

Historic Wickford, Inc. P.O. Box 261, North Kingstown, RI 02852

HistWick Herald

!!! Marker Unveiling : April 7, 11:00 am , Updike Park

March 2018

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Historical Markers for Wickford, RI

HistWick proudly announces the unveiling of six historical markers in Wickford. The public is invited and encouraged to attend this celebration: April 7, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. at Updike Park located at the corner of Brown Street and West Main Street (rain or shine).

The program will be lively but brief. North Kingstown Historian, Tim Cranston, will then lead a “Wickford Walk” to one or more of the markers, explaining some historical highlights at each locale. Light refreshments will be available. A film crew will be on hand to document this exciting event.

HistWick is a nonprofit organization devoted to preserving and protecting historic features in Wickford and environs. Discussions of a marker project began in mid-2015. After a comparative study and research of other RI historic villages by members of the organization, the HistWick Board was approached to support the creation of this project.

Not only was the project endorsed, the Board committed \$5,000 and a committee was formed comprised of members and historic enthusiasts including: Sue Moore, Tim Cranston, Peter Galster, Art Hall, Linda Piedra, Larry Ehrhardt, Mike Donohue and Charles Bauer to coordinate the project. Cranston chose items of historical interest and wrote the text for each marker.

The first five markers memorialize: Ship building in Academy Cove, Bush Hill’s early Narragansett settlement, Main Street’s grand houses, Updike house on Pleasant Street, and the rail/steamship era, the “Gateway to Newport” at the end of Main Street. A sixth marker will be located in Updike Park and contains a map and “walk” information, siting the markers.

The Rhode Island Foundation donated an additional \$10,000 through the efforts of Tim Cranston. Local artists, including two Narragansett Tribe members, created the illustrations and Debbie Sabo designed the layout for the markers.

Histwick is a not for profit corporation dedicated to historic preservation and community information for those interested in the village of Wickford.

Wickford Village Design Standards and Guidelines

We value the historic significance of Wickford's village center and it is hoped that the advent of sewers will open the door for new development opportunities and economic vitality. The town's goal is for the commercial district to grow and evolve while retaining the character, charm, and identity of the entire village.

In light of the infrastructure upgrades, the town hired a consultant to work with the planning department and a steering committee to prepare a set of Standards and Guidelines for development on Brown Street and a few adjoining properties on Phillips Street. (Commercial properties on Main and West Main Streets already fall under the jurisdiction of the Historic District Commission.) The HistWick Board applauds this effort and has been monitoring its progress closely. Many of our members attended and provided input to the community workshops held last Fall.

The project team has been hard at work on a set of design principals intended to encourage creative solutions that will preserve the unique qualities of Wickford's village center, while helping businesses meet the challenging economy of the 21st century. They believe thoughtfully designed changes, additions, and new construction will encourage economic growth in the commercial district without negative impact to the adjoining historically-zoned residential neighborhoods.

The work schedule calls for approval of a final draft at the next meeting of the Committee on April 5 after which the document goes to the Planning Commission for review and the Town Council for final approval.

Special Town Election, April 24, 2018

The Town Council is seeking voter approval to sell the Old Library building on Brown Street, and two other properties. A buyer has been located for the Old Library and your HistWick Board has endorsed her plans to use the building for a restaurant/gallery/theater facility while carefully preserving the exterior.

The election will be held on April 24. New voters must register by March 25. To vote by mail, your ballot must be requested by April 3.

Smith's Castle Clean-up March 24 9:00am – noon

Our sister organization, Smith's Castle, is looking for volunteers to help clean-up their grounds. In addition to cleaning the trails in preparation for the bridges and signs, they will be trimming bushes, moving the wood pile by the Annex, and raking leaves/litter.

The Castle is also looking for Docents (who give tours) and Greeters to help throughout the season. Training classes start Tuesday, April 3, 2018, meet once a week, and run for five weeks, the last class is on Tuesday, May 1, 2018.

Please contact the Office for more information: smithscastle55@gmail.com or 294-3521.

An Update on Sewer Work on West Main, Brown and Phillips Streets

Sewer construction is about to resume in the village. The week beginning 3/19 will see some disruption on Brown, West Main and Phillips as D'Ambra does minor excavation and repaving of the lateral trenches. They have settled so full depth paving can be installed. This work will go quickly and won't require total road closures.

The week beginning 3/25 will see predominantly night work. Brown, Phillips and West Main will get planed and re-surfaced with final paving curb to curb. April will see the sewers get extended up West Main above Cranston's. The road will be closed during construction hours only for approximately one week while they work on the narrowest section of the road.

Village Merchants Host Daffodil Days

The weekend of April 7 & 8, 2018, Wickford Village Merchants will host its Daffodil Days. The weekend is more than the flowers. It is about the joy of spring and renewal. The theme this year is "Maker Days" which will include guest artists, designers, authors & crafting activities at many local shops.

Highlights of events include: horse drawn carriage tours narrated by Town Historian Tim Cranston, a Roaming Railroad for kids & adults, a Daffy Dog Parade on Sunday, local jewelry designers at both Sprigs and Green River Silver Co., baby goats from Reynolds Farm will be at Beauty and the Bath, Whilden Fisheries will host multiple processing a whole fish demonstrations at Fishing Boat Lucy Rose. And on Sunday, April 8 we are pleased to have Indiecycle recycling again!

"Last year's Daffodil Days were amazing! The Wickford Village Merchants came together to put on a great fun-filled weekend for everyone," says Carrie P. Mitchell, Daffodil Days Event Coordinator. "We put a lot into two-days and it is worth it because people come back year after year."

NK Land Conservancy Mill Cove Bridge Project

The Land Conservancy of North Kingstown is restoring a historic walking path in Wickford Village for all to use and enjoy. Traversing one of Mill Cove's saltmarshes is a town-owned earthen causeway that used to connect Wickford Village, town open space and LCNK's Bush Hill Preserve to Wilson Park., the boat launch, bike and hiking trails, and several housing areas on the west. Many years ago, a pipe under the causeway collapsed, destroying the walking path. LCNK is going to install a footbridge to connect our community.

The first phase of the restoration project is the engineering and permitting. With support from the Town Council, Planning, Engineering, Recreation and Harbor Management, LCNK applied for and received a \$ 10,000 RI Foundation Centennial Community Grant. These funds will support the initial scientific studies, engineering and CRMC permitting

The second phase of the project is to stabilize the banks and install the footbridge, as well as improve the trails for everyone's enjoyment. LCNK has received a small DEM trails grant to clear the existing trails and add directional signage, but fundraising continues for full implementation of the second phase and to bring the project to complete success.

Please visit www.lcnk.org for more information on how to support this project.

Playground Project : Old Town Hall

The Town of North Kingstown and the Cranston family are pleased to announce that, utilizing a RI State grant and a generous donation from an anonymous donor channeled to the project through the RI Foundation, we have selected playground equipment to be purchased and installed at the site of the future Wickford Heritage Center, as the first phase of the Margret Cranston Playground. This appropriately themed play equipment includes pieces that reflect Wickford's history as both a busy maritime port and a regional transportation hub moving people from RI urban areas and beyond to both Newport and the Narragansett Pier. These new pieces of playground equipment, along with the existing slides will be installed this spring and this wonderful playground will be available to delight



You are invited to celebrate the installation of

Wickford Historical Markers

Saturday, April 7th, 2018

11:00 am at Updike Park

(the corner of West Main Street and Brown Street)

Light Refreshments Available

**Meet Wickford's renowned Historian, Tim Cranston, who will
moderate a walking tour of nearby Markers**

SPONSORED BY HISTORIC WICKFORD, INC.

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