

Heritage Commission Annual Report 2022

Members : Pamela- Gaudreau Chair, Fran Rosenau -Co-Chair, Peter Koester- Secretary, Paul Wentzell, Sierra Dolce, and Selectman ex Officio member Robert Nickerson.

Project and Event summaries:

The Sandown Heritage Commission was established by a citizen's petition warrant article in 2018 becoming the 66th town to establish a Heritage Commission. The commission is not funded by the town budget but by donations, fundraisers and grants. The Heritage Commission continues its work to research, identify, and preserve Sandown's cultural and historical resources, sites and structures. The commission also assists other town boards and private non profit groups when needed, for projects or issues relevant to the town's historic resources. This year, for example, the commission was asked to survey several town parcels that were being considered for public auction. The commission was asked for recommendations identifying parcels which may be of historic value to the town. The Heritage Commission continues to work on compiling an inventory of Sandown's Historic Resources, which can be incorporated into the master plan. Having a thorough and detailed HRI can facilitate the processing of projects that may come before the town boards as well as access to grant funding for preservation, repairs or maintenance of our historic sites.

The Old Meeting House & Hearse House: The Old Meeting House, managed by the non profit Old Meeting House Association, under the direction of Arlene Bassett, is the jewel of Sandown's historic buildings. It is unique in and of itself, being featured on programs like NH Chronicle and hailed by many as the finest old meeting house in the nation. The Hearse House is an intriguing little building behind the Old Meeting House, 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 the building was modified into an outhouse to service the Old Meeting House. In 2020 the Heritage Commission, assisted by town administrator Paula Gulla, was able to get the Hearse House added to the National Historic Registry along with the Old Meeting House. That same year, the Meeting House grounds got a makeover with Eagle Scout Galen Walton restoring the grounds to their original splendor. In 2021 Eagle Scout Gabriel Gerhard completed his Eagle Scout project, sponsored by the Heritage Commission, to repair the Hearse House, replacing the roof, trim and clapboards on the building. There is still one last wall to complete the replacement of clapboards on which we hope to get some this year. The Heritage Commission would like to thank the Old Meeting House Association, the Eagles Scouts, Lane Roofing, Chief Joe Gordon, Kevin Majors, Dave Dupouy and all who helped with the preservation and maintenance of this special pair of historic buildings.



The Red Barn: Located near the Old Meeting House, managed by the Conservation Commission, continues to get some needed improvements. Back in 2019 the Heritage Commission's Co chair, Fran Rosenau applied for and was awarded a grant on behalf off the Conservation Commission, for an assessment performed by "barn whisperer" Bill Coleman. Based on that assessment, the barn continues to get needed improvements and repairs. The latest project this year was an Eagle Scout project by Justin Silva to construct a new cupola built. Hopefully the cupola will be installed in its rightful place on top of the barn soon. Another Scout Project sponsored by the Heritage Commission sponsored was Girl Scout Mackenzie Byron-Chaput's Gold Award project collecting over 1000 lbs of plastic bags, enough to receive two Trex Benches through the recycled "bags to benches" program. She installed the benches at the Red Barn overlooking the pond last year and this year, Pamela Gaudreau, Heritage Chair, had two plaques made for the benches, paid for by the Conservation Commission in appreciation for her service to the community.



Ancient Stone Structures and Native American ceremonial stone sites : The Heritage Commission's chair Pamela Gaudreau and member Paul Wentzell have been recording the many megalithic stone sites and their locations, collecting photographs and researching the sites. The sites have attracted the attention of other local Megalithic researchers as well as Dennis Stone, owner of America's Stonehenge. These sights appear to predate colonial period and are similar to other Neolithic sites all over New England , including nearby America's Stonehenge and the Danville Beehive Hut, reported to be 5,000-7,000 years old. The 2010 discovery of a site in Keene, NH was reported to be the oldest site in North America to date at 12,500 years old. The commission is working to get an interdisciplinary panel of experts to investigate and record these sites. With limited support or resources from state archaeologists to investigate these sites, this November commission



members were thrilled to attend the NEARA Fall Conference where they found a network of support and resources to help investigate the sites in our community. The New England Antiquities Research Association is a non profit organization that focuses exclusively on stone sites, using the latest technologies, like Lidar, Ground penetrating radar, and sedimentary OSL dating and rock surface OSL dating at these sites. For more information check out the link:
<https://neara.org/>

Round Table Event : In February the Heritage Commission hosted a round table event with three other neighboring Heritage Commissions, (Danville, Hampstead and Kingston). The commissions shared project ideas and resources, discussed common goals, experiences and challenges, and ways to help improve our ability to serve our respective communities. The event was well received by the guest commissions who have all agreed to return for another Round Table event scheduled on February 16, 2023.

Education and Outreach:

“Trail Through Time”: The Heritage Commission’s Paul Wentzell has been leading a project to create a trail system that identifies the historic sites throughout the community, inspired by the “Trail Through Time” trail system in Acton Massachusetts. This will be a long term project, starting with designing kiosks and historic markers to be placed at the historic sites and eventually connect the sites with a trail system that allows hikers to learn about Sandown’s rich history as they hike the trails. The commission hopes to coordinate with other town groups to help create these trails, kiosks and historic markers over time.



Presentations: In May, the Heritage Commission’s Fran Rosenau organized two presentations. One was “A History of Agriculture as Told By Barns”, with John Porter, a third generation farmer discussed the importance of preserving farming and old barns. The program was sponsored by a grant from the NH Humanities. The other was an antique appraisal event where folks brought antique items to be identified and appraised by Appraiser Auctioneer Ron Wacowski. The event was such fun success the commission has scheduled another for the Spring of 2023. The commission would also like to thank Fran Rosenau for her fundraising efforts through Yard sale events.



Old Home Days: Member Sierra Dolce represented the Sandown Heritage Commission at the Sandown old Home Days where she featured the republished 3rd Edition of local author and historian Richard Holmes’ book: A View From Meeting House Hill” as well as free commemorative tokens designed by Commission Secretary Peter Koester.

Guided hikes: Heritage Commission Chair Pamela Gaudreau organized two guided hikes featuring historical sites in Sandown, partnering with the Sandown Historical Society, Old Meetinghouse Association and the Conservation Commission. The first hike started with a tour of the Depot, then proceeded along the state railroad bed trail, to a wooded trail leading to the Red Barn, then on to a tour of the Old Meeting House. The Commission would like to thank the Historical Society’s Heidie Traeger, Heather Rosati and Josie Dupuoy, the Old Meeting House’s Arlene Basset and Conservation Commission’s Mark Traeger for assisting with this event. The second hike was a 4 mile hike along the old historic Hersey Rd from Sandown into Danville Bee Hive Hut, exploring the many ancient stone sites “hidden in plain site” all along the trail.



The Heritage Commission would like to thank the community for its support as one of the newer commissions in the state. The commission is looking for one or two additional alternate members. 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 , or visit us on FB.

Respectfully Submitted, Pamela M Gaudreau, Chair