



ESSEX NATIONAL
HERITAGE AREA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Essex National Heritage Commission Holds Annual Spring Meeting at Winnekenni Castle in Haverhill

New Commissioners Introduced, Regional Initiatives Discussed,
and Partnership Grants Announced

April 11, 2013 (Salem, MA) – The Essex National Heritage Commission (Essex Heritage) welcomed over 150 community and business leaders from around Essex County to its Annual Spring meeting held at Winnekenni Castle in Haverhill yesterday, April 10. The business portion of the session focused the success of regional partnerships, the need for ongoing preservation and sustainability and ongoing efforts to promote the region through collaborative events. Members elected new members of the Commission and announced the recipients of the 2013 Partnership Grant Awards.

Attendees were welcomed by Mayor of Haverhill James Fiorentini who thanked attendees for joining Essex Heritage at the Annual Meeting and remarked upon his efforts to promote parks, trails and sustain historic resources. Thomas J. Sullivan, Esq., Vice President of Development, Winnekenni Foundation and City Councillor, Haverhill, and also a newly appointed Commissioner of Essex Heritage gave a brief history of Winnekenni Castle and welcomed Essex Heritage members and friends to the Castle. Senator Kathleen O'Connor Ives also welcomed the group to Haverhill and spoke of the importance of tourism to the regional economy. Mentioning the “gems right here in the City of Haverhill” as examples of regional assets.

Essex Heritage is supported by a 150 member Board of Commissioners who live and/or work within the Area and who serve as representatives of the communities, businesses, community organizations, educational institutions and historic, cultural and natural resources of the region. The following eight individuals were nominated to serve as Commissioners for a three-year term:

- Thomas Alexander, Alexander & Femino, Beverly
- Tim Coco, Coco & Co., Haverhill
- Lawrence Morse, Lawrence B. Morse & Associates, Danvers

- Beth Anne Bower, Salem State University, Salem
- Thomas J. Sullivan, Attorney at Law, Haverhill
- Timothy Felter, Newburyport Five Cent Savings Bank, Newburyport
- Michael Spanos, Business Systems Consultants, Beverly
- Kristin Zampell Noon, Wenham Museum, Wenham

Other dignitaries in attendance included: Michael Bonfanti, former Mayor of Peabody, Essex Heritage Commissioner; Molly Gachignard, Office of Representative John Keenan; Denise Johnson, Office of Congresswoman Niki Tsongas; Jerry Klima, Board of Selectman, Town of Salisbury; Hailey Klein, Office of Senator Kathleen O'Connor Ives; Chris Lange, Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren; and Barry Pett, Office of Senator Bruce Tarr.

Essex Heritage President Richard Yagjian offered the President's Report. Mr. Yagjian began by thanking organizations and individuals for their support of Essex Heritage. He then spoke about the importance of community engagement and provided information about the important resources in the Essex National Heritage Area. Mr. Yagjian reported on the successes during his term as President (the past 1 ½ years), remarking on the success of the regional partnership initiative Trails & Sails which has allowed more than 8,000 people to experience the Heritage Area in new ways. He also talked about the past progress of the educational and interpretive programs, the strong partnership with the National Park Service to promote youth jobs and teacher training, and provided updates on upcoming programs throughout Essex County - including the Essex Heritage Hero Award Dinner, member events, photo safaris and the photo contest. He thanked the Essex Heritage attendees and staff for their tremendous effort and success during his term as President.

“Our ability to sustain our heritage lays in our collective strength – all of us joining together to work towards a common goal –” said Essex Heritage Board President Richard Yagjian. “— a goal of sustaining and protecting the fast historic, natural and cultural treasures of Essex County.”

Essex Heritage Director of Heritage Development Bill Steelman announced the 2013 Partnership Grant Recipients. The Partnership Grant Program is a matching grant program created to foster and support the stewardship activities of organizations that share the Commission's mission to preserve and promote the historic, cultural and natural resources of the Essex National Heritage Area. Impacting many in the region, the 15-year old program has provided more than \$1.8 million to municipalities and nonprofit heritage organizations that steward the region's nationally significant heritage.

Grants were awarded to:

Andover

Andover Historical Society

Danvers

Danvers Alarm List Company

Essex

Essex Historical Society & Shipbuilding Museum

Haverhill

Rocks Village Memorial Association

Ipswich

Ipswich River Watershed Association

Lawrence

Friends of Lawrence Heritage State Park

Lawrence History Center

Nahant

Nahant Preservation Trust

Rockport

Thacher Island Association

Regional

Essex County Greenbelt Association

For additional details about the grants please visit:

<http://www.essexheritage.org/partnershipgrants/index.shtml>

A “State of the Heritage Area” report by Essex Heritage Chief Executive Officer Annie Harris highlighted the national efforts to promote and encourage Heritage Areas. Ms. Harris began by discussing how Essex Heritage works with a small staff throughout the 500 square miles of Essex County to build coalitions for important programs and projects. The work is overseen by a 25 member Board of Trustees, and 150 Commissioners that are recruited from around the region that help in working on projects that promote the sustainability of our region.

“The Commission’s success over the years is attributed to working across town and city lines to form partnerships and build coalitions to improve this area,” said Ms. Harris. “Some people call us the “glue” that helps to bring people and places together for the long-term sustainability of our heritage assets.” She updated the group on several projects including the Border to Boston Trail, the Merrimack River Trail and the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway.

Mr. Michael Quijano-West, Superintendent of Salem Maritime and Saugus Iron Works National Historic Sites thanked Essex Heritage, the Commissioners and regional partners for efforts to restore and protect regional assets. He remarked on the challenges facing federal entities, but promised a commitment to protecting, preserving and serving the public. The Superintendent provided an update on the park service planning process, including a new effort to protect regional assets throughout expected and ongoing climate changes including rising sea levels. In conclusion, Mr. Quijano-West announced that “as of 2013 the national park sites at Salem Maritime and Saugus Iron Works are now free and open to the public!”

Ms. Harris concluded the morning’s business thanking Winnekenni Castle Foundation for their hospitality, and encouraging attendees to join the Essex Heritage membership program.

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About Essex Heritage (Essex National Heritage Commission)

The Essex National Heritage Area encompasses the 34 cities and towns of Essex County, a 500 square mile region just north of Boston, Massachusetts. The county was officially designated a National Heritage Area by an Act of the U.S. Congress in 1996, in recognition of the important role that the county played in American history and the significant heritage resources that still exist in the region. The Act also authorized the establishment of the Essex National Heritage Commission as the non-profit steward of the Area. Working in collaboration with the National Park Service and other partners, Essex Heritage promotes public/private partnerships and develops and implements programs that preserve, promote and enhance regional awareness of the unique historic, cultural and natural resources found within the Area. For more information, visit the website at www.essexheritage.org or call (978) 740-0444.