

## **Heritage Commission Annual Report 2019**

2019 was the first full year of operations for the Heritage Commission, which was established by a citizen's partitioned warrant article in the March 2018 election. The HC is tasked not only with public historic sites, artifacts and cultural resources, but we also can assist private land owners with their historic sites, such as the "town pound" located across from the Old Meeting House, and many of the historic mill sites and prehistoric megalithic sites scattered throughout our town. The Commission can assist land-owners seeking resources to have any potential historic sites on their property investigated, identified, and protected. The HC became a member of the NH Preservation Alliance which will be a valuable resource for helping with project goals.

The Heritage Commission does not receive any funds from the town budget or other public funding to carry out its business, which is to research, identify, protect and preserve Sandown's historical and cultural resources. For that reason, much of this year was spent organizing fundraising events that would not only establish an operating budget, but also engage the community with fun, interactive and educational activities that featured our popular historic sites. The Commission relies solely on grant funding, matching grants, gifts and donations to cover the operating costs, which often involve fees and costs associated with applications for grant funding.

Fundraising has been a huge part of the commission's work this year in order to establish an operating budget. The commission sponsored monthly activities and special events to build those funds. Co-Chair Sue Dupouy coordinated a series of fundraising events with Bob McDermott of Paranormal NH, including two presentations and investigations at the Old Meeting House, and a first ever investigation at the old railroad depot. Mr. McDermott and his team offered their services at no charge, donating all proceeds from these events to the Heritage Fund to establish a working budget. We are very grateful to Bob McDermott, his team for giving us such a fascinating and fun way to raise funds.

Members Fran Rosenau and Sue Dupouy organized yard sale events through generous item donations from the community, which, along with Mrs. Rosenau's diligence with online yard sales, has generated a good start to some working capital. We are also thankful for the tremendous support received from our community and neighbors coming out to attend and support these events.

Some of the projects the HC has worked on throughout the year are:

Members agreed on an official logo and a banner, with member Paul Wentzell designing the graphic art for both.

**Recorded Interviews:** This project seeks to catalogue and convert old VHS tapes of video interviews with some of Sandown's respected elders, recounting their life experiences of Sandown in days gone by, giving us all a window in time to see our town through a uniquely personal historic lens. We are grateful to Sandown Cable Director

Chris Donnellan for offering his expertise and resources to convert the tapes into a more compatible digital medium for the public to view upon completion.

**The Red Barn: assessment and clean up-** The Red Barn, located near the Old Meeting House, is managed by the Conservation Commission and used for storage by many different Community groups. The HC, in coordination with the Conservation Commission, is exploring the historic value of the Red Barn to determine if it may be an eligible candidate for the Historic Registry. If so, that may open up some funding for needed repairs. HC member Fran Rosenau on behalf of the CC, applied for and received a grant through the NHDHR and Preservation Alliance to have the Red Barn assessed for its historic value, and for recommendations for needed repairs, in keeping with good conservation and preservation practices for its continued use. The “barn whisperer” Bill Coleman preformed the assessment and provided a detailed account of the history of the Barn, which was built in 1830 in the style of an English Thresher Barn, that was modified over time to accommodate the changing needs of use. A copy of the report is on file at the Town Hall. Members of the HC, CC along with other community groups participated in a cleanup of the barn to prepare for the recommended repairs, which are ongoing.

**The Hearse House-** this intriguing little building behind the Old Meeting house has a fascinating history of being built as a carriage shed for the horse drawn hearse that was used for burial services in town back in the 1800’s. Later, after the hearse became obsolete, the building was modified into an outhouse to service the Old Meeting House. The HC, with the assistance of Selectmen’s Office Assistant Paula Gulla, is submitting an application to add the Hearse House to historic registry as an addendum to the Old Meeting House since they are functionally associated with each other. The application is still pending.

**Stone Structures-** Chair Pamela Gaudreau, has been investigating and documenting the many historic stone structure sites in Sandown. Member Paul Wentzell has joined in this effort. In October, four members attended a presentation by Dr. Robert Goodby, a research Archeologist specializing in pre-colonial stone structures who recently discovered a Native American prehistoric in Keene, NH that dates back to 12,500 years ago, making it one of the oldest sites to date in North America. This is exciting news that indicates there may be other sites right here in town, that could also date back to those earliest inhabitants of prehistoric Sandown.

In February, Chair Pamela Gaudreau was invited by the Girl Scouts to give a presentation on Sandown’s early heritage and the stone sites. In October Mrs. Gaudreau was invited back to lead an educational stone structure site walk in the Fremont Rd Town Forest, showing the scouts how to recognize and identify the different types of historic stone structures in the forest.

In September Mrs. Gaudreau was contacted by Dennis Stone owner of America’s Stonehenge who expressed interest in seeing some of the Sandown Stone sites. Mrs. Gaudreau was pleased to host a “VIP” site walk on the Morrison Lane parcel with Dennis Stone, his son Kelsey, and ancient stone structure researcher and author Heather Arnold. The group contacted Mrs. Gaudreau after seeing some of her photos of the stone structures that are posted on social media. The sites appear similar to many other

prehistoric megalithic sites all over New England. The goal is to get these sites investigated, identified and recorded for conservation and preservation. Any residents that have odd standing stones or stone groupings on their properties that they'd like to have investigated, please contact Pamela Gaudreau.

Submarine Presentation- For Veteran's Day, Secretary Peter Koester, a navy submarine veteran, gave a fascinating presentation on the history of submarines. It was an amazing account loaded with historic photos, stories and recordings dating back to the very first submarine commissioned up to present day. Although the presentation was not filmed for Sandown Cable, Mr. Koester gives frequent presentations all over NH & MASS. Anyone interested in learning more about our nations submarine history can contact Mr. Koester.

The SHC is now beginning to work on compiling Sandown's Historic Resource Inventory which will document and record all of Sandown's historic and cultural resources and incorporate them collectively into the master plan. Having a thorough and detailed HRI can facilitate access to grant funding.

The SHC would like to thank the community for its support as we establish ourselves as one of the newest commissions in the state. Our regularly scheduled meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month and the public is welcome! If you would like to know more about the SHC or are interested in joining, feel free to visit our website at [sandown.us](http://sandown.us) , or visit us on FB.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pamela M Gaudreau, Chair