

# **HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

## **Annual Report 2017**

The main role of the Carlisle Historical Commission (CHC) is to act as the Historic District Commission for the Carlisle Historic District, which primarily includes the town center, and to act as the Historical Commission for the town as a whole. The membership of the Historical Commission is prescribed by Article 9 of the Carlisle General Bylaws, and consists of 5 members and up to 3 alternate members to be appointed by the Selectmen. The membership must include at least one architect and a nominee from the Carlisle Planning Board.

The Historic District and Historical Commission were created to preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics and architecture of buildings and places that are significant in the history of Carlisle; to maintain and improve the settings for such buildings and places; and to encourage designs compatible with the character of the Historic District.

In its role as the Historic District Commission, the CHC receives, hears, and rules on applications for alterations to the exterior of structures within the Historic District, and alterations to hardscaping (paving, stone work, etc.) on a property. During 2017, the CHC reviewed four new applications, and issued four Certificates of Appropriateness. The applications reviewed by the Commission included:

- Reviewed, modified and approved an application for installation of a railing on the stairway to the Infinity Garden located to the rear of the First Religious Society property.
- Reviewed and approved an application for exterior painting of a home within the Historic District, returning the home to a more historic color palette.
- Reviewed, modified and approved an application for co-location of a wireless facility within a church steeple, and with equipment housed on a property within the Historic District.
- Reviewed modified an approved an application for revisions to the front entrance of a business property within the Historic District

The CHC also held informal discussions on several of these applications before the formal hearing – a process that the Commission continues to encourage in order to provide guidance to the applicant and to streamline the hearing process.

During 2017, the Historical Commission received several requests for review and discussion:

- Community Preservation Committee (CPC) application for preservation of Town records (request of Town Administrator). The Commission voted its support.
- CPC application for binding of Mosquito collection (request of Gleason Public Library). The Commission voted its support.
- CPC app for lighting of the historical collection displayed at Heald House (request of the Carlisle Historical Society). The Commission voted its support.
- Update on 21-23 Bedford Rd reconstruction and renovation project.
- Discussion of possible re-siding and other exterior work to a residence within the Historic District (request of property owner/resident).

- Review of Eagle Scout Project to replace missing and damaged Bicentennial Markers in Town (request of Eagle Scout and Trails Committee).
- Initial discussion of possible use of CPC funding for modest renovation of the Highland Building to enable its use for Town functions (request of the Recreation Commission)
- Discussion of possible new Library/Curator position (request of Gleason Public Library)

**Proposed Central Burying Ground Comprehensive Preservation Plan**

In January 2016, the CHC had applied for CPC funding to develop a comprehensive Preservation Plan for the Central Burying Ground on Lowell Street, within the Town’s Historic District. This application had been based upon a joint proposal submitted at the Commission’s request by Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture and Fannin-Lehner Preservation Consultants, for historic preservation of the site. A Town Meeting vote in May 2016 awarded the Carlisle Historical Commission \$20,000 from the CPC’s Historic Reserve Fund for development of a multifaceted Preservation Plan, and the final plan, which included a landscape assessment of the site, a tree inventory and assessment, a structural assessment of stone walls and other structural features within the site, and a complete gravestone assessment, was submitted to the Commission in December 2016.

An advertised public information session to present, discuss, and receive input on the Preservation Plan was held in January 2017, and the plan was also presented to the public in additional informal discussions. Members of the public as well as members of the CPC expressed concern over the magnitude and projected cost of the project, and asked that the Commission consider a staged approach to obtaining funding for and enacting the plan. The CPC also requested a more detailed cost analysis. The Commission plans to reconsider the approach to enacting this comprehensive plan.

**Commission Membership**

The Historical Commission underwent some membership changes in 2017. Chair Neal Emmer resigned from the Commission in April due to other increased time demands, and Commissioner Annette Lee accepted the role of Acting Chair at that time. In June, when annual officers were appointed, Ms. Lee offered to continue as Chair for the 2017-2018 appointment year. Alternate Kathy Keller was appointed to full member of the Commission, and, at his request, Commissioner Jack O’Connor was re-appointed to Alternate. In June, town Resident Eric Adams, an experienced professional in preservation-oriented renovation and construction, expressed interest in Commission membership, and at the Commission’s request, he was appointed by the Selectmen in July 2017. Alternate Commissioner John Lyons completed his membership term June 30, 2017. Administrative Assistant Gretchen Caywood continues as the Commission’s staff and in-house point-of contact for the public at Town Hall.

The Historical Commission extends its sincere thanks and appreciation to all those who have worked diligently to preserve the historic character of Carlisle, and particularly to the residents of the Historic District for their appreciation of the historical importance of the Town Center.

Annette Lee, Chair

Members: Geoffrey Freeman, Ed Rolfe, Kathy Keller, Eric Adams

Alternate Members: Jack O’Connor.