

Gloucester's 400th Anniversary – 2018 Year-End Community Report

Gloucester's planning for its 400th birthday in 2023 took solid steps forward in 2018. As co-chairs of the anniversary's steering committee, we are pleased to present this year-end report to the community as well as a forecast of things to come in 2019.

Our achievements fall into four categories: reaching out to the people of Gloucester for ideas and input, identifying and advancing the launch of our first set of goals, organizing a team of volunteers who will drive event planning into high gear in 2019, and winning and investing the initial critical financial support needed to advance our efforts.

Community outreach was front and center in our 2018 agenda. The steering committee hosted two well-attended open forums, one last spring in City Hall and the second this fall at the Cape Ann Museum. Extensive and wide-ranging input from a great cross-section of local residents yielded an important product: consensus quickly emerged on an array of events and commemorations that fell into several broad categories: maritime events, historical commemorations (with a special focus on our neighborhoods, our diverse ethnicities, and our veterans), and cultural and educational presentations.

And all embraced the key elements of our mission: the anniversary should not be an event for tourists, but rather an event for the people of Gloucester which others are welcome to attend. It is to be a year-long commemoration of our settlement in 1623 and a celebration of our subsequent history, our heritage and, most importantly, our people.

Many who spoke consistently expressed real concern that the legacy of the 400th anniversary should address two key challenges: capturing for posterity the stories and voice of our people; and ensuring that the documents which record our history are archived and preserved for the use of those who will follow us. We are happy to report progress on both fronts.

Collaborating with 1623 Studios, Cape Ann's full-service community media center and local cable access service provider, we are already at work on the first challenge. We are proud to co-sponsor a program, "Cape Ann Oral History", which will enable the people of Gloucester to record their stories. The first video is already complete, featuring a proud senior, Joe Favazza, who shares tales of a lifetime in Gloucester – check it out yourself at this link: <https://youtu.be/-iz5mPRbnpg>

And be on the lookout for a very special moment, when Joe tells of being a witness, at the age of five and a half, to the unveiling of the legacy gift of Gloucester's 300th anniversary in 1923: the Fishermen's Memorial Statue.

Work has also begun to engage the second challenge: preserving Gloucester's archival treasures. In the spirit of leaving behind our own important bequest, we have established a subcommittee that is focusing on how the legacy gift of the 400th anniversary might be the establishment of a stand-alone archival facility where our historical records can be safely stored and readily accessed by all who seek to access and study them. Stand by for updates on this effort as 2019 proceeds.

Though they are less exciting, successful organizational and funding initiatives were also undertaken in 2018. On the organizational fund, the steering committee was reconfigured so that each member took on responsibility as the key point of contact for one of the many categories of commemoration to be held in 2023. Initial details on event planning will be announced on January 15th with the launch of our 400th

anniversary website, www.gloucesterma400.com . Look to the website for frequent updates, announcements of new initiatives, and other information. And here are two additional reasons to check out our website next month:

1. Its unveiling of the Gloucester 400 logo, which is the product of community proposals and their skilled development by local designer Linda Stockman; and
2. The launch of our juried world-wide competition to select the design for the official medal of Gloucester 400th anniversary.

An important breakthrough for our planning for 2023 was the success of Senator Tarr and Representative Ferrante, with solid support from Mayor Romeo Theken, in winning approval in this year's state budget for a \$125,000 anniversary grant. It is directed to Gloucester Celebrations, Inc., a 501(c)(3) corporation established for 1998's 375th anniversary and on which we three now serve as its officers. Working through the steering committee and with the community, GCI will lead the drive towards 2023.

We have already put these financial resources to work, bringing on a Gloucester-based communication consultant to make our website a reality and support future outreach, and laying the foundation for 2023 events which require early investment. Through our website and future reports like this one, we will provide updates on all our planning activities as well as those expenditures and the results which they are yielding. In the meantime, please share your ideas – if you see one of us, we'd love to hear what is on your mind, or you can reach out to us at gloucester400@gmail.com.

We believe that the teamwork of 2018 lays a sound foundation for the advancement in 2019 of the 400th anniversary. Working with all of you, we look forward to continuing our efforts in the months ahead. Together in 2023, let's celebrate all that makes our community special on the occasion of Gloucester's 400th birthday.

For the steering committee,

Bob Gillis

Ruth Pino

Bruce Tobey

Co-chairs
