

9+-TOWN OF LANCASTER, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2020

Members Present: Amy Brown, Liz Colley, Marcia Jakubowicz, Heather Lennon, Joan Richards, Mark Schryver, and Karen Silverthorn

Members Absent: Joy Peach, and Jean Watson

Guest: Roy Mirabeto

Call to Order:

Chairperson Lennon called the meeting (*via ZOOM*) to order at 5:01 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Karen Silverthorn and seconded by Marcia Jakubowicz to approve the Lancaster Historical Commission (LHC) meeting minutes of October 26, 2020 as corrected. Chairperson Lennon called for the vote and it carried unanimously.

Devens South Post – Update on proposed changes:

Joan Richards reported that the National Guard proposal for changes to the present firing range are described on the town website under Fort Devens Community Involvement Plan and also on the Conservation Commission (ConCom) link on the town website for all to review. The company representing the US Army has met with the ConCom twice and at this time no Notice of Intent (NOI) has been approved. Roy Mirabeto asked if anything further had been brought before the town? Joan Richards responded that no further information has been received. We continue to keep abreast of the ConCom Meetings, which are posted and held on ZOOM.

Status of Significant Property Developments/Sales in Lancaster:

1. Since the former EVR I Thayer mansion “Fairlawn” AKA “White House” on the Atlantic Union College campus has been sold to a private owner, improvements to the mansion and the surrounding landscape continue. The “Brown House” AKA “Slice” is either going to be apartments or condos in the re-use plan.
2. 679 George Hill Road - Negotiations for the sale of the “Hawthorn Hill” mansion are ongoing. Other land on the former estate may possibly be developed into 20 to 23 lots for housing. Land along Hilltop Road has already been developed with 7 lots and most of the houses already occupied. Another development nearby, Hawthorn Hill Estates, is rapidly being built out.
3. The future of the Thayer Conservatory of Music along Main Street is still uncertain.

Special Project Reports:

1. Hosmer Project Volunteer Martha Moore has been assisting in the cleaning and restoration of the Hosmer puppets/marionettes and continues to follow guidelines from the Ballard Institute in Storrs, CT.

2. Lancaster Historical Society (LHS) Webpage:

Heather Lennon mentioned that the LHS has a volunteer webmaster for their new website and it is currently being developed.

3. Prescott Building Signage:

Heather Lennon mentioned that new, more accurate and much needed signs have been installed on the Prescott Building. She had been called in to consult with and make suggestions to the representative from the company that did the work.

4. Town Marker Location Map:

Amy Brown reported that she has completed a map which identifies the location of historical markers in town. It can be accessed electronically by clicking on information boxes. Amy will e-mail this document to members for review. Consideration and approval of this map will be taken up at our next meeting. Marcia Jakubowicz asked if there would be hard copies of the map available? This will be pursued along with the map being made available on the Lancaster town webpage and the LHS webpage.

Accessions:

A case of approximately 30-50 birds from the former Thayer Bird Museum collection held by the Atlantic Union College has been donated to the LHC. The LHS has agreed to have the birds cleaned and labeled.

Other Business:

Heather Lennon brought forward getting the Rowlandson Garrison Site Area on the National Register. This work was originally started by Phyllis Farnsworth (former LHC member) decades ago. Following discussion, Joan Richards made a motion that the LHC pursue this and it was seconded by Mark Schryver. A vote was called for and it carried unanimously. The area would include the Rowlandson Garrison Field, the Old Settlers' Burial Field, the Middle Cemetery and land gifted to the town formerly belonging to John E. Thayer II. The property owners will be contacted regarding this. The pine tree stump marking the hearthstone of the house is badly deteriorated.

Future Meeting Date:

The consensus of the LHC was to schedule the December meeting for Wednesday, December 30, 2020 at 5:00 pm. The change in day and time will be posted with the town clerk meeting.

Adjournment:

Mark Schryver made a motion to adjourn at 5:38 p.m.

