

Lancaster Historical Commission (LHC)
Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2022

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

Members Absent: Joy Peach, Mark Schryver, and Jean Watson

Guest: John Farnsworth,

Call to Order:

Chairperson Lennon called the meeting (*via ZOOM*) (*ID: 871678380040 Passcode: 584697*) to order at 5:01 pm.

Meeting Minutes:

The meeting minutes of December 29, 2021 were reviewed, corrected and approved unanimously on a motion made by Karen Silverthorn and seconded by Marcia Jakubowicz.

LHC Annual Report for 2021:

The above mentioned Annual Report was reviewed and approved as written unanimously on a motion made by Joan Richards and seconded by Amy Brown.

Election of Chairperson for 2022:

Heather Lennon was elected unanimously to serve as Chairperson for 2022 on a motion made by Joan Richards and seconded by Karen Silverthorn. No other nominations were presented.

Wall Hangings in the Prescott Building (PB):

Agenda item #7 was next addressed to accommodate guest John Farnsworth. He reported that he has recently been in touch with a contact at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). Hopefully, a plan will move forward to assign engineering students there to study wall strength in the PB to potentially hang three large scale framed murals. Chairperson Lennon will work with John by providing photos and dimensions etc. through the coming months.

COVID 19 Pandemic Data Collection on Lancaster 2020 to the present:

John also mentioned he is compiling and organizing information he has been collecting on the current pandemic. At some point, he will turn a copy of his work over to the LHC for storage and future retrieval. Concurrently, Marcia Jakubowicz will be doing research on the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918 and how it impacted Lancaster LHC members generally agreed on the importance of these endeavors and several suggestions were made for sources of information. Both John and Marcia were thanked for taking on these two important projects.

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

Chairperson Lennon reported that she has been in touch with all three Select Board (SB) members, the interim Town Administrator (TA), and Finance Director Cheryl Gariepy regarding the above mention application. All are in favor of moving forward and the only thing needed is a signature from SB Chair Jason Allison. The deadline to submit the application is February 7, 2022. This project, to get all seven historic cemeteries in Lancaster on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) was started many years ago. If accepted the project will be well on its way to completion. Joan Richards and other LHC members thanked Heather for all the hard work.

Significant Property Developments in Lancaster -update:

Chairperson Lennon reported that two former Thayer family mansions, “Hawthorn Hill” and the “Homestead”, have recently been sold. She will share further information when the details can be verified.

Former Lancaster Industrial School for Girls (LISG) Campus – update:

No new information to report. SB liason Alix Turner will be contacted.

Memorial School Re-use Committee (MSRC):

The meeting that was scheduled for January has been postponed to February.

Town Green:

LHC members were highly encouraged to attend the February MSRC meeting to hear what Melissa Cryan from the MA Department of Conservation Services (DCS) has to say. She is expected to explain the details on a grant award made to the Recreation Committee (RC) a few years ago. Somehow, the RC was put in charge of the entire Town Green land space. This is thought to be in error and many unanswered questions remain. The situation needs to be examined carefully and corrected as soon as possible. Joan Richards expressed deep concerns regarding the lack of informing the LHC when all this took place.

For long-term protection of the Town Green, which is a treasured historical asset, the LHC’s long-time goal has been to create a Civic Historic District to ensure future protection not only for the buildings but also protection for the open land space.

Sign and Marker Refurbishment Plan:

Heather Lennon plans to speak with DPW Superintendant Kevin Bartlett, soon about getting Vo-Tech students to work on sign refurbishment.

OTHER BUSINESS:***Correspondence:***

The LHC has prepared a letter of support for Thayer Memorial Library (TML) director Joe Mule for his application for Massachusetts Preservation Project Funds (MPPF) (Round 28). The funds would be used to work on TML’s roof and windows which are in serious need of attention.

Donations:

1. Luther Burbank School Middle School principal Laura Friend librarian has donated six volumes of books, published in 1914, relating to the work and accomplishments of native son Luther Burbank. Marcia Jakubowicz mentioned that the Thayer Memorial Library has two complete sets which consist of twelve volumes each.
2. Denise Hawkins Aldrich has donated numerous items of Hawkins family memorabilia. The family has lived in Lancaster for several generations and once had a thriving poultry business.

LHC members unanimously accepted both donations on a motion made by Joan Richards and seconded by Marcia Jakubowicz. The items will be inventoried and catalogued and thank you letters will be sent.

The passing of Mary Zoll of Regonni Memorials in Clinton:

With great sadness Karen Silverthorn spoke of the death of Mary Zoll in December, 2021. Mary had worked with the LHC on numerous signs and memorial stones for Lancaster over the years. She will be greatly missed and it is our hope to continue working with her family on future plans for signs, markers and memorials.

Future Meeting Date and Adjournment:

The next meeting of the LHC is scheduled for Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. via ZOOM. A motion to adjourn was made by Joan Richards, seconded by Karen Silverthorn. It carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Richards, Recorder for the Meeting.