



**GARDINER CITY COUNCIL**  
**AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**



<b>Meeting Date</b>	12/04/2019	<b>Department</b>	Buildings & Grounds
<b>Agenda Item</b>	4.6 Consider the Designation of Common as a Historic Area		
<b>Est. Cost</b>	n/a		

<b>Background Information</b>	<p>Robert Abbey, and the fountain renovation committee, have been diligently working on how to restore the Palmer Fountain in the common area. As part of that process, they discovered that there is the potential to have the common become part of the historic register for the State of Maine. (Parks and Rec has formally recommended this for the Common. See attached meeting notes.)</p>
	<p>Allowing the common to become part of the historic register would open up eligibility for federal grant funds.</p>

<b>Requested Action</b>	'I move to allow the City Manager to make a request to the Historic Preservation Commission to allow the Common to be placed on the Historic Register.'
<b>City Manager and/or Finance Review</b>	The City Manager recommends the above action.
<b>Council Vote/ Action Taken</b>	
<b>Departmental Follow-Up</b>	

<b>City Clerk Use Only</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading _____	Advertised _____	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> _____
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading _____	Advertised _____ w/in 15 Days	
	Final to Dept _____	Updated Book _____	Online _____

## Christine Landes

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**From:** Robert Abbey <rangerrob18@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 21, 2019 5:49 PM  
**To:** Christine Landes  
**Subject:** Notes on Gardiner Common  
**Attachments:** Common Questions.docx

Hi Christine,

Here is my summary document on the status of the Common and the potential to have it nominated to be part of the Historic Register. I have included notes from several phone calls and one face-to-face meeting with Maine Historic Preservation and two emails provided by Sue Crawford. Park and Rec has formally recommended this change for the Common.

I believe that the only significant change if we do request inclusion in the Register is to more fully and faithfully protect the Common as a landmark property of the city. Our Historic Preservation Commission would have a role, just as it does with all the buildings on Water Street now in the district.

My main concern is the restoration and preservation of our 120 year old Palmer Fountain.

Any questions? I'm here!

Best,  
Robert

## **Re: The Nomination of the Gardiner Common to the National Register**

Phone conversations between Michael Gobel-Bain of Maine Historic Preservation and Robert Abbey and the discussion currently before City Council:

**The discussion:** Whether to ask Maine Historic Preservation to nominate the Gardiner Common (Brunswick Square) to be added to Gardiner's Historic Register.

**Reason:** Should the Common be added, it would open up eligibility for federal grant funds - Certified Local Government monies, which could be applied to the Palmer Fountain restoration. (These funds were used to jump start conservation work at Johnson Hall.)

### **FAQ**

•What is the Common's current status?

Eligible to be nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places

•What is the process to nominate the Common for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places?

Gardiner makes a request (city manager)

Maine Historic Preservation (MHC) reviews request, prepares a nomination, sends to the National Park Service in Washington for final approval

•What changes in terms of responsibility and/or ownership?

Only change is to define a role for Gardiner's Historic Preservation Commission  
MHC would be involved only if we were requesting federal grant monies

•Is this status revocable?

No

•Are we guaranteed access to grant funds for projects on the Common such as the restoration of the Palmer Fountain?

Not necessarily. Because the fountain's integral history was interrupted by the melting down of the original statue during WW II, MHC was initially not encouraging. However, after further discussion, staff agreed to reconsider any application for funds in light of the City's commitment to the war effort and to commission a new statue for the historic site.

**Attachments:** Correspondence between Sue Crawford and Kirk Mohny and Michael Goebel-Bain, both of Maine Historic Preservation in Augusta. This is the agency that oversees the work of our Historic Preservation Commission, Geri Doyle, Chair.

Hi Sue, (Crawford)

The Maine Community Foundation (MCF) manages one program, the Belvedere Fund, that is earmarked for the restoration of historic properties. MCF awards grants once a year, but this year's application deadline has passed. The Davis Family Foundation also supports historic preservation projects, as does the Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust. In addition to these sources, there may be others that have a particular interest in the preservation of outdoor art/sculpture. The Maine Arts Commission may know if such grant opportunities exist, and you could also conduct a search through the Maine Philanthropy Center.

Eligible properties for the Belvedere Fund must be listed in or be determined eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. I do not know if the other two granting entities have similar requirements. Listing in the National Register is a prerequisite for any development awards that the Maine Historic Preservation Commission makes. If the Common were to be listed in the National Register, and if the fountain were considered to be a contributing historic resource to its significance, the City of Gardiner could apply for funds from our office through the Certified Local Governments program. *The City is one of only eleven communities in the state that can participate in this program because its historic preservation program (largely embedded in the provisions of its preservation ordinance) has been certified by the National Park Service.*

As you may recall, the City's comprehensive plan at one time recommended the creation of a second historic district in the neighborhood surrounding the Common. I do not know if that would be feasible at this time, but *you could also ask us to determine if the Common is individually eligible for listing in the National Register.* If you wish to pursue this option, please contact Michael Goebel-Bain of our staff at [Michael.W.Goebel-Bain@maine.gov](mailto:Michael.W.Goebel-Bain@maine.gov).

Kirk F. Mohny    Director    Maine Historic Preservation Commission

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Sue,

We have several files filled with information on the common or Brunswick Square in Gardiner. The Square has been determined eligible as a contributing site in a potential historic district. The Square is also individually eligible for listing in the National Register, and from our telephone conversation, I understand individual listing is the course the city would like to pursue.

The Square has a long history which involves many changes over time. A tentative period of significance for the Square is from 1824 to 1969. Changes made within that period can be

historic in their own right. Changes made since then, within the last 50 years, make features of the Square non-contributing to its overall historic significance. The playground on the east side is one example. The 1894 Palmer Fountain would also be considered a non-contributing object within the eligible Square. Because the original Neptune statue was removed during W.W. II, the historic integrity of the fountain has been lost. The 1979 *Lady with Birds* sculpture is a major component of the overall fountain. Because this sculpture is less than 50 years old it would need to be of exceptional significance to contribute to the Square on its own or as part of the overall fountain.

The period of significance for the Square extends to 1969 for a variety of reasons. It does not extend further because to do so would require exceptional significance. The square itself and more recent changes do not rise to that level. We can review nominations and eligibility at a later date however and adjust the period of significance. When this sculpture reaches 50 years of age, it may be eligible in its own right for significance in the area of Art. The fountain as a whole at that point might also be considered a contributing object to the Square if the period of significance of the square is determined to extend to 1979 or after. The status of the *Lady with Birds* sculpture and the Palmer Fountain should be reconsidered in 2029. Until that time, the fountain (granite base and sculpture together) is considered a non-contributing object of the National Register Eligible Brunswick Square site and as a result could not use CLG grant money for work.

Availability of grant funds for the fountain was mentioned as one factor making listing of interest to the city, so I want to be clear about that. I would be happy to discuss this further and move a nomination for the Square forward with the knowledge that it could be revised in 2029 with the possibility that the fountain would likely become a contributing object to the district upon revision of the Square nomination at that date.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Michael Goebel-Bain National Register and Survey Coordinator

**End Note:** In a person to person meeting between Robert Abbey and Michael Goebel-Bain, Michael indicated that the MHC could reconsider the Palmer Fountain's eligibility for federal grant funds in light of the city's efforts to: 1) support the war effort through a significant act of patriotism and 2) commission the casting of Lady and the Birds by Maine artist Norman Therrien as an appropriate way to preserve this historic feature on our Common.

**Minutes: Gardiner Parks and Rec Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday Nov. 5, 2019 5:30 - 6:30 pm City Hall**

Present: Tony LaPlant, Jack Fles

Absent: Marc Rines, Jerry Maschino, Jess Clark, Jeannine Lhureux, Cindy Reiter

Guests: Robert Abbey, Dottie Washburne from Streetscape

**OLD BUSINESS**

**I. Approval of Minutes August 6, 2019 –**

Carried with no changes

**II. Palmer Fountain on the Common**

Robert Abbey

A. Tito Masonry coming to evaluate the fountain

**III. Things to Communicate to City Council**

Robert Abbey

A. City Common -

1. Park and Rec recommend to city council that the city common be added to our Historic Register properties. Once added, Gardiner will be eligible to receive grant monies. Motion Carried.

B. Down Town Smoking -

1. Motion: Park Rec recommends to city council that Johnson Hall/Dearborn Park be designated Tobacco Free Area. Motion Carried

C. Johnson Hall

1. JH has received grant which will include new stairs to JH/Dearborn Park

2. Retaining walls leaning steeply and will eventually fall. This is a long term concern to watch.

D. McKay Park:

1. The park is sliding apart, needs aggressive fix. Streetscape has worked on park last month, but it needs more attention than volunteers can provide.

E. Why do our trees keep dying? Evaluation of soil, salt and depth of plantings

1. Robert Abbey will contact Arborist at Augusta Arboretum to begin a professional examination this spring.

**IV. Dog Park**

A. Eagle Scout project – A young man is making bench and picnic table for the park.

**V. Waterfront**

A. Buoys removed and stored at Treatment Plant

B. Gardens look good – Jack F. will send thank you notes. Robert A. will send Jack addresses

**VI. Kiosk and Public safety rules for pet owners at the Waterfront –**

Tony LaPlante

A. The goal of the Kiosk post dog rules and business/pleasure opportunities in Gardiner.

B. Project appears to be on long term hold.

**VII. Striper Tournament – June 2020**

A. Jack F. and Jay S. will meet with a tackle shop that has had sponsored events in the past.

**VIII. Park and Rec membership**

A. Jack F. will encourage members to participate or resign.

**XIII. Next meeting - Tuesday December 3, 2019 5:30-6:30 City Hall**

**IV. Adjourned at 6:20 pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jack Fles