



PETERSHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
*and* PETERSHAM HISTORICAL COMMISSION

3 South Main Street • Petersham, Massachusetts 01366 • 978-724-3353 tel • 978-724-3501 fax

## Annual Report for July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018

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

The Commission received Project Applications and held Public Hearings for two projects during the year: An Application was received from a resident requesting to add a shed dormer to the first floor front side of their single story house; the addition would be visible from the public way. A site visit and Public Hearing were held. Upon review, the HDC did not approve the Application due to its impact on architectural features of the dwelling. An Application was received from a resident requesting to replace windows on the front facade of their garage, the structure is visible from the public way. A site visit and Public Hearing were held. Upon review, the HDC approved the project as all parties agreed to a specific window style and a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued to the owner with a copy to the Building Inspector.

During the year the Commission received two requests from residents to determine whether their projects required HDC review. Upon review, the HDC determined both projects involved only ordinary repair & maintenance with one of them not visible from the public way as all work was being conducted at the rear side of the dwelling. The HDC issued Certificates of Non-Applicability to both owners with copies to the Building Inspector. HDC member and contractor Jeremy Gabrenas reported that a District residential project of his required a new front door to replace a failing existing door. The new door matched the old and the project fell within the definitions of ordinary repair & maintenance. A query was submitted by a contractor regarding renovations that would change the style and details of the front entrance of a District house. Upon review, the HDC determined that the proposed changes would alter architectural features and would require an Application and Public Hearing. The contractor chose to instead make renovations while maintaining the existing features. A renovation project underway on a District dwelling had included changing existing front porch columns without review by the HDC. The Commission conducted a site visit with the contractor-owner who agreed to return the columns to their original architectural style.

The HDC met with a representative of the Congregational Church seeking a support letter for a grant submission to the National Trust for Historic Preservation seeking funding support for restoration of the Church steeple and building repairs. Members supported this important renovation effort and issued the letter. At the request of the Selectboard, the Commission discussed restoration of the Town's World War I monument on the south common and in which the marble facade is failing. No action was taken this year by the Town on the project.

During the year, the HDC received the final report on the study at the Stone-Wheeler property, *'Archeological Reconnaissance of the Stone-Wheeler Site, Petersham, MA,'* dated January 2018, by UMass/Amherst professor Eric Johnson and his students. The HDC also received the annual edition

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**Annual Report for July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018 – continued**

of the *Massachusetts Historic Register* showing the two Petersham school houses have been added, the 1846 Ledgeville school (Fourth District) and the 1849 Second East Street School (Fifth District).

The HDC-HC held initial discussions about re-issuing an updated version of the 'Historic District Properties' book. The book was last issued in the mid 1990s. HDC member Christine Mandel has conducted extensive research and writing on a majority of the District properties. Her work includes full Deed research for each property along with additional information such as maps, news clippings, and personal reminiscences. Nancy Allen drafted an initial proof of three representative properties including historic and contemporary images. Commission members Claudette Bishop, Melissa Martinez, and Lynn Shaw, along with Chris and Nancy, held an initial meeting to review process and project needs including further research for the individual properties still requiring attention. A walking tour brochure and/or general smaller brochure were also discussed as possible projects which could utilize the content from the larger 'Properties Book.'

HDC-HC materials including District map, Bylaw, Application forms, submitted Project Applications, and Certificates of Appropriateness are easily accessible to interested persons via the [townofpetersham.org](http://townofpetersham.org) website at the Historic District Commission link on [mytowngovernment.com](http://mytowngovernment.com)

The Commission is grateful to Petersham residents, property owners, and fellow town officials for providing their ongoing support for preservation of Petersham's history.

*Respectfully submitted,*

~ Nancy Allen, *Chair*; Robert Clark, *Vice Chair*; Claudette Bishop, *Clerk*  
Jeremy Gabrenas, Christine Mandel, Melissa Martinez, Lynn Shaw

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**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.