

NEWBURYPORT PRESERVATION TRUST

P. O. Box 184, Newburyport, MA 01950
www.nbptpreservationtrust.org

Linking the past with the present and future



Quarterly Newsletter of the Newburyport Preservation Trust

Winter 2020

You're invited! NPT Annual Meeting on Sunday, Feb. 23 recaps 2019 advocacy efforts – and previews 2020 plans

NPT Annual Meeting set for Sunday, Feb. 23, 4 p.m., at Riverside Cafe

All members of the Newburyport Preservation Trust are invited to gather together for our Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 23, 4 p.m., at Riverside Cafe at the rear of the Towle Building, 260 Merrimac Street, Newburyport.

Members who attend will get a concise report on NPT's 2019 activities – all driven by member support – and a preview of what's in store for 2020, including plans for this year's Preservation Week. At least equal in stimulation is the opportunity to enjoy light refreshments with like-minded friends and neighbors united in support of our all-volunteer non-profit preservation advocacy organization.

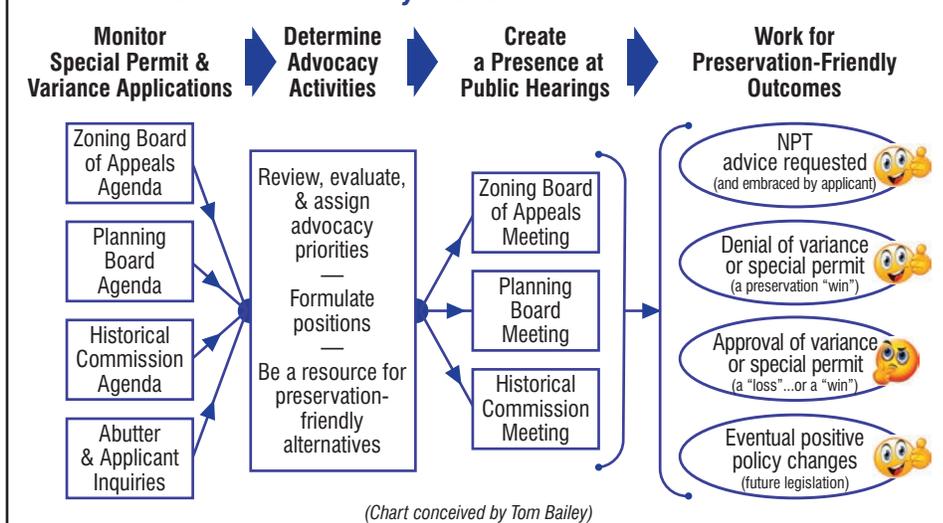
Each year NPT aims to hold its Annual Meeting in a different venue of architectural or historical distinction. This year at the Riverside Cafe, attendees will socialize among the industrial remains of the Towle Building, a surviving mill structure built in 1866 that boasts a rich history that is still being made today. Plan now to join your NPT friends on February 23. See you there! ■

Mark your calendar for Preservation Week 2020

Circle the dates on your calendar now for Newburyport Preservation Week 2020, compressed into three days, Friday through Sunday, May 15, 16, & 17.

This year's theme is "The Mills of Newburyport: The Dream That Ran Out of Steam," incorporating not only the architecture of the city's mill buildings past and present, but also the interwoven histories of steam mill technology,

NPT's Preservation Advocacy Process



Preservation advocacy is most effective when city boards hear multiple new voices

If you're wondering how you might help advance preservation interests in Newburyport, consider adding your pro-preservation voice from time-to-time at zoning board, planning board, or historical commission public hearings. After all, these

entrepreneurial speculation, immigrant labor, population shift, neighborhood growth, an evolving economic landscape, and changes in use through the years. Although many of the city's early mill buildings are lost, several remain as fine examples of late 20th-century preservation for commercial and residential use.

Plans for Preservation Week 2020 include a feature speaker integrating the multiple facets of the topic; tours of surviving mill buildings and former mill sites; and presentation of the annual NPT Preservation Awards. ■

meetings are "hearings," and our hard-working citizen volunteer city boards really do want to "hear" the public.

Although NPT has earned respect for its reasoned advocacy, enlisting varied voices is always desirable – to forestall anyone's fatigue, speaker or listener. In certain cases, NPT issues a call-to-action. But you don't have to wait until a crisis to add your voice. See the chart above for an understanding of the process. Then contact us to learn how you can help at info@nbptpreservationtrust.org.

And here's why it is important: Five-plus decades after the first stirrings of the city's preservation-driven renaissance, now it is the resultant prosperity and attractiveness that draw attention far and wide.

Some investors and developers drawn to Newburyport by its prosperity are not yet informed about the economic, aesthetic, or cultural benefits of architectural preservation.

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The beginnings of an archive for the Historic House Plaque Program

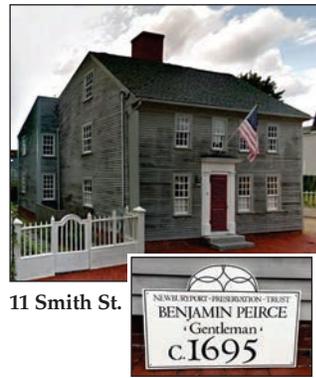
With 45 NPT historic house plaques now mounted on Newburyport homes in the city's National Register Historic District, NPT now has the beginnings of an accessible archive of its accumulated research.

In cooperation with the Newburyport Public Library's Archival Center, copies of the research completed thus far for homes in NPT's Historic House Plaque Program are now part of the center's holdings, and are available to other researchers for consultation.

The first research was completed and the first plaque mounted in late 2014, and the program has grown steadily since. But while photos of happy homeowner/stewards have appeared in the NPT quarterly newsletter, even the NPT website included no running list-to-date of completed research and mounted plaques – until now.

Visit the **Historic House Plaque Program page** at the NPT website (www.NbptPreservationTrust.org) and you will see prominent links to a viewable, zoomable, downloadable, and printable PDF file – a summary-in-progress – that includes a chronological list-to-date of homes researched, along with the plaque inscriptions. The PDF file also includes selected photos of homes and plaques. The plan is to ultimately include photos of all homes in the program.

Read all about the Historic House Plaque Program at www.nbptpreservationtrust.org, where you can learn about the research process, criteria, and fees; and download/print an application form. ■



11 Smith St.



3 Dove Street



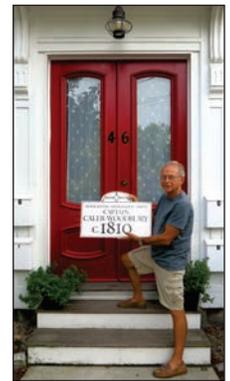
24 Boardman Street



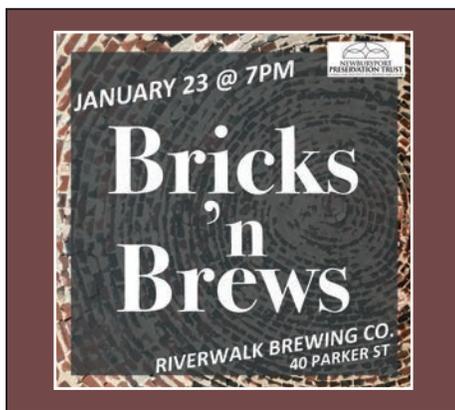
9 Madison St.



88-90 Lime Street



46-48 Purchase Street



Bricks 'n Brews event draws a crowd at RiverWalk Brewery

"Bricks 'n Brews," a lively informative presentation about the history of bricks and brickmaking, drew an attentive crowd to the function room of RiverWalk Brewery on Parker Street, Newburyport, on January 23.

Longtime members, along with new friends of the Newburyport Preservation Trust, learned about the composition, manufacture, and use of bricks-and-mortar

– the building materials that defined our city's early-19th-century downtown – from museum educator Mike Welch of West Newbury, Mass.

The program included the presenter's easy-to-understand overview of brick-making, augmented with illustrative digitally-projected graphics. The presenter's collection of different types of bricks was available for inspection after the program.

The hope is that this program, arranged by NPT board member Tom Bailey, will be a model for other social and educative programs at this venue or others. ■

Preservation advocacy ...

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Further, some are unwilling to consider how preservation might take its place alongside profits on the priority list. So rank-and-file homeowners must still stand up to preserve neighborhood ambiance and our singular sense of place.

Preservation advocacy is a major focus of the all-volunteer Newburyport Preservation Trust, and that includes monitoring zoning variances and special permit applications; consulting with homeowners, developers, and abutters; preparing positions and appearing before the zoning board of appeals (ZBA), planning board (PB), and historical commission (HC).

NPT advocacy in 2019 included:

- **ZBA:** Of the 11 most preservation-significant cases before the ZBA in 2019, eight can be termed "preservation wins." Of these, two variance applications were withdrawn, and six applicants revised plans in response to NPT requests. Two cases are still active, and one case, originally thought to be a "win," turned out to be a loss: The final ZBA decision was poorly written, and a c. 1800 house was demolished.

- **PB:** Of the four most preservation-significant cases before the Planning Board in 2019, three can be termed "preservation wins," and one case is not yet settled.

- **HC:** Many preservation cases begin at the HC, where NPT is routinely present to comment and offer advice on applications

for demolition delay and other cases that may move on to the ZBA and PB.

- **Policy changes & new legislation.** NPT was involved in several cases leading to policy changes or new legislation, thanks to the City Council, which we supported. These included restriction on distribution of CPA historic preservation funds until a preservation restriction is recorded; full board certification of ZBA and PB written decisions; an ordinance requiring video recording of ZBA and PB meetings; and amendments to the city's DOD (Downtown Overlay District) ordinance.

Members can learn more at the Annual Meeting, 4 p.m. on February 23 at the Riverside Cafe in the Towle Building, 260 Merrimac Street, Newburyport. ■