

MINUTES
LANCASTER HISTORICAL COMMISSION
November 27, 2017

A meeting of the Lancaster Historical Commission (LHC) was held on Monday, November 27, 2017 at 6:30 pm at 131 Main Street, South Lancaster, in the LHC Office.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Heather Lennon, Marcia Jakubowicz, Jay Moody, Joy Peach, Joan Richards, Michael Sczerzen, and Karen Silverthorn

ABSENT: Mark Schryver, Jean Watson

GUESTS: Michael MacCue, Commission on Disability (COD)

Ashley Driscoll – LHC volunteer

CALL TO ORDER: Michael Sczerzen called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

ATHERTON & PONAKIN BRIDGES: Heather Lennon reported that she has spoken with Orlando Pacheco regarding these two bridges which are on the National Registrar and the possibility of including them in the developing town-wide trail system. A structural analysis of both bridges by qualified professional needs to be done before any further action can be taken. This will be pursued through Town Planner Noreen Piazza. Discussion also included pursuing “National Landmark” status for the Ponakin Bridge.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY: (through the State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB):

Heather Lennon reported that she met with Orlando Pacheco pertaining to a Veterans Preservation Project grant possibility. She will take the responsibility for writing the grant. The deadline for this application draft is December 15, 2017. Orlando indicated that the town had the funds to meet the matching requirement for the application. Money for a granite marker with a bronze plaque will be requested. Heather will also pursue the details for a bronze plaque to be attached to a memorial marker. Joy Peach’s research on the soldiers of the War for Independence during 1775 to 1783 indicates that more than 738 men served from the town of Lancaster. Joan Richards said she would ask John Farnsworth if he is aware of any boulders large enough to be considered.

HISTORIC CEMETERIES:

LHC members discussed the gravestone damage done by fallen tree limbs during recent storms. The need for a grant for landscape preservation was mentioned. Heather Lennon introduced Ashley Driscoll, who has volunteered to do a project of locating and matching displaced foot stones with their head stones in the Middle Cemetery.

TOWN GREEN BUILDING RE-USE PLANNING:

Jay Moody said the present Re-use Committee has been focused on the Memorial School. They have not been able to move forward as they are waiting for input from the Board of Selectmen (BOS). Jay also indicated that he is in possession of several files created by Larry Shoer several years ago relating to the potential re-use of the Memorial School.

LHC members expressed concern that town officials did not have public hearings prior to the listing of articles seeking to sell or convey the Town Hall and Memorial School at the October special town meeting. The articles were not approved by voters but the matter will, no doubt, come up again.

Michael Sczerzen, Chair, recognized Michael MacCue, from the COD who wanted to ask questions related to the use of the Town Hall once the employees have moved into the Prescott Building. MacCue expressed frustration and concern over the present space in the Community Center and indicated that his committee would like to have office space in the Town Hall once

the present employees are moved to the Prescott Building. Further discussion revolved around handicapped accessibility requirements. The LHC is in unanimous agreement that the Town Hall should remain open, heated and used for voting and by town boards and committees.

ROWLANDSON ROCK AND TOWN POUND HISTORIC SITES:

No report given. Scout Leader John Aurin is expected to report at a later time.

TOWN CLOCK MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU): Heather Lennon reported that Orlando Pacheco is waiting to hear back from the First Church Standing Committee relating to the terms of the agreement.

HISTORIC CEMETERIES INITIATIVE:

Michael Sczerzen reported that another tree limb fell during a recent storm and the Department of Public Works (DPW) has removed some of the debris. Miraculously, the fallen limb missed doing significant damage to the grave markers in the area. Heather Lennon has kept Kevin Bartlett aware of the LHC's concerns.

Lancaster resident Sue Billings, who is working under the Senior Tax Abatement Program, is continuing to transcribe information on burials from the file drawers in the Cemetery Department's office. She agreed to share a copy of her finished work with the LHC to keep on file in the office. At some point, it is hoped that the stones can be documented through photographs as well.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has not responded regarding our National Register submission for all seven historic cemeteries. It has been several months since the forms were sent and it is hoped they can be approved as a "batch".

PRESCOTT BUILDING UPDATE:

Michael Sczerzen reported that the building rehabilitation still seems to be on track. A January move into the building is anticipated. National Grid will install the long awaited transformer within the week. The Community Center will now be on the new transformer. Power outages in recent wind storms caused significant inconvenience for the Community Center as well as the Thayer Memorial Library. The next meeting of the ADHOC committee is scheduled for December 15, 2017 at 12 noon in the Town Hall Auditorium.

LHC members discussed moving forward with a letter to the BOS recommending that the multi-purpose meeting room be named for Phyllis Farnsworth who served 29 years on the LHC and was chairperson for 23 years.

A discussion on municipal parking and signage once the Prescott Building is opened included a suggestion to completely eliminate all parking on Thayer Drive except for the handicapped spots near the library and church. It was felt that parking lots in the rear of the campus should be improved and utilized.

HISTORIC SIGN REFURBISHMENT:

No report given.

FINANCE REPORT/BUDGET:

No report given.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

The minutes of the November, 2017 meeting were read, corrected, and approved on a motion made by Joy Peach and seconded by Heather Lennon. The vote carried unanimously.

LHC MEMBERSHIP CHANGES:

Joan Richards reported all letters related to the change for Jean Watson, from a full member to an associate member and for Jay Moody to change from an associate member to full member have been sent and received by the BOS who have it on their next agenda for action.

ACCESSIONS:

None reported.

ADJOURNMENT AND FUTURE MEETING DATE:

Next Meeting: Monday, December 18, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in the LHC office at 131 Main Street.

Joan Richards made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 pm.. It was seconded by Heather Lennon. Michael Sczerzen called for the vote and it was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Richards, Recorder for the Meeting