

2001 Westford Historical Commission Annual Report

The Westford Historical Commission had an active year continuing to fulfill its charter: preserving, protecting and developing the historical and archeological assets of the town. Outstanding achievements include getting Graniteville and Forge Village Historic Districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places and winning a 2001 Massachusetts Preservation Award for the second year in a row.

National Register of Historic Places. The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) voted to approve our nomination for placing the *Graniteville Historic District* on the National Register of Historic Places on June 13, 2001. A public hearing for the Graniteville Historic District was held on May 9, 2001 at the Graniteville Pride Committee meeting. MHC at their December 12, 2001 meeting in Boston approved our nomination to place *Forge Village Historic District* on the National Register. We held a hearing at Cameron School on this nomination on November 12. We also submitted nominations for two additional historic districts *Brookside Historic District* and *Parker Village Historic District* to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for inclusion on the National Register. We immediately began work on establishing eligibility for listing on the National Register of our cemeteries. The Commission hired Sanford Johnson to write nominations for the Fairview Cemetery and the West Burial Ground on Concord Road. We anticipate to submit the cemetery nominations to the MHC in the spring 2002.

Jane Hinckley took responsibility for getting the two new historic districts properly marked with signs at each entrance. Jane worked with the highway department to get this accomplished.

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 we developed 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 8 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, 4 Church Street (recommended preservation; may be moved to Forge Village Ballpark).
- House at 17 Old Road, built c. 1790, recommended preservation; we are working to find a lot for the house.
- 49 Cold Spring Road, demolition approved
- House & barn at 145 Littleton Road, built c. 1850, recommended preservation of barn; working with 4-H to move the barn to the Westford 4-H grounds. While the house was not deemed to be historically significant possible acquisition by the Housing Authority.
- 8 First Street, demolition approved
- 527 Groton Road, demolition approved
- 3 Rutland Circle, not eligible for review built in 1964

MHC 2001 Preservation Award. The Commission was very pleased to submit a winning nomination of Bob Webb, Margaret Webb and Bob Waskiewicz for the prestigious Massachusetts Historical Commission's 2001 *Preservation Award* for their outstanding work in preserving and restoring the former Gould Picking Farm today known as Meadow Brook Farm. The nomination listed the following areas as accomplishments:

- Adaptive reuse/rehabilitation (House, Barn and out buildings).
- Community Outreach (Outreach Gardens grown by local churches for local missions)

- Education (newspaper series, presentation of restoration at Museum Lecture Series).
- Local preservation
- Media (newspaper articles, slide show),
- Restoration (House, Barn and out-buildings).

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 an awards ceremony held at the Massachusetts State Archives on May 31, 2001.

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, Phil Gilbert made a wooden cover for the "Westford Knight" during the winter months. The Commission worked with interested "Westford Knight" groups to develop a long-term solution to preventing further deterioration of the engraving.

Work With Other Town Boards. Ken Tebbetts represents the Commission on the Community Preservation Act Committee and is working with the Recreation Commission to move the old Parsonage in Graniteville to Forge Village ball field for their use. Stacey Perron represents the Commission on the Monument Committee, and Sally Benedict is our liaison with the planning board. Jane Hinckley is our liaison with Town Hall and the Library. The School Committee invited us to their "Westford Trivia Night" to welcome the new superintendent of schools, Stephan Foster. We worked with Graniteville Pride and Forge Village Coalition on the historic district public hearings and signage.

Scenic Roads. The Commission completed the sign project to identify with signs the four Scenic Roads. Westford's scenic roads are Hildreth Street, Old Road, Old Lowell Road and Vose Road.

Capital Improvements. Our capital improvements budget was used to install air conditioning in the Westford Museum and Cottage. A new bathroom sink was installed in the Museum. We are also obtaining quotes for installation of new windows in the Museum Cottage. New shades for the windows were purchased and installed by volunteers for the Museum.

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