

## LANCASTER HISTORICAL COMMISSION

### Annual Report for 2007

Michael Sczerzen chaired the Historical Commission in 2007. The members were Elizabeth Colley, William A. Kilbourn, David Knott, Joy Peach, Sally Rouleau, Michael Sczerzen, and Jean Watson.

The Commission office is open to the public every Tuesday to provide service to the public regarding historical research and genealogical information. Proceeds from research copy work were returned to the General Fund. The Historic District Study Committee appointed in 2002 received approval from the Massachusetts Historical Commission on their Preliminary Plan and proposed bylaw in September. The warrant article at the October town meeting was defeated. The Historical Commission thanks the members of the Historic District Study Committee who worked very hard on the Preliminary Plan and Bylaw. The members are: John Daly, Gene Feher, Mark Finnerty, Chair, Robert Follansbee, Jr. Vice Chair, Nancy Kosiewski, Karen McGarity, and Mark Schryver. Sally Rouleau is the liaison from the Historical Commission for the Historic District Study Committee. Sally Rouleau is also the liaison from the Historical Commission for the Town Green Study Committee. We completed the historical section documentation with the Town Planner for the Master Plan which is scheduled to be approved in 2007. The Commission is pursuing the wording to propose a demolition delay bylaw for considering in 2008.

The historic Bulfinch Church (5<sup>th</sup> Meeting House) First Church of Christ was notified by Massachusetts Historical Commission that they were selected to receive a grant from the Massachusetts Preservation Project Funds. The town was notified that the application was not selected for the old Hose House (the South Fire Station), c. 1888, which has suffered interior damage due to roofing done five years ago. The good news is that the voters at Town Meeting in October voted funds to cover repairs to the South Fire Station. The Historical Commission and DPW Supt. applied for a Survey and Planning Grant for the Old Common and Middle Cemetery in January, but were notified that we have not been selected. However, the positive news is that Massachusetts Historical Commission provided a consultant to complete the inventory sheets on Old Common and Middle Cemetery placing us in a better position for the next grant round. Also, David E. Ross & Associates, Inc. a huge gifts the Historical Commission and the town with a complete survey of the graves in Old Common and Middle Cemetery. The Historical Commission sincerely appreciates David Ross and his staff for the time and effort they donated.

The Commission thanks the individuals and organizations that have adopted a town historic marker and have maintained the markers with attractive plantings during the four seasons.

The Memorial School, which has been vacant, suffered significant damage these past few years through vandalism, and had to be boarded up. The Prescott Community Building (Center School) remains vacant. The Town Green Buildings Advisory Committee is moving forward with a step by step plan for complete phase one which has included removal of all old metal and addressing the mold issues in the buildings.

The Historical Commission was notified by Massachusetts Historical Commission that MHC would hire a consultant to complete E-Forms and data sheets and maps of the Old Common and Middle Cemeteries. This work is part of the Historical Commission goal to have all six cemeteries dating from 1878 back, recorded for nomination for National Register Status. The Commission in coordination with the DPW continues to pursue grant money from MHC preparation of necessary requirements for National Register Status for all our historic cemeteries.

#### Significant changes to property:

The Current Topics Club closed its doors at 59 Neck Road and sold the building with preservation restrictions to a new owner who will remodel the building into a single family home. The Historical Commission wishes to go on record and thank the Executive Board of the Current Topics Club for the gift for preservation of documents and artifacts, which include the records, and significant artifacts listed below. Their legacy to the town will be two scholarships for Lancaster students. In their 110 years of service to the town, the women of the Current Topics Club witnessed many changes from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including the women's right to vote, the automobile, indoor plumbing, and many more changes moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Historical Commission applauds the women for their service to the community.

The 18th century Jonas Fairbanks House on 47 Sterling Street was demolished bit by bit.

The historic marker at Lane's Crossing at the intersection of Harvard Road and Rt. 117 (Seven Bridge Road) damaged by vandals still has not been replaced.

The site of the Industrial School for Girls, off Old Common Road on the location used by the RFK School has done some repair work to three of the houses. .

**Accessions:** Survey Site Plans for Old Common and Middle Cemeteries gifted to the town by David E. Ross & Associates. Pictures, Photo albums, and Artifacts from Current Topics Club