

To the Honorable Members of the Select Board:

**Billerica Historical Commission  
Annual Report**

For the two fiscal years ending June 30, 2021

Since the Commission was remiss and did not file an annual report for FY 2019/2020, the Commission's activities for the past two fiscal years are herein summarized.

**Local Inventory:** The inventory forms the **Sarah Fletcher Murphy house** at 372 Boston Road and the **Edward O. Anderson house** at 7 Brentham Road were completed and accepted by MHC. Continuation sheets were filed for the inventoried properties located at 11 Concord Road and 14-16 Andover Road. The sheets were accepted by MHC and will be included with the inventory forms formerly filed for those buildings. Continuation sheets provide updated information on the history of a property previously inventoried. Although the Smallpox Cemetery situated along the MBTA Tracks between High and Pond Streets had been previously accepted a GPS listing was obtained to complete the inventory form. Future consideration for additions to the Town's local inventory of historic properties are being considered.

**Circa Signs:** Although the Commission has limited funds devoted to this project three new Circa Signs were installed one on the **Stephen Barrett house** at 201 Pollard Street, another on the **Edward O. Anderson house** at 7 Brentham Road, and the third on the **Sarah Fletcher Murphy house** at 372 Boston Road. A replacement sign was affixed to the **Rufus K. Underhill house** at 67 Andover Road.

**Community Preservation Committee (CPC):** Travis Brown was chosen unanimously as the Commission representative to the CPC. Preservation Restrictions were signed in relation to CPA funds granted to the Billerica Historical Society for improvements to the organization's headquarters, the Clara Sexton house and to the First Parish Church for improvements to the bell tower, clock, and steeple. Notarized signatures of the Commission members were required for both projects. This occurred during the height of the pandemic which complicated the process. A letter of support was also written in conjunction to the request for preservation material made by Kathy Meagher, Local History Room Librarian. The materials are intended to be used to properly preserve the items currently housed in the Local History Room.

**Demolition Delay By-law:** An application was filed for the demolition of the barn associated with the inventoried **Charles Henry Hill house** at 332 Concord Road. Although the house was demolished after a tragic fire in 2005, the barn remained extant. After reviewing the inventory form, it was determined that the barn was not included on the local inventory and no action on the Commission's part was necessary. A permit was filed for the demolition of the **Oliver Farmer house** located on Boston Road just north of the Billerica Center Historic District boundary. Thankfully the application was withdrawn. An application was filed for the demolition of the **Otis Lincoln house** at 120 Rangeway Road. The Commission members determined the house was of historic import and a demolition delay hearing was held in May of 2021. After the hearing a six-month demolition delay was unanimously approved in hopes that the house could be saved and that the owner of the property would explore an avenue which would lead to the house's salvation. The six-month delay ends on November 10, 2021. It is unfortunate that the **Peter Hill house** on Concord Road was never inventoried and may be soon razed. The local inventoried **Col. Ranlett house** was razed without the appropriate hearings required by the Demolition Delay By-law. It appears that this occurred as a result of a scrivener's error, which is unfortunate. The developer did promise to place a plaque on the property recognizing the site of the Col. Ranlett house. Apparently, there were other violations of Town requirements at the location and construction on the property has been

temporarily stopped. After this unfortunate incident, the Commission members suggested that annually the Building Department should secure a list of the properties in Billerica that are on the Town's Local Inventory of Historic Properties directly from MHC. The MACRIS inventory maintained by MHC provides all the latest updates and is reviewed constantly for errors and omissions.

Signage: The damaged municipal designated sign at the corner of Mount Pleasant Street and Billerica Avenue was replaced as well as was the missing Middlesex Canal Crossing sign on Rogers Street. A replacement for the municipal Billerica and Bedford railroad sign at the intersection of Lexington Road and Boston Road is currently being arranged.

Wayside Markers and Plaques Inventory: The Commission is in the process of preparing a computer driven map designating the location of Billerica's many wayside markers and plaques. This project is ongoing and will serve as the inventory when complete.

Community Grant Application: The Commission applied for a Community Grant to maintain the High Street MCC marker site. In 2016 the area around the marker was restored with grant funds from EMD Serono. At the time it was anticipated the MCA and the MCC would tend to the care of the small, so called, park. Unfortunately, this did not occur. The grant failed to attract any interest and was rejected. Recently the DPW with approval from Mr. Curran, the Town Manager, has helped out with the maintenance of the site. Their assistance is greatly appreciated by the Commission members.

Each member of the Commission has assigned responsibilities. Alec Ingraham is the Chair and handles research on historic properties, inventory forms and Circa Signs, Mary Leach functions as the secretary posting the meeting and overseeing the Commission's website, Travis Brown is the liaison with the Building Department and monitors demolition requests which require the Commission's review, and Matt Hrono supervises the local historic wayside markers and plaques computer driven map. Andy Boisvert is a new member and is just learning the responsibilities of the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Boisvert  
Travis Brown  
Mathew Hrono  
Alec Ingraham, Chair  
Mary Leach