

HYANNIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

JFK Hyannis Museum

May 3, 2025

The Hyannis Historical Society held its annual meeting May 3, 2025, at the JFK Hyannis Museum. President Pam Brown welcomed more than 15 attendees and thanked the museum's executive director, Wendy Northcross, for hosting the session.

Acceptance of the minutes of the May 4, 2024, annual meeting was moved and approved.

Secretary's Report (Ed Maroney)

Board members met most Tuesdays in the Society's room at the Hyannis Public Library. First Tuesday Open Houses were held several times. A monthly column was written for distribution through the library's newsletter.

The long-awaited restoration of the historic Universalist Cemetery won full backing from the town council, with work to begin in May 2025.

The historic brick railroad roundhouse near the Hyannis Transportation Center will be preserved and used as a facility for classic and custom cars. Some years ago, the Society was among those speaking against a plan to demolish this rare structure.

Brochures for a walking tour of nautical symbols in and around Main Street will be at the printer's soon. This is a joint effort of the historical society and the town.

Working with library director and society board member Antonia Stephens and two illustrators, the Society researched the lives of the 14 women who founded the Hyannis Library Association in 1865. Their stories will be featured in a graphic novel.

The Society's website has been updated to be more compatible with smartphones. Also, historical material from the town's information kiosks has been incorporated along with many photographs.

Treasurer's Report (Pam Brown)

Income for 2024-25 was \$310 versus expenses of \$271. The Society's cash balance as of May 3, 2025, is \$1,217.

Fifteen members paid dues for the 2024-2025 year.

Acceptance of the treasurer's report was moved and approved.

Presentation of "Pleasant Street Then and Now" (John Richmond)

Board member John Richmond took the audience on a virtual tour of the history-filled buildings of Pleasant Street and environs; excerpts are shared below. Starting with the Furman Building on Main Street, former home of the Hyannis Board of Trade, the tour took an extended look at The Cash Block, now host to Bradford's Ace Hardware but once encompassing a furniture store, barber shop with bowling alleys, and an embalming business.

24 Pleasant St., where once the presses of The Barnstable Patriot thundered, got its start as a general store run at one point by Capt. Allen G. Baxter after his retirement from adventures that included 20 years' residence in China. The building, now sadly neglected, once was home to the Hyannis Library Association.

A schooner captain, Joseph Hallett, built a house at 27 Pleasant St. in 1770 that was destined to be the home of other sea captains, including the "gruff, adamant teetotaler" Allen Hallett. Capt. Allen Crowell built 35 Pleasant St. on land purchased from Allen Hallett. Crowell, who commanded coastal and deep sea ships, sailed to Ireland with relief supplies during the famine. This house is rich in historical details and has its original stable, which has many objects collected by the current owner. The future of this home, which has been on the market at various times, has yet to be decided.

The surrounding lots of several sea captains houses were used as open-air lots for ferry parking in the 20th century, contributing to the decline of the buildings. Eventually, they were torn down and replaced with the Sea Captains Row housing development. Among the houses lost were #43, once home to Capt. Charles Gibb, a deep water sailor who served in the Civil War and the Lighthouse Service. Vanished #44 was home to deep sea and coastal captain William A. Bearse.

A few doors down is 89 Pleasant, the oldest house in Hyannis, dating from 1690. It is said to be the fourth oldest building in the entire town and the first permanent dwelling. It was moved to Pleasant Street from a site overlooking the harbor to prevent its demolition for a marina expansion and is part of the Barnstable Housing Authority's inventory today.

The virtual tour crossed South Street and stopped at, among others, 125 Pleasant St., known as The Nantucket House, believed to have been floated over from the island. By 1860, Capt. Edward B. Bacon lived here. He perished with his son George and his brother Almorán II when his steamship went down off Newfoundland in 1876.

One of the last stops on the virtual tour was Baxter's Boathouse, the restaurant that formerly served as a fish market. Some in town are thinking about possible municipal uses for the property, a reminder that history is anything but a static study.

The presentation was followed by a lively discussion about ways to protect the heritage of Hyannis, with significant focus on possible futures for the Capt. Crowell House at 35 Pleasant St. The chairs of two town committees dedicated to historic preservation – Bob Frazee of the Barnstable Historical Commission and Cheryl Powell of the Hyannis Main Street Waterfront Historic District Commission – shared information and insights.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the annual meeting and seconded. The action was approved.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

May 3, 2025

President Pam Brown called the meeting to order. Present also were board members Ed Maroney and John Richmond.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the May 4, 2024, meeting of the board. The action was approved.

John Richmond nominated Pam Brown for president for a one-year term. Ed Maroney seconded the motion, which was approved.

Pam Brown nominated Ed Maroney for secretary for a one-year term. John Richmond seconded the motion, which was approved.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved.