

Lancaster Historical Commission (LHC)
Meeting Minutes
March 29, 2023 via ZOOM

Present:

Amy Brown, Judy Elwell, Sandy Foster, Heather Lennon, Marcia Jakubowicz, Mark Schryver, Karen Silverthorn

Absent: Jean Watson

Guests: Martha Moore, Richard Trussell

Call to Order:

Chairperson Heather Lennon called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. Participants identified themselves with their names and addresses.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

Meeting Minutes from 2-22-23 were approved unanimously as corrected on a motion made by Karen Silverthorn, and seconded by Judy Elwell.

Conflict of Interest Training:

Chairperson Lennon asked if any members had yet received a link from the Town Clerk for this *required* training. Since no one had, the Clerk will again be asked to send it out.

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

Chairperson Lennon, the town's "Grant Coordinator" for this project, reported that she attended a ZOOM meeting on March 10, 2023 together with representatives from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and the Public Archaeology Laboratory (PAL) to discuss progress on the first of three phases of work. The completion of "Phase One" has been delayed due to poor weather during the winter months. If all goes well, the third and last phase should be finished in August of 2023.

Hazardous Cemetery Tree Removal: The southeast corner of the Middle Cemetery (MC) has six to twelve trees remaining to be cut and cleared. Finance Committee guest Richard Trussell commented that \$12,000.00 should be available for this in the 2024 budget. An estimate to do the work will be pursued.

Bicentennial Event -- Lafayette's Farewell Tour -- September 3, 2024

After a "brainstorming" session with the Lancaster Historical Society (LHS) Executive Board, Heather Lennon and Karen Silverthorn met with Joe Mule and Rachel Rosengard at the Thayer Memorial Library (TML) to discuss and propose a partnership for this event which will take place between 9 am and 10 am on the above mentioned date. A partnership was agreed to and progress reports will be forthcoming.

Local Plan for the Semiquincentennial in 2026:

Heather Lennon reported that Stephen Kerrigan, Select Board (SB) Chair, is aware of this event but has not yet formed a planning committee. Nonetheless, as before stated, the LHC already has plans underway to upgrade the MC in anticipation of a special event to honor the thirty-seven Revolutionary War Veterans buried there.

Community Preservation Act (CPA) Project:

Chairperson Lennon reported that the application for a total assessment of the MC previously submitted to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has been accepted. Next it needs to be approved by voters at the upcoming Town Meeting on May 3, 2023. An update will be provided after the meeting.

Significant Property Developments in Lancaster:

The owners of the “Hawthorn Hill” estate on George Hill wish to have their property listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NHRP). Per Ben Haley of MHC, a re-evaluation will need to be done with the former estate being considered as an historic “District”. The support of abutting property owners with contributing historical assets will be pursued. Updates will be forthcoming.

Historic Panels Project:

Chairperson Lennon reported that John Farnsworth has recently been in touch with his contact at Worcester Polytechnical Institute (WPI). Plans are to have a team of students come out to Lancaster to evaluate the wall strengths in the Prescott Building to see if the panels can be safely hung.

Announcements:

The LHS will present its fourth program of the season on Sunday, May 7, 2023 at 2 pm at the Dexter Room at TML. It will be on “The Old Common and Lancaster’s Native Son Horace W.S. Cleveland”.

Unanticipated Item:

Marcia Jakubowicz suggested going back to “in person” monthly meetings rather than on ZOOM. Discussion followed and opinions were expressed in favor of both. Guest Dick Trussell suggested using a “Hybrid”. This matter will be pursued and Chairperson Lennon will report on it next month.

Adjournment and Future Meeting Date:

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

The next meeting of the LHC is scheduled for Wednesday, April 26, 2023, at 7:00 pm via ZOOM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Lennon, Chair

