



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Ann Matlack introducing

LD 1264, Resolve, Requiring the Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Modify the Deed That Conveyed Montpelier, the General Henry Knox Museum in Thomaston, to the Friends of Montpelier

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Good afternoon, Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and respected colleagues on the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee. My name is Ann Matlack and I represent House District 43, which includes the communities of Cushing, Thomaston, South Thomaston, St George and part of Owls Head.

I am here today to present **LD 1264, Resolve, Requiring the Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Modify the Deed That Conveyed Montpelier, the General Henry Knox Museum in Thomaston, to the Friends of Montpelier.**

With this Resolve, it is my intent to remove, or extinguish, Schedule B on the deed that conveyed Montpelier, also known as the General Henry Knox Museum, to the Friends of Montpelier. Schedule B places “Historic Place Easement Restrictions on the Use of the Property,” including the “Terms, Conditions, Provisions and Restrictions Affecting the Use and Maintenance of ... Montpelier and the General Henry Knox Museum.” This easement was not included in the original bill and was added by the Bureau of Parks and Lands after the fact and it makes maintenance of the property untenable and cost prohibitive.

What this easement really does is restrict the Friends of Montpelier in how they can accomplish the repairs and renovations a nearly 100-year-old building requires. With the centennial of this building fast approaching, the Friends would like to have the flexibility to repair the front porch and railing, repair the rear porch, replace windows that are beyond repair, repair and reconstruct the roof balustrade, paint the entire building and construct a Veterans Memorial Walkway. To do this in a cost-effective, energy-efficient manner and maintain this building as a replica of the original mansion, the Friends would like to remove the Historic Place Easement Restrictions.

A bit of history: Henry Knox was born in Boston in 1750 and only achieved a fifth grade education. His passion was books and he became a successful bookstore owner. At the age of 25, he abandoned his bookstore and joined the “local rabble in arms,” eventually becoming a renowned General and then Secretary of War. Following the war, he and his family retired to

District 43: Cushing, Thomaston, South Thomaston, St. George and part of Owls Head

what is now Thomaston and General Knox built a beautiful mansion of his own design on the St. George River. The mansion was sold in 1854 and the building was razed in 1871.¹

In 1929, with private funding, a two-thirds scale replica of Montpelier was built on donated land on a rise in Thomaston. The building was designed and built as a fire-safe structure to house the artifacts of the Knox family; it was built of brick and steel and clad to resemble the original structure. It was given to the State of Maine in 1965. In 1999, the museum was returned to the Town of Thomaston via LD 540 in the 119th Legislature. This building is not on the National Register of Historic Places. It is a replica; there is nothing of the original structure remaining. The Friends should not have to abide by stringent historic preservation regulations to fix this building.

The Friends would like to continue with the original mission of telling the story of General Henry Knox; using the site for educational, historic and cultural programs and maintaining the grounds and landscaping in the period and style of Montpelier. They would also like to maintain the building using commonsense approaches which will enable them to achieve energy efficiency, protection of the collection of artifacts and allow them to reduce the enormous amount of maintenance the building requires while keeping the overall appearance. They have no interest in selling or subdividing the property.

When you travel north through Thomaston towards Rockland, you can see the mansion on a rise above Route 1. I would like to invite you to stop and take a tour. It is an amazing structure, the contents are beautiful and the docents are knowledgeable and tell great stories.

Thank you for this opportunity to share a bit of history housed in my district. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. There are also more knowledgeable folks coming behind me to correct any errors I made or add additional information.

¹ <https://www.knoxmuseum.org>



CHAPTER 10

H.P. 398 - L.D. 540

Resolve, Authorizing the Transfer of Certain State Historic Site Property

Preamble. Whereas, the Constitution of Maine, Article IX, Section 23 requires that real estate held by the State for conservation purposes may not be reduced or its uses substantially altered except on the vote of 2/3 of all members elected to each House; and

Whereas, the land authorized for transfer by this resolve is within the designations in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 598-A; and

Whereas, the Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands within the Department of Conservation may sell and convey lands with the approval of the Governor and the Commissioner of Conservation in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 1814; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands authorized to convey Montpelier, the General Henry Knox Museum, consisting of historic site land, improvements, structures and historical collections, to the Friends of Montpelier. Resolved: That the Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands within the Department of Conservation may by deed and gift agreement convey Montpelier, the General Henry Knox Museum, including 4.2 acres, more or less, of historic site land and related improvements, structures and historical collections, in the Town of Thomaston, Knox County, to the Friends of Montpelier, a nonprofit corporation, to be used for historic preservation and public education purposes. The contract for the transfer must contain a reversion clause specifying that, if the Friends of Montpelier do not continue to use the building and the collections for public educational, historic or cultural purposes, the building and collections will revert to the Bureau of Parks and Lands; and be it further

Sec. 2. Appropriation. Resolved: That the following funds are appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the purposes of this resolve.

2000-01

CONSERVATION,
DEPARTMENT OF

Parks - General Operations

All Other

(\$1,805)

Deappropriates funds no longer needed for insurance payments due to the transfer of a historic property from the State to the Friends of Montpelier.

See title page for effective date.

CHAPTER 11

H.P. 656 - L.D. 912

Resolve, to Transfer Land in Edmunds

Preamble. The Constitution of Maine, Article IX, Section 23 requires that real estate held by the State for conservation purposes may not be reduced or its uses substantially altered except on the vote of 2/3 of all members elected to each House.

Sec. 1. Director of Bureau of Public Lands authorized to convey real estate in Edmunds. Resolved: That, pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 598-A and section 1837, subsection 1, once the Bureau of Public Lands acquires title from the Town of Dennysville to a parcel of land and the structure situated on that land in Edmunds, Washington County, the Director of the Bureau of Public Lands is authorized to convey that parcel of land to the Dennys River Historical Society. The parcel of land consists of approximately 9/16 of an acre and is bounded and described as follows:

Beginning at a point located 41 feet 8 inches S. 22°E. from the southeast corner of M. E. Church; thence N. 67° 15' W. 9 rods more or less to the center of the traveled highway between the 2 bridges; thence along said highway bearing N. 20° 45' E. 10 rods more or less to the intersection of the traveled Hurley Point Road; thence along said Hurley Point Road bearing S. 64° E. 10 rods more or less; thence S. 25° 30' W. 9 rods more or less to the point of beginning said land to contain 9/16 acres more or less.

The director is authorized to convey the above-described property and improvements to the property on the condition that the property and improvements be retained by the Dennys River Historical Society and used exclusively for public purposes and on further condition that, in the event the presently unorganized township of Edmunds becomes incorporated as a town, then the Dennys River Historical Society, upon the request of the Town of Edmunds,

SCHEDULE B
Terms, Conditions, Provisions and Restrictions
Affecting the Use and Maintenance of the Property

HISTORIC PLACE EASEMENT
RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF THE PROPERTY

MONTPELIER and the GENERAL HENRY KNOX MUSEUM
High Street, Thomaston, Knox County, Maine

The GRANTEE covenants and agrees to abide by the following terms, conditions, provisions and restrictions on the use of the Property:

- 1. Condition and Significant Historic and Conservation Values:** The condition and significant historic and conservation values of the Property, including but not limited to the buildings and improvements thereon, are confirmed in Baseline Documentation entitled, "Baseline Data Notebook and Certification for the Montpelier and the General Henry Knox Museum," certified as accurate by representatives of the Grantor and the Grantee who are familiar with the condition of the Property, its buildings and improvements. The Baseline Data shall be recorded with the Maine State Archives, Augusta, Maine.
- 2. Use of the Premises.** The GRANTEE agrees to use the premises for only educational, historic, and cultural programs for the general public and for only such other uses as the Director, Maine Department of Conservation, Bureau of Parks and Lands, determines to be consistent or compatible with such uses.
- 3. Activity on the Property.** The GRANTEE agrees to erect no signs and conduct no activity on the Property which would destroy or diminish its historical, cultural or aesthetic value and further agrees to do all things which are reasonably necessary to insure that the Property continues to be registered as an historic place under the National Preservation Act of 1966.
- 4. Maintenance.** GRANTEE agrees to assume the cost of continued maintenance and repair to the Property as to preserve the architectural, historical, or archaeological integrity of the Property in order to protect and enhance those qualities that made the Property one registered as an historic place pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Nothing in this Historic Place Easement shall prohibit the Grantee from seeking financial assistance from any source available to it.
- 5. Alterations.** The GRANTEE agrees to make no exterior or interior alterations, structural or cosmetic, on the Property without the prior written approval of the State of Maine through its State Historic Preservation Officer.
- 6. Grounds and Landscaping.** The grounds and landscaping of the Property shall be maintained in a healthy condition and in a manner exemplifying the period and style of Montpelier.

BK 2418 PG 031

7. **Utilities.** Utility entrances needed from time to time shall be installed in a manner which will not impair the aesthetics of the Property.

8. **Utility rights-of-way.** No utility rights-of-way shall be located within the Property after the date of this instrument unless they are approved in advance and in writing by the GRANTOR. Generally, such approval will be withheld unless permissible utilities are located underground.

9. **No Subdivision.** GRANTEE agrees that no division or subdivision will now or in the future be allowed by current or future owners of the Property.

10. **Access and Inspections.** GRANTEE agrees that the employees and/or agents of the State of Maine, Bureau of Parks and Lands and Historic Preservation Commission, have the right to access the Property, including, but not limited to, the right to enter the Property at all reasonable times for any authorized and official purpose therein.

KNOX SS: RECEIVED

1999 OCT 27 PM 3:04

ATTEST:

Bill M. Chase
REGISTER OF DEEDS