



Gloucester Historical Commission
Gloucester City Hall
9 Dale Avenue
Gloucester, MA 01930



August 20, 2018

Dear Community Preservation Committee,

The Gloucester Historical Commission is writing this letter of conditional support for the Stage Fort Park Advisory Committee's Community Preservation Grant for the restoration of the ordnance carriages for the Stage Fort cannons.

The Commission's support is conditional upon the recreation of historically accurate replicas using period materials (wood and iron). The Commission recognizes the guns' loss of historical integrity over the years; we hope to regain some of that with the Stage Fort Park Committee's efforts to ensure reasonably historically accurate renditions of the artillery carriages. Attached are images from the Civil War era and the 1930s to illustrate the style of carriage used on each of the guns. In the photographs, Figure 1 illustrates a traversing carriage mounting a piece of coastal artillery at Fort Conant during the Civil War. The Model 1848 naval gun would be mounted as such in the unlikely event it was used at a coastal fortification (the Army manned coastal defenses). Figure 2 illustrates a typical field carriage mounting the 30 pdr. Army Parrott Rifle from 1865. The image probably dates from the early 20th century. Figure 3 is a photograph from around 1930 illustrating the four guns currently placed at Stage Fort Park. The Parrott Rifle is mounted on a wooden field carriage, and the three other guns (the Model 1848 naval gun and two 1906 replica French 19th century 24 pdrs) are mounted on truck carriages.

Beside maintaining historical integrity, the mounting of iron guns on aluminum carriages risks galvanic corrosion, particularly at their current location along the sea. Given that the Model 1848 naval gun is one of 105 extant examples, the Army Parrott Rifle is one of 206 extant examples, and the replica U.S.S. Constitution cannons are two of 33 of the remaining known 54 guns cast in 1906 for Old Ironsides, it is imperative that the Stage Fort Park Committee take every precaution not to further damage them.

With that in mind, The Gloucester Historical Commission offers its conditional support for the restoration of the Stage Fort park cannon carriages.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Lepionka (for Bob Whitmarsh and Jude Seminara)
Co-Chair, Gloucester Historical Commission
978-491-1017