

Request for Waiver of Assembly Room Fees

The SHA 501c3 non-profit requests that the town of Swansboro waive the fees for use of the Assembly Room of the Emmerton School-Old Town Hall for our quarterly evening programs and an occasional planning session and a possible daytime seminar like the N.C. Maritime History Council annual meeting we hosted in 2022.

Supporting our request is a list of our contributions to the town which goes back to our creation in 1961 and the successful Bicentennial celebration in 1983 which was a partnership with the town. More recently a partnership in which we both celebrated the 225th anniversary of incorporation was a great event for both entities and led to our providing plaques to historic homeowners with no cost to them. It also helped create an atmosphere in which we negotiated the creation of the Swansboro Area Heritage Center Museum in the Old Town Hall- Emmerton School, which is staffed by our volunteers on weekends. We ask the current town commissioners and staff to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors and support our mission.

Some of our accomplishments since our revival in 2008 include co-sponsoring with the town the Historic Hayride, planning and implementing the Historic Homes Tour, providing free quarterly programs with well-known state historians, creating printed tourist brochures and leading walking tours that have included travel writers. We continue to interview numerous Swansboro citizens creating a record of Swansboro history we make available to researchers along with a rich archive of Swansboro history and genealogical records.

We have worked with Swansboro High School Students offering SAT volunteer hours for scholarships and we have attracted high school history teachers and students to participate in the National History Day Program, showcasing their exhibits to the community. Other accomplishments include leading a campaign in which we purchased the Alex Moore house to save it from demolition. The in-kind services of a professional architect with over 40 years of experience in support of the Historic District Commission was done through his commitment to the SHA. Our volunteers have included a retired history professor, a professional artist, former town and county administrators, and a trained collections' registrar along with numerous citizens of the community. We have created with the support of the town a long-awaited goal, the Swansboro Area Heritage Center Museum.

With the presence of the museum in the Emmerton School-Old Town Hall building, the SHA was crucial to the town in getting the \$424,000 federal grant a couple of years ago for brick repair and other improvements. One of our volunteers wrote parts of the grant and liaised with the state preservation office. In part, thanks to the SHA's relationship with state preservationist we now have the Heritage Center and funding to preserve the historic building. These efforts have preserved and improved the town's building and made it a destination for tourists and the community. Much of the capital improvement work on our side of the building was paid for by the Association through grants we received from the TDA. The rest of the cost has been covered by the SHA. This museum is in the very building we are asking you now to please waive the fees for use of the Assembly Room. (We have a display in the Heritage Center on the history of the building and the Assembly Room and would love to help you learn more about the history of this town space.) As Dr. Jack Dudley, notable Swansboro native, historian, and SHA Board member, has said often, we have indeed done all this for the town.

The future is bright for the Historical Association with your continued support. We are partnering with Parks and Recreation for activities and publications for the 70th Anniversary of the Mullet Festival. Our Thursday morning coffee hour open to the public is continuing lessons in Swansboro area history like tobacco farm life in Swansboro, the Cedar Point Mullet Fishery, and the history of the Tideland News.

The August quarterly program in the Assembly Room will be a slide presentation of unpublished photos presented by Jack Dudley on “The Pride of Swansboro: Boats and Boat Building”. We look forward to continuing our festival booths that provide homemade refreshments during town events. And most exciting, we are a member of the official Onslow County 250 America Committee which will allow us to work with the county to focus our programs and events like the 2026 Homes Tour on the role of Swansboro and its citizens in the American Revolution.

As you consider this request keep in mind that we are not the same as a soccer organization or an arts group. Those things are important, but they are not essential to preserving Swansboro's historic character. The SHA has done this with an all-volunteer group that has given 1000s of professional hours to the town. We can pay the fee but to maintain our museum and organization in the future as our past volunteers age out, we will likely need all our resources for paid employees, consultants, and exhibit creation.

Please consider continuing the town tradition of partnering with the SHA by waiving the Assembly Room Fees of the historic Emmerton School. This will show your support for our continued efforts to preserve, and educate our citizens and visitors about Swansboro's rich history.

Respectfully submitted by Amelia Dees-Killette, SHA President, July 9, 2024.