

**MEETING MINUTES  
LANCASTER HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
January 27, 2020**

A meeting of the Lancaster Historical Commission (LHC) was held on Monday, January 27, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. in the LHC office on the upper level of the Prescott Building.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Liz Colley, Marcia Jakubowicz, Heather Lennon, Joy Peach, Joan Richards, Karen Silverthorn

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Amy Brown, Mark Schyrver, Jean Watson

**GUESTS:**

Greg Jackson, Christine & Roy Mirabito, Jay Moody, and, Andrea Kiuru-Shepard, Recreation Director

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Heather Lennon called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm. and guests and welcomed the guests.

**SCENIC ROADS BY-LAW:**

Heather Lennon called for Agenda Item #8 “Scenic Roads By-law Initiative” to be considered first.

Lancaster resident, Greg Jackson, who has done considerable research on the matter, presented information for a town by-law to manage any proposed changes to the town’s numerous scenic roads as they now exist. This issue is presently of high concern with new construction impacting the town’s rural landscapes.

Discussion followed including the fact that the house lots recently sold on Hilltop Road have been cleared and huge boulders full chert (a rare geologic formation found in few places in the world) have been simply trucked away.

Greg Jackson asked LHC members for their support. Marcia Jakubowicz moved that the LHC send a letter of support to the Planning Board encouraging the preparation of a Warrant Article for a bylaw relating to Scenic Roads; namely for the protection of stone walls, and trees on public ways, roads and streets. The motion was seconded by Joy Peach and it carried unanimously. Other pertinent town boards and departments will be copied.

**ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON:**

A motion was made by Karen Silverthorn that Heather Lennon continue on as chair-person for the LHC in 2020. The motion was seconded by Marcia Jakubowicz, a vote was called for and it was approved unanimously. No other nominations were brought before the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The meeting minutes of November 19, 2019 were read, corrected and approved unanimously on a motion made by Karen Silverthorn and seconded by Joy Peach.

**PROPOSED PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT IN LANCASTER -- 40B, 61A, McGovern Blvd.:**

Heather Lennon reported that ongoing meetings are being held regarding each.

Marcia Jakubowicz said that the Agricultural Commission had met and discussed the 61A land with Lancaster Land Trust members but nothing has been decided yet.

**HAWTHORN HILL ESTATES (*former Poras property*):**

Marcia Jakubowicz mentioned there is concern that a large and very unsightly pumping station has been constructed to serve the needs of new housing being constructed. The fact that a pumping station was installed on George Hill Road without a definitive answer as to how it got approved or who approved it, is worrisome. Even if a penalty has been paid for a violation, it remains a huge concern in an area known for lack of water supply.

**679 GEORGE HILL ROAD:**

The asking price on the Bayard Thayer Mansion aka “Hawthorn Hill” has been dropped to \$2.5 million. The mansion was used as a location for some of the scenes in the recently released film “Little Women” and the property received press coverage. At this point, the carriage house is also still for sale.

**NATIONAL REGISTER CEMETERY NOMINATIONS:**

Heather Lennon reported that she received notification that, as of November 8, 2019, the Old Settlers’ Burial Ground and the Middle Cemetery have been officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). It is hoped that all four remaining Lancaster historic cemeteries will be nominated in the future. Three of the four are already “eligible” and steps will be taken move them all toward being listed.

**ROWLANDSON ROCK AND TOWN POUND PROJECTS:**

Heather Lennon reported that on December 11, 2019, Boy Scouts Troop No. 1 from Lancaster were presented with Rowlandson commemorative coins that had been issued originally in 1976 (300 years after the Lancaster Massacre). The coins were given to the Scouts to thank them for their help with the clean-up and refurbishment of the Rowlandson Rock and Town Pound Historical Sites. Troop leader John Aurin was also awarded a coin.

**OLD COMMON INITIATIVE:**

Heather Lennon reported she has yet to receive a reply to her correspondence (sent in early November) to the Massachusetts Department of Capital Assets Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) relating to the three historical houses along Old Common Road that are in a designated National Historic District. The three houses, as well as the entire campus, are in seriously neglected and dilapidated condition.

**PROJECT FOOTSTONE:**

This project is currently on hold until after the winter months.

**SIGNS AND MARKERS PROJECT:**

No report given.

**ACCESSIONS:**

Heather Lennon showed donations from Reverend Tom Wintle former pastor of the First Church. He donated a collection of slides as well as a framed photo of the dining room in the church parsonage from 1920. He also donated, to the Lancaster Historical Society, a copy of a 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the Rowlandson Narrative which was printed in Lancaster in 1828. These donations were accepted by the LHC. A donation of a flat screen TV from Andrea Kiuru-Shepard will most likely replace the Panasonic TV previously brought in by Joan Richards.

**2019 ANNUAL REPORT (DRAFT):**

Heather Lennon distributed a draft for members to review. She would like to have members provide her with a count of any volunteer hours for 2019 for the report total. The report is due to the town clerk in the later part of February.

**COLLECTION MANAGEMENT PLAN DISASTER PLAN COMPONENT:**

Marcia Jakubowicz reported that there is a Webinar on disaster planning coming up soon put on by the North East Document Center (NEDCC). Maria Jakubowicz, Karen Silverthorn and Heather Lennon plan to participate.

**OTHER MATTERS:**

***National Scenic Rivers Designation:***

Heather Lennon read an email from Alix Turner regarding National Scenic River designations. The LHC consensus was to highlight the “Meeting of the Waters” between Bolton and Center Bridge Roads, and, the the north branch of the Nashua River flowing through the Cook Conservation Land. Alix Turner will be informed of these recommendations.

***800 Main Street:***

The circa 1875 brick structure was originally the Lancaster Bank, then the Center Hose House, and then the town Ambulance Building and Communication Center. Most recently it was occupied by Woods Ambulance Service. Woods pulled out with little to no notification to the town and the LHC is concerned since no information has been provided regarding the building’s future.

***New Display Case:***

Heather Lennon reported she has been notified that there is a free used display case from Tower Hill available to the LHC. Lancaster resident Susan Munyon will arrange the transfer.

***Community Preservation Act (CPA):***

Heather Lennon mentioned that a citizens’ group is preparing a presentation and information on CPA. Recreation Director. Andrea Kiuru-Shepard, invited LHC members to attend the presentation coming up for her committee next week.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion to adjourn was by made by Joan Richards at 7:50 pm. It was seconded by Joy Peach and carried unanimously.

The next LHC meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 24, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. in the office on the top floor of the Prescott Building.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Richards, Recorder for the meeting.