

**TOWN OF LANCASTER, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE LANCASTER HISTORICAL COMMISSION (LHC)**

Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2020

Members Present: Amy Brown, Marcia Jakubowicz, Heather Lennon, Joy Peach, Joan Richards, and Karen Silverthorn.

Members Absent: Liz Colley, Mark Schryver, and Jean Watson.

Call to Order:

Chairperson Lennon called the meeting (via ZOOM) to order at 6:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Corrections were made to the minutes of the September 28, 2020 meeting. A motion was made by Marcia Jakubowicz to approve the minutes as corrected, Karen Silverthorn seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

61A Runaway Brook Lot:

Chairperson Lennon reported that, after some research, it was determined that any historical artifacts found on the property would have to be authenticated by a professional archeologist in order to have any value. Since the surrounding property has already been developed, the LHC consensus was that the right of first refusal on this particular lot is not of benefit the town. A letter has been sent to the Town Administrator (TA) with these comments and is on file in the LHC office.

Devens – South Post Proposed Changes:

Joan Richards reported that the National Guard Commander has agreed that the TA should gather the questions and comments so answers and comments can be provided at the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen (BOS). A number of informative emails have been circulated regarding: (1) impact of changes on the natural habitat, (2) noise level, and, (3) concern for quality of life. The LHC does not have any further data to contribute. The Devens South Post property was “taken over” in the early 1940’s requiring those who lived anywhere on the 4,700 acres to move elsewhere and has since been used for military training exercises.

Significant Property Developments/Sales in Lancaster:

Heather Lennon reported there has been no further information over the last month. The Planning Board (PB) is meeting tonight with the future of former Hawthorn Hill estate on their agenda.

Middle Cemetery (MC):

1. Chairperson Lennon has *not* received a quotation from Nurseryman Dale Di Meco for treating the northern slope of the cemetery to prevent the re-growth of weeds and volunteer tree sprouts after the major removal of several trees a couple years ago. With cold weather upon us, she will put this on the agenda again in the spring.

2. Chairperson Lennon reported that she has recently discovered new and serious damage to several grave markers in the MC. She will report this to DPW Superintendent Kevin Bartlett.

SPECIAL PROJECT REPORTS:

A. Exhibit Room featuring Hosmer dollhouses, puppets and marionettes:

Martha Moore has volunteered to work on refurbishing the puppets and marionettes and has started cleaning and using archival guidelines gotten from the Ballard Institute of Puppetry in Storrs, CT. Marcia Jakubowicz continues her work on the dollhouses.

B. Signs and Markers:

Amy Brown reported she continues to work on a map for historical walking tours throughout Lancaster. She would like to talk with Liz Colley about setting up the maps on-line for user friendly data. Several suggested tours were mentioned: Thayer mansions, burial grounds, older homes of significance of early settlers, and, meetinghouses. Marcia Jakubowicz mentioned that there are images of the all the meetinghouses in the stairwell to the balcony of the First Church.

C. Lancaster Historical Society (LHS) - FYI:

Heather Lennon reported that she is creating a series of seven programs on the Lancaster Thayer family. These will be "COVID Safe" to be viewed from home. This will involve working with Matt Downing of Sterling-Lancaster TV.

Community Preservation Act (CPA):

Members were reminded that CPA is Article #3 on the upcoming election ballot. Passage would benefit the LHC.

Acquisitions:

Heather Lennon reported the receipt of a book by a descendant of the Hudson family members of whom were early Lancaster settlers. A letter of thanks has been sent.

Adopt of Marker:

Kristin Phillips will no longer be maintaining the trough planter at the Center Bridge and Neck Road intersection. A new person will be sought to tend the planter and thanks will be sent to those already committed. The list of marker tenders will be updated and shared with Sue Billings of the Garden Club which offers reimbursement for the cost of plants purchased.

Future Meeting Date:

LHC members agreed to meet Monday, November 30, 2020 at 5 p.m. via ZOOM. Chairperson Lennon has suggested meeting on a different week night/time of the month in the future. This matter will be revisited at the next meeting.

Adjournment:

Joan Richards made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 p.m. and Marcia Jakubowicz seconded the motion. Chairperson Lennon called for the vote and it was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Richards, Recorder

Note: The TA has given Chairperson Lennon written permission to use her personal ZOOM account to set up future meetings which will be recorded. Invitation links listed in the Agendas are posted on the town's web page.