

Know Your Neighbor video “construction” meeting, NBPT Senior Center, October 18, 2018

Attending: Peter Blaiwas, Tom Getz, Ahmer Ibrahim, Kat Preftes; guests: Joanne Morris, Rob Napier, and Sherry Moore of the Newburyport Documentary Film Festival.

We requested a meeting with Joanne and her colleagues to discuss how we need to start shaping the interview footage we have into a cohesive and *interesting* documentary film. We screened a few of the interviews for our guests to get the conversation started.

Rob Napier:

- What do you want to say to the community?
- Focus on residents rather than visitors.
- What is the HRC connection? Does there need to *be* an HRC connection?
- Decide on the message (story) you want to convey through this film. *Every* interview has to stay on message.
- Gear questions to your story; adjust message questioning before further taping.

Message(s):

- Why is it important to know your neighbor?
- How does knowing your neighbors help make living in or visiting this town a better experience?
- How can knowing your neighbors help to offset assumptions about the people who live in our city?
- What would interviewees be willing to do to help make NBPT a better place to live?
- How have major changes in Newburyport affected life here?
  - Railroad access
  - Downtown urban renewal
  - Infill of open space
  - Reduced economic diversity

Joanne Morris:

- Seek the advice and assistance of an experienced filmmaker. This will help to bring focus to big picture. Talk to local filmmakers, local area film schools (i.e. Monserrat) about this.
- Editing is the technical focus on film quality. Filmmaker may be able to do their own editing or may need an editor as well.
- Create “film texture” with balance of fact and opinion.
- (*very important*) Audience is easily bored if repeat the same thing more than 2 or 3 times.
- Vary background and composition of interviews; i.e.: take interviewer out of the frame of some interviews, perhaps crop interviewer out of some existing interviews.
- Create a “Work in Progress” presentation to the community with reactions and suggestions, and videotape the presentation.
- Vary format beyond interview questioning with individual statements from perhaps:
  - Mayor Holaday and other gov’t officials, local historians (archive at NPL, historical society, NBPT Daily News), Custom House, Youth Services, local merchants, school administrators and teachers, Kelleher Park admin, YWCA community advocacy administrators, etc.

Follow-up:

All in attendance agreed that we should suspend filming until we have a better handle on what we want the completed film to be. We need to schedule a breakout meeting (outside of our regular monthly meeting) to discuss how to proceed from here. Kat can suggest some dates to meet and discuss the points outlined above.