

TOWN OF LANCASTER, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION (LHC)

Meeting Minutes of Lancaster Historical Commission
8-31-20

VIA ZOOM

Invite Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89499993351>

Call to Order:

Chairperson Lennon called the meeting to order on Monday, August 31, 2020 at 7:00 pm. The meeting started late due to a problem with the ZOOM connection.

Present: Amy Brown, Liz Colley, Marcia Jakubowitz, Heather Lennon, Joy Peach, Joan Richards, Mark Schryver, Karen Silverthorn, and Jean Watson

Absent: None

Guest: Sharon Murphy Boski

The agenda items were discussed as follows:

1. **LHC Meeting Minutes:** Meeting minutes from 3-2-20 were approved as written unanimously on a motion made by Karen Silverthorn and seconded by Marcia Jakubowicz.
2. **Access to Prescott Building (PB) during COVID times:** Chairperson Lennon reported that the Town Administrator (TA), has given her written permission to be in the building in accordance with the Governor's regulations and safety standards. Access is from 9 am to 4 pm on Tuesdays. One other person may also be allowed in on those days.
3. **Town Green Committee (TGC):** Jay Moody, Chair of the Select Board (SB), has asked Heather Lennon to chair a temporary Town Green Committee. Plans are to meet with members via ZOOM to discuss guidelines and rules regarding signage on for the Town Green. The five member TGC will report to the SB by November 1, 2020. **Note:** It has recently been reported in the ITEM that future Netflix filming using the gazebo on the Town Green has been cancelled.
4. **Proposed Property Developments/Sales in Lancaster:**
 - A. **Perkins School (PS):** The PS has presented the Planning Board (PLB) with plans for a new dormitory, school building and addition to the Janeway Center. Also, a new driveway across the lawn the front of the "Manor House" is planned. The future use of White Hall, the dormitory to be vacated, is as yet undetermined. It could possibly be used for affordable housing.
 - B. **Hawthorn Hill Estate** – Special Permitting for 23 houses, brought forward through the engineering firm of Ducharme and Dillis has not yet been approved by the PLB.

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It was asked if a Project Notification Form (PNF) had been submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). The answer was “not yet”.

William Van Pelt IV and Marc Deere, partners from Mid-Continent Companies LTD of Houston, TX, are negotiating with the Bramananda Saraswati Foundation (BSF) to buy the 55 acre parcel which includes the mansion. Their plan would be to fully restore the house and gardens for use as a wedding venue. These potential buyers favor getting the estate nominated for National Register (NR) status. It is already “eligible” per a recent submission done by Heather Lennon and approved by MHC.

C. AUC’s White House AKA “Fairlawn” -- Chairperson Lennon reported that the new owner, Pastor Carl Behrmann of Goffstown, NH told her something of his plans for the four acre estate. He would like to restore the mansion and surrounding grounds to become a “Beacon of Light” in the community. He also would like to demolish the “Slice” (brown house) which was originally attached to the mansion. It is now located at the north corner East George Hill Road and Main Street. He envisions four units of housing to be developed there.

D. Thayer Conservatory of Music — There is current negotiation with the owners for a possible sale to Carol Linda Applebury who is interested in the building to be used as a day school for autistic children. According to Dr. Connie Drexler, the Music School (now leasing) would be allowed to continue, but the terms are unknown. The proposed sale is not yet complete.

6. Articles from Annual Town Meeting:

- A. **Scenic Road Bylaw** – This passed and has been submitted to the MA Attorney General’s office for approval.
- B. **Community Preservation Act (CPA)** – This passed and will be on the ballot in November for final approval.

7. Historic Cemeteries Initiative: Members of the Financial Committee (FinCom) are aware that funds are needed for tree removal which is an issue for the proper maintenance of our historic cemeteries.

8. Scout Project(s):

- A. Members of Lancaster Boy Scout Troop #1 under Scoutmaster John Aurin recently gathered to clear an old cart path along the north border of the Middle Cemetery. This pathway will be part of a proposed walking trail highlighting places of historical significance throughout the town. A photo of the Scouts in action providing a community service appeared in the ITEM. Hopefully, a sign will eventually be posted, near Route 70 and the trail, to identify the nearby site of Lancaster’s first two meetinghouses. Mary Zoll, of Regonini-Zoll in Clinton, has produced a mock-up of the sign which is estimated to cost about \$3,000. Funding sources have not yet been determined.

B. Amy Brown is working to prepare a trail path/scavenger hunt for the Cub Scouts at the request of Cub Scout Leader Scott Granger. Details will be available soon.

9. **Renewal of Collections Agreement between the Lancaster Historical Society (LHS) the LHC** - Chairperson Lennon is preparing an update of the agreement (previously signed by past chair Michael Sczerzen) putting on permanent loan all item from the LHS to the LHC. This will be finalized at the next LHC meeting.

10. **Special Project Reports:**

1. **“Ballard Hill” sign** -- This sign, obscured by brush, will be relocated to a spot closer to Route 117 when the DPW can schedule the time. Bob Lidstone of the Lancaster Land Trust approves of this move.

2. **PB/ Town Green Signage** – Chairperson Lennon has recently reviewed and discussed proposed new signage with a contractor chosen by the town. The finished signs should improve directions for the general public.

11. **Accessions:**

- A. Rowlandson archeological dig relics from 1979 – donated by AUC through campus Administrator, Barbara Fuller.
- B. Genealogy book – donated by a descendant of Lancaster’s earliest settlers
- C. Three large file cabinets for the office -- donated through Linnea Lakin Servey

12. **Hosmer Project :**

Marcia Jakubowicz introduced Sharon Boski who has a degree from the University of Connecticut in Puppetry. She recently visited the PB to see the Hosmer Collection. LHS members approved her proposal for filming a 10-minute promotional film for use by the Northeastern Regional Puppetry of America group. They will film in the PB in September and give a copy to the LHC to use for promoting the Hosmer collection. Chairperson Lennon thanked Ms. Boski and will be in contact with her shortly for scheduling.

13. **Adjournment and Future Meeting Date:** The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm. The LHC will meet next on Monday, September 28, 2020 at 6:30 pm. via ZOOM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Richards, Recorder for the Meeting