

Lancaster Historical Commission (LHC)
Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2023 via ZOOM

Present:

Amy Brown, Judy Elwell, Heather Lennon, Marcia Jakubowicz, Joan Richards, Karen Silverthorn

Absent:

Marcia Jakubowicz, Mark Schryver, Jean Watson

Guest:

John “Sandy” Foster, II

Call to Order:

Chairperson Heather Lennon called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm. Participants identified themselves with their names and addresses.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

Meeting Minutes from 12-28-2022 were approved unanimously as written on a motion made by Judy Elwell, and seconded by Karen Silverthorn.

Membership Appointments:

- A. Joan Richards moved that the LHC nominated Heather Lennon to serve as LHC Chair for 2023. Amy Brown seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Heather thanked the LHC for their support and confidence. No other nominations were made.
- B. Chairperson Lennon reported that she had mentioned to the Town Administrator (TA) that Joan Richards would be resigning when she was no longer a legal Lancaster resident. Joan Richards mentioned that the Select Board (SB) had thanked her for her thirty years of service at one of their December meetings. She went on to say that she had worked with six chairpersons and had met many talented and dedicated LHC members. She then tendered her letter of resignation and Judy Elwell made a motion to accept it with regret. Karen Silverthorn seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The LHC commends Joan highly for her thirty years of dedicated service and an official letter of regret at the resignation will be sent.

Joan Richards stated she since she was no longer a voting member and that she was volunteering to continue to take the meeting minutes for the evening. Heather Lennon thanked Joan Richards who was now a volunteer guest.

- C. Heather Lennon introduced John “Sandy” Foster to the meeting. Sandy had submitted his letter of interest to the SB to serve on the LHC and the LHC got a copy. Karen Silverthorn moved that members should vote John “Sandy” Foster, II in as a qualified candidate to fill the term left by Joan Richards. Amy Brown seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The Chairperson will forward this recommendation to the SB and TA. It will go on an upcoming SB agenda for approval and then Sandy will be sworn in. LHC members expressed much thanks to Sandy Foster for his willingness to serve.

National Register of Historical Places (NRHP) Survey and Planning Grant:

Chairperson Lennon, the town's "Grant Coordinator" for this project, reported that a consultant from the Public Archaeology Laboratory (PAL) in Pawtucket, RI came into the office to do cemetery research on January 17, 2022. The third phase of this work should be complete August, 2023 for presentation to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). Lancaster DPW Supt. Kevin Bartlett has been kept in the communication loop.

Hazardous Tree Removal in the Middle Cemetery (MC)

It was reported that Ike Kilbourn has completed the \$8,000 work in the MC and that he will pursue felling the stand of trees in the southeast corner at a future time. He will have to remove them by climbing and cutting directly as his crane cannot reach the area. More details will follow.

Local Plan for the Semiquincentennial in 2026:

Heather Lennon reported that she suggested forming a town committee to plan for the above mentioned event to the SB during the "Public Comment" period at a recent meeting, SB Chairperson Kerrigan said he is well aware of the upcoming event.

Community Preservation Act (CPA) Project:

Heather Lennon reported that an application requesting \$13,500.00 has been submitted for an overall assessment of the damaged stones and grave markers in the Middle Cemetery (MC). Once the application is accepted and the assessment is completed, specific plans for "hands on" labor to do the work can be arranged for subsequent years. More details will be forthcoming.

Significant Property Developments in Lancaster:

- A. The John Eliot Thayer II estate on George Hill is still on the market for sale.
- B. Restoration work continues on two historic residential structures formerly belonging to Atlantic Union College (AUC). They are near the intersection of Main Street and Sterling Road in South Lancaster.
- C. The remodeling work at the circa 1790 antique saltbox house at 2121 Main Street, the "Oliver Baldwin House" on Ballard Hill, is ongoing. Notably, the second floor is being altered so it will no longer be a classic "saltbox" design.

Historic Panels Project:

This agenda item is on hold.

Announcements:

Chairperson Lennon reported the draft of the *2022 Annual Report* has been completed and will be sent to LHC members for review and approval in advance of our next meeting which is prior to the February 24th deadline for submission to the Town Clerk. The 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports met with complications due to the COVID Pandemic and personnel turnovers in the Town Clerk's office.

Adjournment and Future Meeting Date:

Adjournment at 6:30 pm was approved unanimously on a motion made by Karen Silverthorn and seconded by Judy Elwell.

The next meeting of the LHC is scheduled for Wednesday, February 22, 2023, at 6:00 pm via ZOOM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Lennon, Chair