



NEWS

ORLEANS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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ORLEANS HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO NEGOTIATE PURCHASE & SALE AGREEMENT TO ACQUIRE CAPTAIN LINNELL HOUSE IN 3-4 YEARS

The Orleans Historical Society (OHS) will negotiate a Purchase & Sale agreement with the owners of The Captain Linnell House, William and Shelly Conway, as a next step in the eventual purchase of the historic building and most of its contents. OHS plans to preserve the 1840s sea captain's home as a museum as well as a revenue-generating special events space for the benefit of Orleans residents and visitors. Until the transaction is completed in 3-4 years, the Conways will continue to operate the facility as a restaurant and popular venue for weddings and other special occasions.

"After five months of intensive study, our Board unanimously agreed that the Captain Linnell House represents a unique opportunity to preserve an historic landmark that has plenty of space to display our local history collections well into the future," said Kathleen McNeil, Executive Committee member and chair of the Board's Linnell subcommittee. "In addition, the size and quality of the function room, with two licensed kitchens and space for up to 200 guests, is unmatched in the area and will provide revenue to operate the facility and maintain our current 1834 Meetinghouse and Hurd Chapel."

McNeil said that for years OHS has been searching for a viable solution to its serious lack of space and the challenge of properly preserving and displaying current and future Orleans artwork, antique furniture, ship models, archives, photos, maps and other items entrusted to its care. It has looked at the possibility of occupying other historic buildings or moving them to a site adjacent to its River Road property. All of these options presented their own logistical and financial challenges, and none had good potential for sustainable revenue generation.

"The Captain Linnell House is essentially turn-key for us as a museum and community center," McNeil said. "We visited several other non-profit organizations on the Cape that have similar revenue sources, and we have developed a business model that will work for us and the community. Of course we have to raise sufficient funds so that we can purchase and operate the property, but we have 3-4 years to do that. The Conways have said they want us to be the next caretakers of the house, and we are very pleased and excited to have that opportunity."

(more)

Captain Ebenezer (“Eben”) Linnell, born in 1811 on Barley Neck Road in Orleans, married Rebecca Crosby in 1835 and had a traditional Cape Cod home built for her on the present Captain Linnell House site. Later he saw a French-designed, neo-classic villa built for a shipping agent friend in Marseilles and brought back the plans to build the exact replica that stands today. Linnell died at sea in 1864 and, after several owners and various uses, the house fell into disrepair. Under the ownership of the Conways, who bought the property in 1988, the building has been restored as the classic, mid-1800s clipper-ship captain’s mansion it once was. A Cape Cod landmark, the house is listed on the Massachusetts Register of Historic Places.

Since 1958 the Orleans Historical Society has been dedicated to preserving the Town’s heritage, respecting its past, and making its history and culture available to both residents and visitors. The Society also is a strong advocate for positive change and cultural growth consistent with the Town’s history and natural beauty. Its museum and offices are located on the corner of Main Street and River Road. Go to www.OrleansHistoricalSociety.org for more information, or call 508-240-1329.

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