

**Lancaster Historical Commission (LHC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
*June 30, 2021*

**Members Present:** Marcia Jakubowitz, Heather Lennon, Joy Peach, Joan Richards, Mark Schryver, and Karen Silverthorn

**Members Absent:** Amy Brown, Jean Watson

**Guests:** Victoria Petracca

**Call to Order:**

Chairperson Lennon called the meeting (*via ZOOM*) to order at 5:05 pm.

**Meeting ID: 833 7103 1862 Passcode: 407649**

**Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes of May 26, 2021 were approved unanimously as edited on a motion made by Karen Silverthorn and seconded Marcia Jakubowitz

**LHC Membership Changes:**

The Select Board (SB) has approved the following appointment updates:

Karen Silverthorn -- full member to 2024

Marcia Jakubowicz -- full member to 2024

Jean Watson – associate member to 2022

Liz Colley has resigned from the LHC and members voted unanimously to send her a letter of acceptance of the resignation with regret on a motion made by Joan Richards and seconded by Marcia Jakubowicz. This will be done.

**Memorial School Re-use Committee:**

Chairperson Lennon reported she has been sworn in and that Mark Schryver has also been appointed by the Select Board (SB) to serve as members of the above- mentioned committee. The committee has not yet met.

**Significant Property Developments/Sales in Lancaster:**

Chairperson Lennon reported that there has been no new information available on Hawthorn Hill, or the Atlantic Union College (AUC) core campus and Music Conservatory, or the Perkins/RFK merger. – all are still pending. Hopefully, there will be updated information by summer's end.

**Former Lancaster Industrial School for Girls (LISG) Campus on Old Common Road:**

Discussion was had regarding the future of the above mentioned property including possible implementation of parts of an award-winning plan for affordable housing recently done by a team Harvard and MIT students. \* (*See name of study at end of this report.*) Newly elected SB member Alix Turner had been invited for input as she is the SB liason to the Massachusetts Department of Capital Asset Maintenance and Management (DCAMM) who

own the property and are believed to be disposing of it soon. Recently, a resident along Old Common Road has ***requested that a tour*** be arranged of the property

Though Ms. Turner did not show up, Victoria Petracca, of Lancaster's Affordable Housing Trust (LAHT), attended as a guest and informed members regarding Lancaster's critical need for affordable housing, especially since the "Safe Harbor" status has recently expired leaving the town vulnerable to inappropriate projects.

A site in North Lancaster (under the Capital Group) was also discussed as a potential location for affordable housing as well as the former Memorial School (MS) attached to the Community Center. Ms. Petracca said the school might be converted into twenty small studio units for seniors. Chairperson Lennon said she would like to see the building demolished to open as green space the space between the town's adjoining Civic and Recreational campuses. She stated that few towns in Massachusetts have the potential for such centrally located and adjoining campuses to serve the needs of residents. Mark Schryver raised concerns about the capacity of the septic service currently in place, and, adequate waste water disposal at the MS. Joan Richards mentioned that perhaps the Community Preservation Act (CPA) will be of help. Chairperson Lennon suggested that it seems time to upgrade and add units to the senior housing at Bigelow Gardens (which is under the Lancaster Housing Authority) as it is now sixty years old.

At the end of the discussion, it was the consensus of LHC members that a letter supporting the development of the former LISG campus be strongly encouraged through efforts of the LAHT and SB liason Alix Turner. This letter, ***including a request for a tour***, will be sent to Ms. Turner with copies to the LAHT chairperson as well as other members of the SB.

**Sign and Marker Refurbishment:**

It has been suggested that a new round of refurbishment for historical signs needing it should be organized with assistance through the town's tax abatement program. This matter will be pursued in the coming months.

**Accessions:**

Lancaster resident Susan Munyon has recently assisted with the donation and moving of some used file cabinets for the LHC office. Her help is much appreciated.

**Future Meeting Date:**

The consensus of members was to not meet again until August unless a need arises. The next regular meeting of the LHC is scheduled for Wednesday, August 25, 2021 at 5:00 pm via Zoom.

**Adjournment:**

A motion to adjourn made by Joan Richard and seconded by Karen Silverthorn carried unanimously and the meeting ended at 5:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Richards, Recorder for the Meeting.

*\* The name of the award-winning fifty page study is “Lancaster Commons: History Meets Affordability”. It was issued and in the spring of 2021. Team members were: Andrea Grimaldi, MIT; Angela Blume, Harvard; Cassie Gomes, Harvard; Jaie Azud, Harvard; Jiwon Park, Harvard; Mengyao Li, Harvard; Mora Orensanz, MIT; Sharon Velasquez, MIT. The 2021 Affordable Housing Competition was sponsored by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston.*