

**MEETING MINUTES
LANCASTER HISTORICAL COMMISSION
August 26, 2019**

A meeting of the Lancaster Historical Commission (LHC) was held on Monday, August 26, 2019 at 6:50 p.m. in the LHC office on the upper level of the Prescott Building.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Amy Brown, Liz Colley, Marcia Jakubowicz, Heather Lennon, Joy Peach, Joan Richards, Mark Schryver, Karen Silverthorn

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jean Watson

GUEST:

Jay Moody

CALL TO ORDER:

Heather Lennon called the meeting to order at 6:50 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The meeting minutes of June 24, 2019 were read, corrected and approved unanimously on a motion made by Karen Silverthorn and seconded by Amy Brown.

PROPOSED GOODRIDGE BROOK 40B DEVELOPMENT:

Heather Lennon reported on a CLINTON ITEM article posted on August 16, 2019 about an appeal made by a group of Lancaster citizens and businesses against a recent ZBA decision to allow the Goodrich Brook housing development project to move forward.

She also read an email from Town Administrator (TA) Pacheco related to LHC meeting minutes from May 24, 2019. The TA wanted to correct a statement by an LHC member about the lack of an adequate and timely "Housing Production Plan" and "Safe Harbor" status for the town.

Discussion followed and the consensus among members was that it is very unfortunate that the town of Lancaster is now facing difficulties and legal expenses that most likely could have been avoided.

HAWTHORN HILL ESTATE:

Heather Lennon reported on a CLINTON ITEM article posted on August 24, 2019 stating that nineteen acres of the estate have been sold. Seven "Approval Not Required" (ANR) lots are now being developed along Hilltop Road.

TOWN GREEN – UPDATE:

When copies of public records were obtained, it was discovered that the decision to keep the Netflix Gazebo on the Town Green had been made by the Board of Selectmen (BOS) on August 30, 2018. It is now clearly apparent that all efforts to achieve a different outcome through the later months were to no avail due to this early decision from top town officials at the outset.

EXHIBIT ROOM AND HOSMER DOLLHOUSE PROJECT:

Marcia Jakubowicz mentioned that, with the exception of the pumpkin colored one, all the dollhouses are now complete. She recommended that the Parsons-Chandler house remain unfurnished, as furniture of the correct scale is difficult to find and would be very costly.

LHC MEETING MINUTES 8-26-19 approved

Heather Lennon said that volunteer woodworker Dick Belanger is building a mock puppet stage for the Exhibit Room to display numerous Hosmer puppets and marionettes.

NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS FOR TWO LANCASTER CEMETERIES:

Heather Lennon reported that she has copies of letters sent to town officials indicating that two town cemeteries, the Old Settlers' Burial Ground (OSBG) and the Middle Cemetery (MC), will be officially nominated on September 11, 2019 at the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) headquarters in Boston. The meeting is open to the public and Heather plans to attend to represent the LHC.

It is hoped that all four remaining Lancaster historic cemeteries will be nominated in the future. Three of the four are already "eligible". Funds must first be found to pay for the required professional consultants to do the work according to MHC's specifications. Members thanked Heather for her continued efforts to do the preparatory work.

PROJECT FOOTSTONE:

This project is currently on hold.

ROWLANDSON ROCK AND TOWN POUND PROJECTS:

Eagle Scout candidate Nolan Stocker and his father have re-erected the Town Pound sign and work has been completed in that area. An historical sign, which will be paid for by the Lancaster Historical Society, has just been erected at the Rowlandson Rock Historical site by Regonini-Zoll of Clinton, MA.

The project is now ready to sign off and hopefully some captioned pictures can be published in the local newspapers to bring attention to these accomplishments.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ACCESSIONS:

Letters and photocopied house pictures were once again sent to the Massachusetts Department of Capital Assets Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), the RFK Action Corps School (RFK) with copies to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). The three historical houses along Old Common Road are in a National Historic District and are all currently in very dilapidated condition. So far, a response has been received from DCAMM saying they are "actively" looking into the situation.

A case of bird specimens that had been on display in the former Thayer Bird Museum on Main Street in the early twentieth century was donated through Principal Sean O'Shea of the Mary Rowlandson Elementary School where the case has been housed for many years. The front glass on the case was broken in the move but will be repaired.

A possible Native artifact has been donated by Boy Scout Benjamin Munyon who found the item while working at the Rowlandson Rock Historic Site. Amy Brown will bring this to the attention of personnel at the Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, MA to get an opinion on what the object may have been.

Heather Lennon reported that Lancaster resident Leo Paquette is planning to donate a mahogany table to the LHC as a gift from himself and in memory of his deceased wife Mary.

LHC members were interested to hear that the Native American Museum at Fruitlands has a Mary Rowlandson diorama, which is not being displayed. Consensus among members was that if it were ever to be de-accessioned, it would make a fine and appropriate display in Lancaster.

SIGNS AND MARKERS PROJECT:

Personnel at the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MA DOT) have advised Heather Lennon to write to her State Representative to see if funds can be found to refurbish two historical signs erected in

LHC MEETING MINUTES 8-26-19 approved

Lancaster in 1930. Representative Harold Naughton Jr. has been sent a letter but so far there has been no response. Also, Amy Brown, who is doing an inventory check on all historical signs in Lancaster, will meet with Heather Lennon soon to review the list as she continues her work.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT PLAN - DISASTER PLAN COMPONENT:

Karen Silverthorn volunteered to work on this and will speak to Joe Mule about coordinating efforts with TML to get the job done.

OTHER MATTERS:

Liz Colley mentioned that the CLINTON ITEM, which has been based in Clinton for over 100 years, will have their Clinton office closed. The WORCESTER TELEGRAM & GAZETTE very recently and abruptly informed staff members and most have lost their jobs. Lancaster area news will still be covered but from a different location.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

As of August 1, 2019, the LHC office is once again open most Tuesdays from 10 am to 2 pm or by appointment.

The next LHC Meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 30, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the LHC Office.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was by made by Joan Richards at 7:50 pm. Joy Peach seconded the motion, a vote was called for and it carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Richards, Recorder for the meeting.