

**Lancaster Historical Commission (LHC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
*December 29, 2021*

**Members Present:** Marcia Jakubowicz, Heather Lennon, Joan Richards, Mark Schryver, and Karen Silverthorn

**Members Absent:** Amy Brown, Joy Peach, and Jean Watson

**Guests:** Sue Billings, John Farnsworth, and Martha Moore

**Call to Order:**

Chairperson Lennon called the meeting (*via ZOOM*) (*ID: 86346751184 Passcode: 793713*) to order at 5:02 pm.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

The meeting minutes of November 15, 2021 were reviewed and approved as written unanimously on a motion made by Karen Silverthorn and seconded by Marcia Jakubowicz.

**Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) Survey & Planning Grant Application -- update:**

Chairperson Lennon reported that Lancaster has officially been selected to submit a formal application for a Survey and Planning grant from MHC. If awarded, the funds would be used to have professional surveys done of four historic cemeteries in anticipation of having them nominated and accepted for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) status.

TA Pacheco, who is leaving at year's end for a new job, has provided written authorization for Chairperson Lennon to become the grant administrator to move things forward in cooperation with Select Board (SB) and interim TA. The LHC's goal is for all seven of Lancaster's historic cemeteries to have National Register of Historic Places (NHRP) status. Three already have such status.

**Significant property developments in Lancaster -updates:**

Chairperson Lennon reported no further detailed updates have been received; however,

- A. She has heard positive comments on the appearance of the "White House" AKA "Fairlawn" which was recently sold by Atlantic Union College (AUC) to a private owner. The owner has greatly improved the facade visible from Main Street.
- B. Negotiations are apparently continuing with extensions given to the proposed buyer of the "Thayer Music Conservatory" AKA "The Homestead", owned by the Atlantic Union of Seventh-Day Adventists.
- C. No further reports on the status of the former Lancaster Industrial School for Girls (LISG) campus are available since a letter from the LHC was sent to the SB and others following the LHC tour of the campus in October.

**Memorial School Re-use Committee (MSRC):**

LHC appointees Heather Lennon and Mark Schryver have resigned from this committee. Communication with the committee chair remains unresolved and the LHC has numerous other matters to work on presently. If the MSRC needs and opinion from the LHC, they have been informed that it can be requested in writing and will be responded to in writing.

**Town Green:**

Since last month's LHC meeting, a cement-based handicapped ramp has been installed for the Netflix gazebo prop. Questions have surfaced regarding a preservation restriction on all the grassy area of the Green that was put into place when the Recreation Committee received a grant several years ago. LHC members are encouraged to attend the next meeting of the MSRC for further information.

The LHC still wants to propose a Civic Historic District (which has been on the LHC's goal list for over five years), to ensure future protection for the buildings surrounding the historic Town Green.

**Sign and Marker Refurbishment :**

Chairperson Lennon reported that a letter of thanks has been sent to the Stocker family for fixing the broken fencing at the Town Pound Historic Site. Also, a thank you was sent to Department of Public Works (DPW) Supt. Kevin Bartlett, for removing the fallen tree which broke the fence.

**Other Business:****Donation --**

A small commemorative collection of early American and Lancaster coins has been donated by William Boucher through SB member Jay Moody. William is the son of late SB member Donald Boucher. A thank you letter has been sent.

**Troughs**

Chairperson Lennon said that the Lancaster Historical Society (LHS) has agreed to help the volunteers of the four historic troughs and the Lover's Lane Site with any planting costs if requested moving forward. LHC members thanked Sue Billings of the Garden Club for help through the years with reimbursements for plantings. A letter will be sent to the Garden Club to make this change official.

**Wall Hangings in the Prescott Building (PB) --**

SB member Jay Moody has mentioned to Chairperson Lennon that the LHC might hang historical two dimensional images on walls in the PB. This would require a study of the wall strength before implementation. Discussion followed and John Farnsworth mentioned that Civil Engineering Department of the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) which has assisted Lancaster in the past and free of charge. The LHC agreed that John Farnsworth should pursue this with WPI and thanked him for his offer to help.

**Covid 19 Pandemic Data Collection on Lancaster 2020 to present:**

John Farnsworth said he has been clipping articles and information related to the pandemic and its impact on the town, plus saving data related to the work he does for the Board of Health.

As a long-time licensed sanitarian, John collects information related to current health issues facing the town. He would like to donate his collection thus far to the LHC for their files which would be maintained for future generations to reference.

Discussion followed including seeking possible Spanish flu records in the Town's Annual Reports of the years which impacted Lancaster and asking the Town Clerk if the town meeting records have any data on the Spanish flu pandemic. For example, the LHC files contain a record of a young member of the Sanderson family from North Lancaster who was a teacher in 1917 who contradicted the flu and died. Her sister-in-law donated some information related to her to the LHC in the late 1990s.

Joan Richards made a motion that the LHC accept John Farnsworth's data and Marcia Jakubowitz seconded the motion. Chairperson Lennon called for the vote and it was unanimous. John Farnsworth was thanked for his forthcoming donation and the LHC will pursue researching and maintaining records on pandemics impacting Lancaster.

**Future Meeting Date and Adjournment:**

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. via ZOOM.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mark Schryver, seconded by Karen Silverthorn and it carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 5:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Richards, Recorder for the Meeting.