

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Honorable Board of Selectmen,

The Annual Report of the Historical Commission for the period of January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018 is hereby respectfully submitted.

The Historical Commission is governed under Town By-Law, Article VII, Section III and Chapter 40, Section 8d of the Massachusetts General Laws for the **identification, preservation and protection** of the Historical and Archaeological assets of the Town.

Members/Meetings

Members resigning this year were Marjorie Johnson, Russell Kenney, and Alan Goldberg. Gary Demers was appointed to a full voting member from a non-voting alternate position. At the end of 2018 we had only five voting members with openings for 2 voting members and 2 non- voting alternates.

Our meetings were held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 7-9 pm at the DPW Public Meeting Room at 49 Whiting St. unless otherwise posted on the Town web site. We held 22 meetings this year.

We take our direction and get training from the state level through the efforts of the Massachusetts Historical Commission and Preservation Mass. Inc. At the town level we take direction from the recommendations in the 2014 Town's Master Plan, the 2013-2020 Open Space Plan and our 2017 Townwide Historic Preservation Plan.

The **2017 Town of North Attleborough Historic Preservation Plan** is available for viewing on the Historical commission pages of the Town of North Attleborough web site and hard copies are available at the Richards Memorial Library. The plan was financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, through the Massachusetts Historical Commission., Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman. The purpose of creating this plan was to :

- 1. Identify and articulate community preservation goals.**
- 2. Help eliminate confusion about the purpose of local preservation bylaws and regulations.**
- 3. Educate the public about the community's history and heritage.**
- 4. Create an agenda for future preservation work and a way to measure the town's preservation progress.**

The report dates early habitation within the current town limits to 9000 BP (years before the present). It is an interesting and well documented history of historic preservation in North Attleborough with many recommendations for various town boards and commissions to carry local preservation activities well into the future.

Among the recommendations in this plan that we have been able to accomplish in 2018 were the following:

1. Develop and Purchase Signs for the Town's 7 designated Scenic Roads.

These will be installed by the DPW in 2019 at each end of North Attleborough's Scenic Roads (M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 15c) which are as follows: :

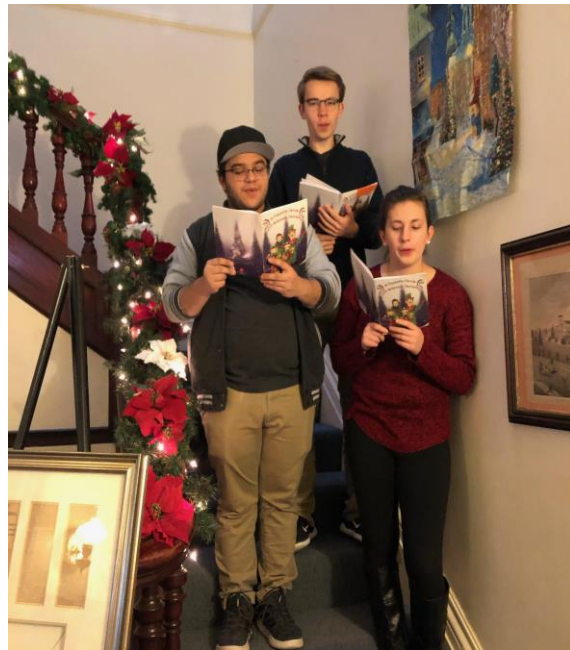
- a. Old Post Road from Route One (Washington Street) to the Attleboro city line.
- b. Mount Hope Street from Elmwood Street to Old Post Road
- c. Fales Road from High Street to Route 120
- d. Holmes Road from Route 120 to Sheldonville Road
- e. Sheldonville Road from Holmes Road to Paine Road
- f. Paine Road from the Cumberland town line to Allen Avenue
- g. Millard Road from Holmes Road to Paine Road

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2. Re-institute Historic House Tours

The previous Historic House tour was held in 2011 which was the fifth such tour organized by Historical Commission members and volunteers over the years. We spent countless hours in 2018 organizing the Historic Gems Hour Tour which was held on Dec. 9, 2018. Susan Taylor and Christina Eustace were our Co-Chairpersons for this event.

A total of 6 private homes and 3 other historic buildings were featured on this tour. Property owners graciously welcomed tour goers into their homes and properties to hear stories about the history of each site and to learn about the architecture specific to each building. Approximately 200 people attended this very successful event and were able to enjoy seeing private spaces and views from high windows they would not normally have the opportunity to visit. As a result of this tour net donations received were approximately \$5500.



3. Hold tours of Historic Places

On September 23, we held an open house at the Holmes Schoolhouse Museum, at 615 Hoppin Hill Avenue, which was well received by the public. We have restored the interior of this one room schoolhouse to depict the 1951-52 school year when this school close according to the collective memories of former students and teachers. Major project supporter and former student at the school, Joel Bastow, attended as did a handful of his classmates. Joel entertained visitors with stories of his memories while attending Holmes School. He presented a bronze plaque, to our Historical Commission members for sharing his vision and completing the restoration project. The plaque has

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been installed on the outside of the schoolhouse. Donations in the amount of \$544 were received for the maintenance of the Holmes School and adjacent Memorial Hall.

The Holmes Memorial Hall restoration is on hold until we receive CIP funding for this three phase project. Architectural plans are in place and we hope to add plumbing to this building so that when completed it will be able to return to its original and former use as a meeting hall.



4. Collaborate with school teachers to further integrate town history and architecture into the classes and third grade curriculum.

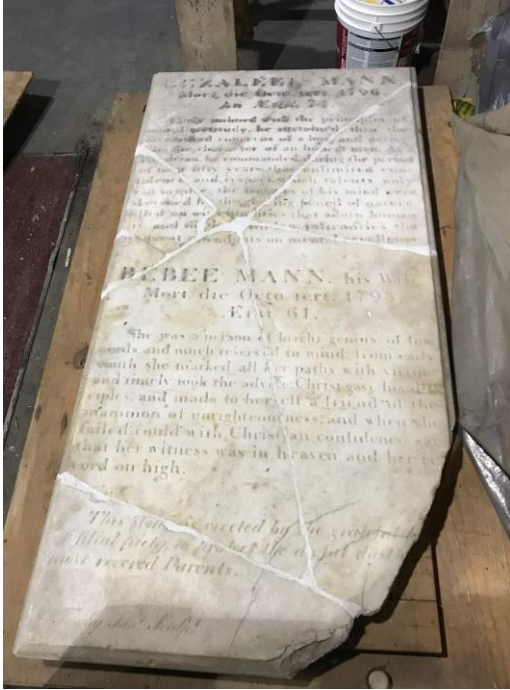
Our Chair has met with the Assistant Supt. of Schools and the Curriculum Development Chairperson in January to beginning planning to integrate town history and architecture into other grade levels, as well as, the third grade that already has a local history program.

5. Prioritize preservation projects for future Capital Improvement Plan funding:

We continue prioritize funding for preservation projects under our stewardship that will benefit from CIP funding as a match to state and federal sources of preservation matching grants. Selectmen since purchased by the town in 2001. We have only advisory authority regarding the preservation of this site.

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Mann/Draper Burial Ground/Draper Avenue



The RTM approved CIP funding in the amount of \$25,000, in the fall of 2017 to begin the restoration of this long neglected historic burial ground. A Preservation Management Plan that consisted of documentary research, a conditions assessment, and ground penetrating radar (GPR) was completed in 2007 for site with private donation of \$5000 specifically for this purpose. This past year we were able to have the 20 foot right of way across grassed yards surveyed by Whalen Engineering who marked the corners of the easement and boundaries of the burial ground. The trees overhanging the burial ground were trimmed and brush removed from the easement in preparation for the reconstruction of the stone wall and replacement of a very large tablestone that has been stored off site at the Wastewater Treatment Plant since it was repaired in ????

6. Seek preservation funding for specific projects

In October we applied to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for matching funding from their Survey & Planning matching grant program to fund a Townwide Archaeological Survey and Plan, a major recommendation in the town's Master Plan, the Open Space Plan and the Historic Preservation Plan.

7. Undertake a Townwide Archaeological Survey

In December we received a letter of invitation from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to submit a full application for this project to their Survey and Planning Matching Grant Fund to create a North Attleborough Archaeological Survey and Plan for a total project cost of \$25,000. The full application is due early in Feb. 2019. CIP Funding has been requested for this project since FY12. If awarded this project will save the town \$12,500!

We have several threatened archaeological sites, locations of which are not for public information. An Archaeological Survey and Protection Plan will be a valuable tool for many departments who are involved in the permitting process of major projects and housing developments.

PROTECTION OF HISTORIC SITES

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Section 106 Review Process

We have the right to comment regarding any adverse effect that would be caused to historic properties or sites that would have any State or Federal funding or impact cultural sites. We commented on the following:

1. Cell tower at 22 South Washington St, Housing Authority Building
2. Cemetery Expansion Project at the Mount Hope Cemetery
3. Residential development projects that impact cultural sites.

Demolition Delay Application Reviews

Per town By-Law we review applications submitted to us by the Building Official for proposed demolitions to historic buildings that are over 80 years old.

We conducted site visits for the following buildings:

A Garage on Oakridge Ave. and a garage at 187-193 Mt. Hope St Garage. We determined that the construction of these buildings were less than 80 yrs. old and did not fall under our review.

We voted to enact the six month delay for the house at 225 Mt. Hope St. The property owner did his part to seek alternatives to demolition with no success. The six month delay period ran out and the house was unfortunately demolished.

We unanimously voted to enact the 6; month delay on Oct. 9, 2018 for the historic Horatio Draper house at 327 South Washington Street. Property owners are required to seek alternatives to demolition for this historic house which is included in the South Washington Street National Register Historic District.

We were strongly opposed to the demolition of the Codding Farm Barn listed on the National Register of Historic places but it was not under our stewardship. We had recommended alternatives and salvage of several irreplaceable items and structural timbers in the barn but no action on our recommendations was taken by the Board of Selectmen who authorized the demolition.



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Senior Tax Credit Volunteer Projects

Mary Coogan spent countless hours enjoying her project to research and create a cemetery data base for Old St. Mary's Cemetery, Robinson Burial Ground at the Central Congregational Church and Woodcock Burial Grounds. Her efforts are impressive and we will continue this project in 2019 to add this information to our web site for those who are searching for local genealogical information.

Ron Desrosiers again spent many hours painting the exterior shutters, trim and clapboards where needed and doing maintenance at the Holmes School to get ready for our open house in September. He successfully repaired a large hole in one of the corner boards that was created by a mischievous woodpecker!

Jim Keegan used his hours at the Powder House and Mann Burial Ground to clear the sites of fallen branches, weeds and making the landscape at these sites more attractive to visitors which also deters vandalism.

We wish to thank Pam Hunt and the Town for this opportunity to work with these volunteers to move our projects forward.

Town Override Funding

We received a \$3000 General Fund budget increase due to the Override. These funds are specifically to be used for the maintenance of town owned historic properties under our stewardship which are the Holmes School and Holmes Memorial Hall; the Powder House, the Mann /Draper Burial Ground and the gravestones at the Woodcock Burial Ground and to educate and train our members about historic preservation best practices by attending preservation conferences and seminars available yearly and hosted by the Mass. Historical Commission and Preservation Mass. Inc.

We welcome anyone interested in learning about the process of historic preservation at the government level to attend our meetings which are always open to the public. You do not have to know the history of the town to become a member, just a willingness to learn and share whatever skills you may have to move our projects forward. We are looking for people who can research and write articles for our website as well as those who can help manage the town owned historic properties which are under our stewardship.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann J. Chapdelaine, Chairperson
Susan Taylor, Vice-Chair
Gary Demers
Christina Eustace
Bonnie Whiteside