



# Bay Shore Historical Society

Gibson-Mack-Holt House c.1820

22 Maple Avenue Bay Shore, NY 11706 (631) 665-1707  
www.bayshorehistoricalsociety.org e-mail bayshohissoc@optonline.net

March 21, 2019

Meeting Notes

Barry called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and all stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Barry noted that progress is being made on the second floor of the Gibson Mack Holt House. All the framed pictures have been identified. The bookcases have been put together and are being stained. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered time to help with this project. Barry mentioned that Kevin Weicks will present about the 'Historic Landscapes at Bayard Cutting Arboretum' at next month's meeting on April 18, 2019.

Minutes from the February 21, 2019 meeting are posted on the Historical Society website. Joe reported income was \$399 and expenses was \$1088. Priscilla provided an update from the Summit Council meeting including: (1) Spruce Up Bay Shore is taking place on May 11; (2) Sal's Market and Big Daddy's are permanently closed; Smoking Al's is not opening in Bay Shore; A grill restaurant is going where Sunny Buffet was located; (3) Seatuck is holding a clean-up of the Penataquit Creek on May 4; (4) The YMCA is celebrating 100 years in America; (5) The Beautification Society is still trying to fund the hanging baskets around Main Street; and (6) All the events happening at the High School.

The speaker for the evening was Chris Verga. Chris is a researcher, educator, author and historian. He presented his book 'Saving Fire Island from Robert Moses'.

500,000 people visit Fire Island yearly. Tourists come because Fire Island has 17 different hamlets with different cultures, pedestrian friendly towns with no motor vehicles and is a national seashore. Visitors to Fire Island have an economic impact on downtowns like Bay Shore.

Chris gave a brief history of Fire Island. A long shore drift formed by the great storm of 1690 became Fire Island. Native Americans harvested wampum (their currency) from Fire Island. There are many theories as to how Fire Island got its name. These include: (1) Whalers lit a fire to signal help was needed; (2) A Dutch map was read incorrectly with the word Vier; and (3) a lot of poison ivy grows on Fire Island and the early colonists said their skin burned like it was on fire.

There was a struggle between harvesting and conservation on Fire Island. This included seals, whales, salt hay and ducks. This struggle made nearly all these things extinct. The number of shipwrecks off

The mission of the *Bay Shore Historical Society* is to collect, preserve and share the rich history of our community and to maintain the c. 1820 Gibson-Mack-Holt House which is located at 22 Maple Ave, Bay Shore, NY. The Society's collection of photographs, memorabilia, and historic documents is open to the public free of charge on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 1pm to 4pm. For further information contact 631-665-1707 or visit the Society's website > [www.bayshorehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bayshorehistoricalsociety.org). The *Bay Shore Historical Society* is an all-volunteer, tax exempt not-for-profit corporation as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



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the coast of Fire Island increased and rumors of pirates and squatters on Fire Island grew. The first resort on Fire Island was the Surf Hotel in Kismet. During a cholera outbreak in Germany, a boat coming to New York was quarantined to Kismet and the Surf Hotel was bought to house the sick. Fish Canneries began to open. Housing for the workers at these factory's was built and communities started to form.

Robert Moses' vision was a four-lane highway through Fire Island. His first accomplishment was Jones Beach. Following the hurricane of 1938, Moses argued that a highway would secure the barrier island and prevent coastal erosion. Construction of the highway would require hundreds of homes to be demolished. Moses lost the fight for his highway when Maurice Barbash, the developer of Dunewood, and Irving Like formed the Citizen's Committee for a Fire Island National Seashore. Members of this group collaborated with the Chambers of Commerce's from across the South Shore and various environmental and civic organizations. In 1964, President Johnson signed a bill that established the National Seashore of Fire Island. This bill halted any further development of a proposed highway east of Robert Moses State Park. After the bill was signed, Irving Like thought Fire Island should be named a World Heritage Site.

Barry thank Chris for his presentation and invited everyone for refreshments.

Respectfully submitted by Kelly Zebro

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