

2000 Westford Historical Commission Annual Report

The Westford Historical Commission had a very active year continuing to fulfill its charter: preserving, protecting and developing the historical and archeological assets of the town.

Membership. Mrs. Bette Hook, a long-time member of the Historical Commission, retired this year. Mrs. Hook has served the Commission and the town well and we thank her for her many years of dedicated service in fostering Westford's history. Stacey Perron, an Alternate Member, was appointed to replace Mrs. Hook, and Deborahanne Mayer was appointed as a new Alternate Member. Both are providing active support to the Commission. Our Chair, Ken Tebbetts, was named "Person of the Year" by the Kiwanas Club for his outstanding leadership of the Historical Commission, for his many activities of service to the town, and for his efforts in the preservation of our unique history. Pam Hall was hired as an administrative assistant to help with the increasing paperwork load of the Commission; her activities have significantly increased our productivity.

National Register of Historic Places. In July 1999, we submitted our nomination for placing the *Graniteville Historic District* on the National Register of Historic Places to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC); we are still waiting to obtain a response from them. In May 2000 we submitted our nomination to place *Forge Village Historic District* on the National Register, and we held a hearing at Cameron School on this nomination on September 6. We also requested that the MHC review both *Brookside Historic District* and *Parker Village Historic District* for possible inclusion on the National Register. The MHC informed us that we should submit a formal nomination for Brookside, but that they had concerns about Parker Village's historical integrity and would like to visit the area. We are moving ahead to place both districts on the National Register. We thank Sanford Johnson, Preservation Consultant, for researching and preparing our National Register nominations.

Demolition Delay Bylaw. We continue to administer Westford's Demolition Delay Bylaw. We developed a set of criteria and a process for administering the bylaw, and Bob Oliphant prepared a brochure that describes the bylaw. We also prepared a new "Determination of Applicability" form for distribution at Town Hall. We obtained the names of several house movers. We have processed eight demolition permits resulting in an opportunity for us to accurately research, record and photograph the historic properties prior to their removal to another site or their demolition:

- Old Parsonage of the United Methodist Church of Westford, 4 Church Street, built c. 1878, recommended preservation; may be moved to Meadowbrook Farm.
- House at 17 Old Road, built c. 1790, recommended preservation; we are working to find a lot for the house.
- House at 141 Groton Road, built c. 1717, approved demolition after photographing it.
- House & barn at 145 Littleton Road, built c. 1850, recommended preservation of barn but not of house; working with 4-H to move the barn to the Westford 4-H grounds.
- Barn at 162 Main Street, built c. 1900, demolished in violation of bylaw; penalties imposed.
- House at 45 West Street, built 1945, determination of applicability sought; does not fall under bylaw.
- House at 41 Providence Road, demolition approved.
- Garage/former Forge Village fire house at 72 Concord road, demolished in violation of bylaw, penalties imposed; house at 72 Concord road is to be moved back on the lot and renovated.

MHC 2000 Preservation Award. The Commission was very pleased to submit a winning nomination of June (Wilson) & Charles S. Kennedy for the prestigious Massachusetts Historical Commission's *2000 Preservation*

Award for their 35-year service in making historic preservation an integral part of the Town of Westford, particularly in the Award Categories of:

- Adaptive reuse/rehabilitation (Parkerville Schoolhouse, Westford Museum).
- Craftsperson (antique furniture restoration, church renovations, memorial cross, spinning, quilting).
- Education (newspaper series, Parkerville living history program).
- Local preservation (Town Museum, Parkerville Schoolhouse, First Parish Church Archives).
- Media (oral histories, newspaper articles, the book *Westford Recollections*, photographs, slide show), and
- Restoration (Town Museum, Parkerville Schoolhouse, church archives).

Copies of the award nomination are available at the J. V. Fletcher Library and at the Museum Cottage. The award was presented by Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin at a ceremony held at the Massachusetts State Archives on May 18, 2000.

Document Preservation Grant. The Westford Historical Commission joined the JV Fletcher Library and Town Clerk to have a survey performed of the town's historical records and record holders under the \$6600 grant we obtained from the Documentary Heritage Grant program of the Massachusetts Historical Records Advisory Board (MHRAB). Town records definitely require better storage facilities. We also jointly sponsored several seminars relating to document preservation.

Westford Knight Preservation. In an effort to find an effective means of preserving the "Westford Knight" carving from further deterioration, particularly during the winter months, the Commission contacted several experts for recommendations, but we were unable to obtain a definitive recommendation. The Commission supported the "Westford Knight" exhibit at the Westford Museum, which was opened by Ms. Laura Zolo.

Work With Other Town Boards. Jane Hinckley continues to provide liaison between the Historical Commission and Town Hall. Working with the Conservation Commission, the Historical Commission identified sites of historic significance for inclusion on a new overlay map of Westford. Stacey Perron is leading this effort. Stacey was also named a member of the new Monument Committee. Ken Tebbetts participated as a member of the Request for Proposal Review Committee for the renovation of the historic Brookside Mill. The Commission has supported the renovation of Abbot Mill and is working with the developer to preserve historical aspects of the site. We discussed the importance of identifying property of historical significance with Mrs. Christine MacMillan of the Land Use Priorities Committee and provided inputs for her use. We submitted names to the Conservation Commission for a new boardwalk to be installed along Littleton Road. Ken Tebbetts will represent the Commission on the town Community Preservation Act Committee.

Scenic Roads. The Commission is developing signage to identify the four Scenic Roads within the town of Westford.

Capital Improvements. Our capital improvements budget was used to install a new oil-fired furnace in the Westford Museum. We are also obtaining quotes for installation of new windows in the Museum Cottage. New shades for the windows were purchased for the Museum Cottage. A formal survey was performed of the Museum, the Museum Cottage and the Parish Center for the Arts to determine our compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Tebbetts, Chair

Bob Oliphant, 1st Vice Chair

Jane Hinckley, 2nd Vice Chair

Marea Joncas, Secretary

Sally Benedict, Treasurer

Roland Pendlebury

Stacey Perron

Alternates:

Phil Gilbert

Deborahanne Mayer

Administrative Assistant:

Pam Hall

Photograph Caption:

Bob Oliphant, Jane Hinckley, Secretary William F. Galvin, Charles & June Kennedy, and Ken Tebbetts at the *2000 Preservation Award* ceremony held at the Massachusetts State Archives on May 18, 2000.