

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40 Section 8D states a city or town may establish a local Historical commission for the preservation, protection and development of the historic or Archeological assets of such city or town.

The Historical Commission's goals and long-term plans along with other town commissions were dealt a blow by Covid 19. We lost a number of members and now stand at only three. As you can see below, we continue to try to bring our town's history to our residents.

1. **Demo – Delay Procedure** – the Historical Commission worked with the town to change the charter to have the Historical Commission become a key part of the procedure. No longer can a building be taken down until we review it to see if said building has historical or archeological significance. This was done in response to the Fair Ground situation.
2. **Historical Preservation Grant** – the Commission was able to obtain a grant from the state for \$15,000 plus matching funds from the CPC to total \$35,000. The plan for these funds was to find a historical preservation consultant to help with our goal. To present to the town a “Town of Sturbridge Community wide Historical Preservation Plan” We sent out bids to 7 different companies to complete the plan, due to COVID no one had the people available. We have been able to get an extension until September 2023, when things may be back to normal.
3. **Boston Tea Party Event** – the historical commission was contacted by the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum, concerning one of our past famous residents. Samuel Hobbs of Sturbridge participated in the Boston Tea Party and is buried in the Old Burial Ground. This group wanted to come to Sturbridge and place a special marker at his grave noting his exploits. On November 9 2021 a group of over 100 people attended the plaque ceremony. Representatives from the daughters and sons of the revolution, family decadents. Politicians and people interested in history. Thanks to Bob Brier who worked tirelessly to get this program moving.
4. The Historical Commission received from the Haynes family a donation of a cradle from 1790. The Haynes family were a major force in the creation of the town library, we are working on setting up a display of pictures remembering their effort.
5. **The Lafayette Trail Marker** – the historical commission has been approached by an organization that is placing markers following his trip to America. On September 24, 1824 Lafayette was in Sturbridge – hopefully we can make this program as successful as the Boston Tea Party event.
6. The Historical Commission was awarded an A rating from the state for having a complete and easy to use historical town web site. Many thanks to Barbara Search who started this putting information on this site and keeping it up to date.

7. During the year the Historical Commission has received various requests from the State concerning projects that may impact Native American burial grounds in Sturbridge.

The Sturbridge Historical Commission continues to strive to highlights historic assets in Sturbridge and to advocate to their preservation. Historical preservation contributes to our community's economy and to our sense of place. We appreciate all of the help and encouragement we have received throughout the year and all the people our mission.

The Sturbridge Historical Commission is a five-member board. We currently have two open spots and welcome anyone interested in history to join us at our meetings

Respectfully Submitted

Richard L Volpe Chair (2021)

Charles Blanchard Vice Chair (2022)

Barbara A. Search (2021)