

Heritage Commission Annual Report 2023

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

Projects 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.



The Old Meeting House & Hearse House: The Old Meeting House, constructed in 1773-1774, is managed by the Old Meeting House Association,(OMHA), under the direction of Arlene Bassett, is the jewel of Sandown's historic buildings. 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 was able to get the Hearse House added to the National Historic Registry with the Old Meeting House. 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. In September, the OMHA's Dave Dupouy finished the clapboard replacement on the last wall to complete the makeover. This past November, the Heritage Commission partnered with Andrew Cushing from the Preservation Alliance to host a regional tour of four local Old Meeting Houses, featuring those in Sandown, Danville, Hampstead and Fremont. The Preservation Alliance generously donated proceeds from that event to all four Old Meeting Houses.



The Depot- The depot is managed by the non profit Sandown Historical Society. This depot was hub of Sandown from the 1800's, starting as the B & M Railroad and later changing to the WNP railroad until the trains stopped running in 1934. Then it was used as storage for the state highway dept until 1977. The state sold the depot to the town of Sandown in 1977.



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. Eagle Scout Justin Silva constructed a new cupola in 2021 and the cupola was finally installed in its rightful place on top of the barn this past Fall of 2023.



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. These sites predate colonial period and are similar to other Neolithic sites all over New England. The Commission is working with New England Antiquities Research Association, (NEARA), 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 second 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.

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. This year designs were chosen for the first three kiosks as historic trail markers, to be placed at the Depot, Old Meeting House and Red Barn.



Presentations: The Heritage Commission sponsored some fun presentations this year. In March, back by popular demand was the antique appraisal event where folks brought antique items to be identified and appraised by Appraiser Auctioneer Ron Wacowski. Heritage Commission’s Peter Koester, gave a “ride along” video presentation on the history and culture of the San Juan Mountains of Colorado. In June, Sandown’s own vintage loom artisan Caroline Morse gave a presentation at the Red Barn to demonstrate several different vintage looms and dozens of examples of the beautiful fabrics made on her looms. The commission would also like to thank Fran Rosenau for her fundraising efforts through Yard sale events.



Guided hikes: Heritage Commission Chair Pamela Gaudreau organized two guided hikes featuring the stone sites “hidden in plain sight” all over town.

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