

**Gloucester Lyceum & Sawyer Free Library**  
**Saunders House Committee – Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, June 26, 2017**

The Monthly meeting of the Saunders House Committee was held on Monday, June 26, 2017 at Sawyer Free Library.

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In attendance: Mern Sibley (Chair), Prudence Fish, Jane Mead, Bill Remsen, David Rhineland, Katelynn Vance, and invited guest, Meredith Fine

**Approval of the minutes of June 1, 2017**

There was a correction to remove the line regarding an inventory of items in the Saunders House.

1) The Library Board has approved the Committee and given it the official name of the Saunders House Stewardship Committee.

**2) Meredith Fine’s report on the deed**

The Committee had asked her to analyze the title and zoning and suggest possible scenarios for the Saunders House.

- The History of the Deed
  - In 1872 Articles of Incorporation for the Library were filed with the state. These are not available on line.
  - The Library is comprised of four parcels: the existing buildings, plus three parcels purchased later to create the parking lot.
    - There are no restrictions on the three newer parcels.
  - In 1884 Samuel Sawyer bought the property and transferred it to a Board comprised of seven Trustees.
    - The restrictions of the deed expired after 50 years based on state law. They cannot be rejuvenated, but new ones can be outlined.
  - In 1967 the Trustees transferred the Library to the City of Gloucester under an act of legislation; Meredith suspects this was in preparation for planning the new building.
    - Chapter 257 of the Acts of 1966 state it should be for the purpose of “operating and maintaining” a library. Because it’s legislation, this language will never expire. It was also incorporated into the deed from the Trustees to the corporation of the City; the language in the deed has expired, but the statute still holds.
  - Later that year, the City transferred the property back to the Trustees, referencing the statute in the deed.
  - Two years later the Trustees transferred the property to Gloucester Lyceum and Sawyer Free Library, Inc. – a self-governed public corporation with its own 501(c)3. This required the permission of the Attorney General; the Trustees sued to receive this permission.

- Zoning
  - SFL is part of the Central Civic District. Allowed under zoning:
    - Residence;
    - Public religious or other non-profit school building;
    - Municipal offices;
    - Public utility facility;
    - Nursery school, day care, trade school;
    - Philanthropic organization;
    - Office building of less than 2500 sq. feet;
    - Funeral home;
      - i. Restaurant (theoretically, could open a restaurant if all profits went to supporting the Library);
- The findings
  - The building cannot be made into its own separate entity unrelated to the Library.
  - It needs to have a purpose related to the Library. Meredith is still investigating how much flexibility there is to the limits.
  - The Strategic Plan lays out the community’s interpretation of what a library is as adopted by the Trustees and the Corporators. It offers a broader vision of a library beyond a repository of books.
  - How is “operating and maintaining” defined? In reading and interpreting legal practice assumes the people who wrote it knew what they were doing. The wording raises the question of the absence of the word “sole” as in “the sole purpose of operating and maintaining...”. It is the question of whether you can only use the building for that or include other purposes as long as the other is also happening.
  - The building has to be part of the Library’s purpose. What that looks like is the Committee’s mission
- Some recommendations
  - Form a Trust to keep the relationship with the Library.
  - Determine how the Saunders House assists the Library in its mission? How do you define the operation and maintenance of the Library relative to this building? How can this building contribute to the Library and what are the limits of it?
  - Install non-profits that contribute to the cultural life of the City. Would that meet the statute?
  - Define it broadly enough that it’s working with the future library, but not so broadly that it becomes untethered.
  - In preparing the Building Plan the state drew up a list of work work needed for the Saunders House to include it in the grant building plan. There was not an in-depth analysis, but a prohibitive list of work needs to be done.
    - Access to the list would give us a place to start in making repairs.
  - Are there funds restricted to the building? There are a number of unrestricted funds, funds restricted to other uses, and one fund restricted to building uses.

- We could do both the building plan for the Monell site and a capital campaign for restoration of the Saunders House. We could probably get state money for historic preservation.
- Whatever we decide to do should be put in writing.
- Moving forward
  - Meredith will look for minutes from the 1966 legislative committees and write away for the probate court file of 1969.
  - She is still working on this and will issue a written report once she has all the documentation.

Meredith left the meeting after one hour when her presentation was complete.

### 3) **Mold Remediation**

- The problem
  - The B&G Committee hired Environmental Health & Engineering, Inc (EH&E) to inspect the site and prepare a report. The mold seems to be confined to materials in the Saunders House basement. They will do a second more in-depth assessment after their initial presentation.
  - The Committee discussed likely problems including: Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), radon, condensation, and other moisture issues; also mold is mostly like also growing on the wood in addition to the materials. We will need to treat the mold, but it's difficult to remove it completely, just keep it in check.
  - Bill recommends purchase of several dataloggers to measure humidity, temperature, dew point; he recommends one that can be tied to a mobile phone app via Bluetooth. He would place one in basement near the wall, one in the mechanical room. Would also be great to have one in the room where they are meeting, on the second floor, and in the attic. We should track the data for an entire heating and cooling season (one year) to determine what work is needed. Would also be helpful in writing grants!
    - Bill recommends getting the Hobo MX1101 from Onset Computer, roughly \$125 each with free software. Mern will check into the protocol of making the purchase.

### 4) **State Historic Grants**

- David and Bill will talk to Historic Commission Chair, Mary Ellen Lepionka, at tonight's meeting about pursuing state money.
- Jane cautioned the Committee to research funding options before drafting a plan of needed work. She suggested checking with the Sec. of the State's office. Jane will supply a list from Essex County Community Foundation of foundations that fund historic preservation.
  - It would cost about \$200 to join the Associated Grantmakers of Massachusetts and get a current list. If the Library hasn't already joined they might want to. Mern will look into that.

## 5) **The physical state of the building**

- About \$500,000 has been spent on the building in the past decade, including painting the exterior and reglazing all the windows.
- Drainage from the gutters. Mern spoke with Steve Goodick, who did the work in 2008. He said they did nothing underground at that time, but that someone from the City had verified that the drain was working. On one side of the building the downspouts go right into the ground along the side of the foundation; on the other side they go into a PVC pipe, but it's unclear what that feeds into.
- Bill has photos of some trouble spots on the exterior of the building:
  - There are visibly rotting sills next to where the downspouts feed into the ground.
  - One gutter is backed up and overflowing.
  - Gutters and downspouts are not being maintained.
  - Concern about the irrigation system and that it be properly maintained. Improper maintenance could lead to moisture in the basement.
  - Evidence that moisture is moving out through the bricks and into the paint.
  - Other signs of high moisture and diagnostic decay on the exterior of the building showing a leak in the roof of the 1913 Annex along the junction going into the wall and coming out the base.
  - Gutters from the third floor drain onto the roof of the area that used to be a porch.
  - Also, the ground around the foundation is eroding. It's about one-foot lower than it would have originally been.
  - Storm sewer – not sure who's property it's on - clearly damaged by a plow, would be a great place for the gutters to drain into.
- Observations
  - Addressing the moisture problems: Cut back vegetation around the foundation; make sure downspouts drain into something; check into the irrigation system. Would probably notice an improvement in a couple of months.
  - Heating: Replacing the boiler and the big heating tanks would pay for itself in a couple of years. The tanks rust from the inside out, so you never know until it's too late, better to be proactive.
    - Convert to gas: smaller boiler and more efficient. Need to determine where the current systems work.
    - Better to have two smaller systems for the different areas.
    - Need to learn how many heating zones there are in the Saunders House.
  - Attic: skim coating on the stairwell covered historic stenciling.
    - Going forward work on the Saunders House should be run by this Committee to make sure it doesn't affect something critical in the building.

6) **Other**

- SFL is very likely to get the grant, just not sure of our placement in the ten-year cycle.
- The Committee brainstormed best hopes for the use of the Saunders House. We want to keep it as part of the library in some form; details to be determined – which is the mission of the Committee.
- Preliminary planning re: what are our goals?
  - Go room by room and determine its best use.
  - Enlist students from BU and Boston Architectural Studies to get the history of the different features of the building.

Next meeting: July 24, 2017 at 10:30 o'clock in the Byers/Davidson Room.

Respectfully submitted by Tracy Bowen

**Actions Summary**

David & Bill will talk to Mary Ellen about state grants

Mern will talk to Fred about the gutters and maintenance of the irrigation system.

Jane will ask Beth if the library belongs to the Grantmakers.















