

CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND
Historic Preservation Subcommittee
Upstairs Conference Room, South Portland Community Center, 21 Nelson Road
October 30, 2017 •
6:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Minutes

In Attendance:

Kathy DiPhilippo, Dir. Historical Society

Doreen Gay

Hannah Holmes

Jessica Kessler

Alessa Wylie, Greater Portland Landmarks

The historic preservation subcommittee met on Monday, October 30, 2017. Meeting was begun at 6:30 p.m. It's first order of business was to look at the duties of the Arts and Historic Preservation Committee as stated on the city's website.

The subcommittee decided to concentrate on the duty of "*Preparing and maintaining an inventory of historic, cultural and architectural areas, sites, structures and objects in South Portland*" with the focus on creating a database to collect the information. Categories discussed include: house/business/government/natural features/historic site/point of interest/religious/event.

Hannah offered to create the draft database and present it at the regular meeting on November 2nd.

Another discussion revolved around the thought of the definition of "neighborhoods" and how they have changed and evolved over the years. In 1895 there were only seven neighborhoods while today there are many more. A future project would be to create a modern day map with today's neighborhood names overlaid over the older neighborhood designations. Kathy would be an invaluable resource for this project.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

The purpose of the Arts & Historic Preservation Committee (AHPC) is to assist the City Council in preserving the historical and architectural integrity of South Portland, fostering beautification of public areas, and promoting the educational, cultural, economic, aesthetic value, and general welfare of South Portland.

Historic Preservation. The protection, rehabilitation, restoration and/or reconstruction of sites, buildings, structures, and artifacts significant in history, architecture or culture.

Duties of the AHPC include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Providing a resource of information and expertise to help and encourage those interested in rehabilitation of structures that have historic, cultural or architectural significance;
- (b) Preparing and maintaining an inventory of historic, cultural and architectural areas, sites, structures and objects in South Portland;
- (c) Developing proposed policies, priorities, and plans for promoting and advancing historic preservation in South Portland;
- (d) Fostering and encouraging preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, designation, and reconstruction that respects the historic, cultural and architectural significance of distinctive areas, sites, structures and objects;
- (e) Making recommendations to the City Council that assure that City projects and City-funded activities enhance the historic qualities of identified historic properties when this is feasible and appropriate;
- (f) Making recommendations to the City Council that assure that City construction projects consider the quality of architecture when this is feasible and appropriate;
- (g) Working collaboratively with the South Portland Historical Society, Greater Portland Landmarks and others to identify and preserve the City's historic, cultural and architectural areas, sites, structures and objects;
- (h) Assisting City staff with seeking grants, donations of funds and/or works of art for purposes of promoting and advancing historic preservation in South Portland;

South Portland buildings on the National Register of Historic Places

Portland Breakwater Light

State Reform School Historic District

Spring Point Ledge Light Station

Seavy-Robinson House – 580 Ocean St

The Seavey-Robinson House is located on a residential street consisting mostly of buildings dating from the early 20th century. This area does not possess the potential for an historic district.

The Seavey-Robinson House is a one-and-one-half story wood frame building with clapboard siding and a gable roof with wide over-hanging eaves. The house has six-over-six double-hung sash and a veranda without a roof extending across the principal facade. The exterior is distinguished for its abundance of delicately-scaled decorative woodwork. Over the main entrance, which has pilasters and sidelights, is a shallow gable roof portico with cresting and vergeboard. There are bracketed cornices over the windows and, at the half-story level on the principal facade, distinctive grille-work. This elevation also features curved panelling at each corner and across the top of the wall. Vergeboard cut in an acorn motif extends along the cornice. Finally, the veranda has a balustrade with intricate scroll-work.

Now located in a built-up urban section of South Portland, this charming "Carpenter Gothic" farm cottage is a rare survivor attesting to the city's rural past when this region across the Fore River from Portland was farming country which supplied the needs of those living in the town. Its original owner, Joseph Seavey, was a carpenter in what was then part of Cape Elizabeth. The house he built, with its elaborate decorative woodwork, served as a display of his abilities as a builder and demonstrated his knowledge of the latest picturesque styles.

By 1860, Seavey had moved his practice up the road in what was then called Knight's Village, but which is now the center of South Portland. Eliphalet C. Robinson acquired the house in 1864 when the developing transportation facilities put this area in commuting distance to Portland. Robinson worked for C. E. Jose and Company in the city. The Robinson's owned the house well into this century.

The Gothic cottage, particularly in a rural context, is comparatively rare in Maine and it is most unusual to find one still surviving in what is now an urban setting. The ingenious arrangement of decorative detail in the main facade is particularly to be noted.