



NEWS

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

State House, Room 337
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Contact: Debra O'Malley
Telephone: 617-727-9180

June 18, 2019

SECRETARY GALVIN PRESENTS 2019 PRESERVATION AWARD TO THE SOUTH HARWICH MEETINGHOUSE IN HARWICH

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, Chair of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, has announced that the South Harwich Meetinghouse in Harwich has received a 2019 Massachusetts Historical Commission Preservation Award.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is proud to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of this year’s awardees,” said Secretary Galvin. “The projects the Commission recognizes this year are particularly diverse and represent the many creative ways that significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. The community-led restoration of the South Harwich Meetinghouse is a true success story.”

South Harwich Meetinghouse was built in 1836 in an eclectic blend of Greek Revival and Gothic Revival design. Serving originally as a Reformed Methodist church, by 1845 it had become Wesleyan. From 1857 until it closed in 1984, the building served the Methodist Episcopal Church.

After the departure of the Methodists, the building continued to serve as a temporary church for several different denominations until it was purchased by the Town of Harwich for the purposes of stabilization and preservation. In 2003, the Friends of the South Harwich Meetinghouse was formed to save the abandoned and deteriorating building. At that time, the meetinghouse was in poor condition, with missing siding, broken windows, an unstable foundation, a failing roof, and significant water damage.

Restoration and rehabilitation of the building was initiated in 2007. In addition to necessary upgrades of utility systems and a new basement, a major focus was on traditional restoration craftsmanship. Among the dozen artisans and craftsmen who worked on the building were decorative painters, woodworkers, metal fabricators and lighting specialists. An artisan trained in traditional stenciling techniques replicated the historic patterns by hand along the lower portion of the walls above the wainscoting. An antique, manual button machine was used to recreate more than 1,800 original buttons



NEWS

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

State House, Room 337
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Contact: Debra O'Malley
Telephone: 617-727-9180

that were then hand-sewn into the repaired and reupholstered pew cushions. Restored and given new life, the meetinghouse—one of the oldest Methodist churches on Cape Cod—now serves as a community performance space and arts center.

This is the 41st year of MHC's Preservation Awards program. Projects are considered annually for awards in the categories of Rehabilitation and Restoration, Adaptive Reuse, Education and Outreach, Archaeology, Stewardship, and Landscape Preservation. Individuals are considered in the categories of Lifetime Achievement and Local Preservationist. Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.



Secretary Galvin is pictured presenting the award for the South Harwich Meetinghouse at an afternoon ceremony on June 6, 2019, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester (left to right: Sara Chase, Marcy Ford, Secretary Galvin, Judith Ford, Robbin Kelley, and Lee Noel Chase. Photo by Goodnough Photography.).

###