



PETERSHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION and PETERSHAM HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Annual Report for July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

The Petersham Historic District Commission & Historical Commission met monthly throughout the year.

During the year the Commission received Project Applications and held Public Hearings for two projects: A sun room/porch rear addition at 37 South Main Street. The HDC approved the Application. Removal of an exterior door on the rear ell and replacement with cedar clapboard at 37 North Main Street. The HDC approved the Application.

Projects previously approved by the HDC that were underway during the year included the Library porch roof renovation, construction of an addition at a private residence at 11 Common Street, and signage revision at TTOR's North Common Meadow. In May 2016, the HDC-HC, along with other town committees, met with the town's planning consultant Ted Carman for a general review of the Nichewaug Inn & Academy property located in the District.

The biggest undertaking for the HDC-HC during the year was the review and editing of the existing HDC-HC Bylaw XII which runs 11 pages in the Town's Bylaws and governs the work of the HDC-HC. The Commission had felt for sometime that this effort was necessary as the Bylaw contained years of patched in modifications accidentally creating confusing sections for the reader. In an effort to remove contradictions and errors and improve readability and clarity, the HDC drafted an administrative revision of the Bylaw. In addition, the District Map was updated for clarity of graphic appearance. All Commission members worked on and reviewed updated drafts on a regular basis throughout the year, with Lynn Shaw coordinating the effort. The draft was reviewed by the Planning Board and by Town Counsel Kopelman & Paige. A Public Hearing was held with the Planning Board in April 2016 for residents' review and input. The final proposed Bylaw and District Map were approved by voters at the June 2016 Annual Town Meeting.

Beginning in August 2015, HDC member Chris Mandel worked closely with Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) consultant Stacey Spies on National Register applications for the two historic East Street Schoolhouses, the 1846 Fourth District and the 1849 Fifth District schools. In March and June 2016, the MHC approved the applications nominating the Schoolhouses for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places; from there the applications went on to the federal review level at the National Park Service. In Summer 2015, the HDC-HC reviewed bids from contractors Doug Cameron and Roger Graves for repair and renovation work at the town-owned Fourth District/Ledgeville Schoolhouse and recommended to the Selectboard that the two contractors be hired. Nancy Allen worked on coordination efforts with both contractors during the Fall and Spring. Petersham Historical Society (PHS) Board member Jean Sinclair provided invaluable support to Chris and Nancy as the Ledgeville School restoration project was in full swing. PHS Board members Henry Woolsey, Jean Sinclair, Paul Youd, Larry Buell, and Bob Bellefeuille, along with residents Barbara Metzger and Dave Malysa, joined HDC members Mark Bishop, Chris, and Nancy to clean out the Ledgeville School so as to make it ready for renovations. The volunteer group also relocated many items from the School to temporary storage at the Center School and organized a sale of items declared surplus by the town.

During the year, Lynn Shaw kept the Commission apprised of repair and restoration work at the historic 1889 Hearse House in the Center Cemetery and which the Cemetery Commission has oversight. Chase Davis of CD Masonry in Oxford was contracted to handle the stone work for that project and Tim White of Barre handled the iron work.

In 2015, with the guidance and coordination of Mark Bishop, the HDC-HC began to offer a public lecture series. Guest speakers and topics for Fall 2015 featured Joseph Cornish on 'Maintaining & Caring for Historic Homes' and Sally Zimmerman on 'Energy Conservation & Retrofitting Older Homes.' Both speakers were from Historic New England. In Spring 2016, HDC member Bob Clark presented, 'Seasons in the Wild' featuring 40 years of his nature photography in the Quabbin Reservoir area. The programs were well attended and we thank the Library for use of the building.

The Commission is grateful to Petersham residents and fellow town officials for providing their support for preservation of Petersham's history. Respectfully submitted, *Commission Members, July 2015–June 2016:*

~ Nancy Allen, *Chair*; Robert Clark, *Vice Chair*, Mark Bishop, *Clerk*
Jeremy Gabrenas, Christine Mandel, Lynn Shaw, *members*

ABOUT THE PETERSHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT Through the diligent hard work of town residents and the commitment of Petersham voters, the Petersham Historic District was established in 1967 as one of the earliest in the Commonwealth and followed the signing of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966. Today, there are more than 600 Historic Districts in cities and towns across Massachusetts. Since the 1930s, over 2,300 local Historic Districts have been established across the United States and the number keeps growing as towns discover and appreciate the benefits brought about by preservation.