non-profit founded by Ms. Briggs. "All around me, wonderful historic houses were being torn down," she recalled. "I said, 'That's it.'" Given her career in advertising and communications, she knew the importance of using media to highlight the problem and its solutions. POP has created a series of films and videos that capture both the beauty and the plight of the region's endangered historic homes; these can be viewed at protectourpast.org

After showing the POP film "Love Letter from Cape Cod," Ms. Briggs spoke of the need for the Cape's historical societies to work together. "I find the Cape very insular," she said. "They just don't want to cross borders."

In a question and answer session, Ms. Briggs was peppered with questions about practical applications of the principles of POP. Attendees raised concerns about the octagonal (Capt. Rodney Baxter) house on South Street in Hyannis, which Ms. Briggs said her organization has filmed from the outside. "We'd love to find a way to save it," she said. One listener volunteered to conduct a title search.

Regarding the fire-damaged Pine Avenue home, the former residence of longtime Hyannis librarian Ora Hinckley, Ms. Briggs described POP's Historic Home Evaluation Rescue Plan, through which historic preservationists and preservation architects evaluate historic homes and restoration options. She said she would contact a member of the team about visiting the house.

The speaker led a brainstorming session on ways to protect historic properties. Ideas raised included a revolving fund that could lend money to owners of historic homes at low interest rates, and a workshop on preservation tactics for historical societies Capewide.

Beyond its media efforts, said Ms. Briggs, POP is about to publish on its website a guide to historic preservation regulations on the Cape and Islands, including those proposed but not yet enacted. The hope is that communities will learn from each other.

Also forthcoming is a restoration resource catalog of tradespeople who specialize in these fields. Recommendations are welcome at info@protectourpast.org. Further, POP will publish a version of a traditional pattern book that showed 19th century builders how to create the homes that we have come to love.

After reiterating POP's mantra – “educate, educate, educate” - Ms. Briggs said, “We have a lot of work to do.”

After Ms. Brown thanked Ms. Briggs, a motion to adjourn the meeting was approved.

HYANNIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

May 4, 2024

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The meeting was called to order by President Pam Brown. In attendance also were board members Dave Doolittle, Ed Maroney, and John Richmond. Antonia Stephens was unable to attend.

Mr. Maroney nominated Ms. Brown for another one-year term as president and treasurer. The motion was seconded and approved. Ms. Brown nominated Mr. Maroney for another term as secretary, which was approved.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was approved.