

SWAMPSCOTT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
HEARING MINUTES
FINAL DETERMINATION ON GLOVER HOUSE

HEARING LOCATION: Swampscott High School/Virtual Hybrid
 Wednesday, April 12, 2023
 7:00 p.m.

<u>MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON</u>	Nancy Schultz, Jonathan Leamon, Brad Graham, Ryan Judkins, Richard Smith
1. <u>HEARING CALLED TO ORDER</u>	At 7:01 p.m., N. Schultz called to order the public hearing concerning the Commission’s final determination as to whether the Glover House (299 Salem Street) should be deemed “preferably preserved” pursuant to Art. IX, § 4(d)(3)(b) of the Town’s General By-Laws.
2. <u>COMMISSION PRESENTATION</u>	<p>N. Schultz shared presentation on the history of the property on which the Glover House sits, from its earliest inhabitants, through its occupation by General John Glover beginning in 1782, through the Athanas family’s operation of the General Glover Inn. The General Glover Inn closed in the 1990s and the building has not been in use since.</p> <p>In 2020, the Town imposed a fine on the “blighted” property, but did not collect the fine.</p> <p>In June 2022, Town Meeting approved a zoning overlay for the property and discussions began regarding the construction of a housing complex. The Commission began discussing the site with the developers and other Town boards.</p> <p>In February 2023, the Commission retained engineers to assess the original Glover House. Their assessment showed that the original structure remains, including the original chimneys and fireplaces. There is significant water and pest damage, as well as asbestos and mold present, but much of the original building is salvageable.</p>

	<p>R. Judkins provided an overview of the Commission’s mandate, the process for imposing a demolition delay, and potential for waiver of the delay if imposed.</p>
<p>3. <u>PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS, WITH COMMISSION RESPONSES</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the Commission concluded what it wants to happen with the property? N. Schultz responded that the purpose of the hearing is to get the community’s input before making any determinations. 2. Are there items/materials in the Glover House that could be salvaged or reused? R. Judkins explained that the Commission has considered that, and made the comparison to White Court. 3. Town has not maintained its oldest properties, as Salem has done, and Glover House is an opportunity to do that. N. Schultz responded that preservation costs money, but that funds could become available in connection with 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. Swampscott will need the cooperation of Salem and Marblehead. 4. Is the site developer willing to work with the Commission to preserve the Glover House? N. Schultz and R. Judkins provided an overview of productive conversations with the developer, including the developer’s willingness to create a memorial park on the property and preserve certain features, including lamp posts and a sundial. 5. Suggestion that the developer’s offers are insufficient. R. Judkins and B. Graham reiterated that the Commission needs the public’s input on additional requests to be made of the developer. 6. Members of Marblehead’s Glover Regiment spoke in favor of preserving the Glover House, and offered funds and volunteer time to do so. Members suggested: (a) requesting that Tedesco Country Club donate funds and/or land to which to move the Glover House, as the club sits on former Glover property; (b)

modifying development design to keep the Glover House on the property; (c) notifying the Commonwealth to bring the importance of General Glover and Glover House to light. Regiment would prefer complete preservation of the house on another site, as opposed to only preserving elements at 299 Salem Street. Regiment is willing to invest significant time, money, and construction/preservation knowledge, but needs assurances that the Glover House will be saved.

7. Rick Detwiller, whom the Commission retained to evaluate the Glover House, commented: (a) the house needs additional study; (b) fireplaces are “unique and irreplaceable”; (c) mold and asbestos can be abated; (d) Colonel Barrett house in Concord was in worse condition than Glover House and it was saved, although the process to several years.
8. Multiple community members raised concerns about the development generally, including increased traffic, the process for approving the development, and the failures of the Town in not preserving the Glover House. R. Judkins reiterated that the Planning Board has already approved the developer’s plan, and the developer has confirmed that it cannot keep the Glover House on the property. N. Schultz explained that the Town has had limited power to preserve the Glover House since it is private property and there is no way to stop the sale of the property to the developer; now citizens need to share their views and concerns.
9. Commission needs to raise public awareness of the Glover House and present community members with its goals for the Glover House. It was suggested that the Commission provide illustrations of potential plans on the Town website. The press needs to get involved as well.

10. Members of the Swampscott Historical Society voiced support for saving the Glover House, either at 299 Salem Street or on other land, and asked how the Commonwealth could support those efforts.
11. Debate as to whether it is preferable to keep Glover House at 299 Salem Street or move it. Issues include: (a) “historical context” is important and favors keeping the Glover House on site; (b) “historical context” is diminished by presence of large housing complex; (c) moving Glover house to a nearby location (such as Tedesco property) could maintain some historical context; (d) 299 Salem Street is private property and public will not have access to anything that is preserved on site.
12. Suggestion that the Town boards did not appreciate the significance of Glover House; focus on obtaining the Hawthorne by the Sea property allowed 299 Salem Street development to be approved.
13. Example raised of Colonial Theater in Pittsfield, which was preserved after funding was obtained through bonds. Suggestion that there are alternative sources of funding available for preservation that need to be explored.
14. Imposing demolition delay will give the Town time to explore options for funding, preservation, moving of house to another property.
15. Community members overwhelmingly expressed support for preservation. B. Graham stated that preservation is costly, the community needs to be involved, and the community needs to have a specific vision as to what “preservation” means. R. Judkins stated that Town needs to make pragmatic, realistic decisions on Glover House and reiterated the call for the public’s ideas.
16. Sam Cole, a representative of the developer, stated that the developer has

	been working with the Commission, is receptive to hearing different perspectives, and will continue discussions with the Commission and Town.
4. <u>NEXT MEETING</u>	The Commission has ten days to make a final determination as to whether the Glover House is preferably preserved and whether to impose a demolition delay. The next meeting to discuss those issues will be held virtually on April 20, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., via Teams.
	Hearing closed at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad W. Graham, Secretary
Swampscott Historical Commission