

Sandwich Historical Commission
Sandwich, MA
Agenda Notes for March 6, 2013
Lisa Hassler

Meetings:

Nov. 5th Sarah Korjeff, Cape Cod Commission, Historic Preservation Specialist

Nov. 8th, Ben Joyce, Cataumet Schoolhouse

Nov. 9th, Richard Neal, Old Schoolhouse – Chalkboard Studios

Jan 24th, The Friends of the Old Schoolhouse, Jo Ann Kelly is the main contact there [508-362-2914](tel:508-362-2914) jojolk@gis.net)

Jan 29th, Kris Fisher, Cataumet Schoolhouse Preservation Group Board, kbfisher2@verizon.net

Jan 31st, Matt Schimmel, neighbor living at Georges Rock

Feb 1st, Kevin Howard, Cape Cod Arts Foundation

Possible funding sources:

Cape Cod foundation \$5,000 or under, rolling
September for annual application

Mass Historical Commission

National Trust for Historic Preservation, matching grant \$2,000 - \$5,000, Feb 1
deadline

Mass Cultural Facilities Fund, Brick and Mortar grants – May or June deadline

Cape Cod Arts Council

Country School Association of America

Corporate donations

Private individuals

Case Study 1:

The “Old Schoolhouse” next to the Unitarian Universalist Church on 6A



Photos credited to Old Schoolhouse's website

The School was built in 1874 by Samuel Sturgis Crocker. In the 1950's it was gifted to the Church by the Town of Barnstable. It was used as a thrift shop by the Cape Cod Council of churches and was rented for a time by the Cape Cod Conservatory. In 1981 it sustained significant damage due to a fire. The building only had \$10,000 insurance. Through donations and volunteer efforts, along with the insurance money, the building was restored.

A “Friends of the Schoolhouse” group formed to assume the responsibilities of the management and upkeep of the building. Due to zoning, the use of the building was limited to a non-profit or charitable purpose

A couple of artists viewed the space in the winter of 2008 and were struck by the large windows and tall ceilings. They began renting a room to use as their art studio. 5 years later, there are approximately 12 artists who rent studio space in the building.

The schoolhouse is open to the public when the artists have an “open studio” night as well as for art classes that are offered.

The rooms rent for approx. \$450 to \$650 depending on the size of the room.

Considerations:

The building is occupied and, through the revenues of the artists, is maintained. The Friends of the School house also uses free labor in the form of Community Service Workers – (Prisoners that work for a day) to do painting and raking and other small jobs.

Supporting the arts has real economic benefits for a community. See studies:

American Planning Association: How the Arts and Culture Sector Catalyzes Economic Vitality.

<http://www.planning.org/research/arts/briefingpapers/vitality.htm>

Americans for the Arts, National Report: Arts and Economic Prosperity, The Economic Impact of Non Profit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences

http://www.artsusa.org/pdf/information_services/research/services/economic_impact/aepiii/national_report.pdf

National Governor’s Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices, Arts and the Economy, Using Arts and Culture to Stimulate State Economic Development.

<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/0901ARTSANDECONOMY.PDF>

The Friends of the Schoolhouse meets once a quarter to review new leases, treasurer’s report, electrical/plumbing, cleaning and other building maintenance concerns. Each member does work on a volunteer basis to coordinate building maintenance or address any leasing issues as needed.

This approach requires the volunteer efforts of a “Friends of” type of group which would need to step forward.

Though the establishment of an arts purpose for the building would bring economic vitality to the village in the forms of increased visitors interested in arts/culture for dining/shopping, the rents themselves would not be high – or it would be priced out of the artists' ability to pay.

Wear and tear on the building. Though the artists are respectful of the building, there will be some wear and tear on the building with this use. This model is more in keeping with an adaptive re-use of the building rather than a restoration of the buildings original interior.

Case Study 2:

The Cataumet Schoolhouse



All photos credited to the Cataumet Schoolhouse's website

The Cataumet Schoolhouse was built in 1894. By 1999, when the Cataumet Schoolhouse Preservation group was founded, it was in a very sad state of neglect. Many thought it would need to be torn down. A group of residents got together and devoted many hundreds of hours of volunteer labor, plus private donations and grant money to restore the building. They have achieved their goal of restoring the building as close as possible to its original state as a one room schoolhouse. They have purchased antique school desks and have outfitted the building with authentic pieces to foster the impression of walking back in time to when the building served the local children.

The schoolhouse now serves many functions. It hosts an antique car show and picnic, musical venues, the holiday fair, weddings, talks on local history, art shows, cookouts, and serves as home to a program that introduces third grade school children to the atmosphere and history of one room school houses.

Link to website: <http://www.cataumetschoolhouse.org/events.html>

Considerations:

The building has been restored to its original appearance and adds value to the surrounding neighborhood.

The building serves the community in a variety of ways and preserves a piece of the town's history.

Through continued fundraising events, memberships and donations, as well as volunteer work, the building is being maintained without cost to the town.

The formation of a non profit is a necessary piece to the success of this model. The volunteer organization is responsible for the maintenance and use of the building.

The antique school desks, while making the schoolhouse a more authentic experience, can be limiting to the use of the building. They require significant labor to move/remove from the building when it is to be used for uses other than the historic interpretation of the schoolhouse. This poses possible concerns for damage to the building and to the desks themselves.

Case Study 3:

The Cultural Center of Cape Cod

The Bass River Savings Bank was unoccupied for 17 years before a generous neighbor purchased the derelict building and donated it to a concerned group of citizens that had formed a non-profit with a view towards restoring the building and transforming it as a cultural center.



Photos credited to the Cultural Center of Cape Cod's website

The project was financed by various fundraising events including a founding sponsors drive. In 2006, the town of Yarmouth appropriated \$400,000 in CPC funds towards finishing the restoration work. The total cost for renovations was \$700,000, less than a third of the original estimate for the work.



Like the Sand Hill School, the former bank required extensive repairs and hazardous materials removal.

The building opened its door in 2007 as a Cultural Center and is now home to a multitude and diverse offering of events, concerts, art exhibits, plays, readings, classes and workshops for all ages.

The Center rents out gallery space from \$100 to \$300 per week depending on the room and rents out the main hall for events and weddings.

Considerations:

The main event room can hold 200 people, making it attractive for a variety of uses including weddings. The functionality is enhanced by the catering kitchen and multi-media equipment that was included in the design

The mission of the non-profit balances a very inclusive mentality – with artists/performers, who may not have made a name for themselves, that are welcomed to bring their ideas. Yet they also strive for a high level of quality in the events and workshops to encourage participation and enrollment.

The non-profit organizes the leasing and oversees the maintenance. The building is self-supporting and is in the process of expanding due to the overwhelming community interest.

Suggestions for moving forward

1. Present recommendation to the Sandwich Board of Selectmen – the Sand Hill School to be used as a cultural/arts/educational resource for Sandwich – helping to support the newly established cultural district. Request permission to move forward.
2. Obtain a preservation survey to establish the current condition and recommendations for preservation of the building – with cost estimates. This would cost approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000 and would be instrumental in applying for grant money. Applying for CPC funding to finance the study.
3. Get the word out through various media sources to enlist the aid of volunteers and benefactors.
4. Begin fundraising activities to benefit the Sand Hill School. Until a non profit is formed, this could be done under the umbrella of the Historical Commission if approved by the Board of Selectman –
5. A non-profit would need to be established to handle fundraising and grant writing as well as explore community cultural uses for the building.