

REPORT OF THE PLYMPTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Plympton Historical Commission has completed its first full year in operation since being reappointed in December 2001. The 7-member board, responsible for community-wide historic preservation planning and the administration of the demolition delay bylaw, continues to work closely with residents and town officials to help mitigate the impacts of development pressure on the historical character of the town.

Impacts of the state fiscal crisis were felt early in the year as various sources of grant funding dried up. As noted in last year's report, the Commission's pre-application request for FY02 Survey and Planning grant funds to the Massachusetts Historical Commission was denied due to legislative action that cut available funds by more than 65%. In May, the Historical Commission submitted an application to the Department of Environmental Management under their FY2003 Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program to complete and submit a National Register nomination for Plympton Green. In a positive turn of events, the Department of Environmental Management, in lieu of funding (none was available due to budget constraints), offered to provide technical assistance to inventory the historic resources in the vicinity of Plympton Green, including Hillcrest Cemetery. The inventory, slated for completion by mid-summer, will include a survey of historic resources, historic research, and an assessment of National Register eligibility for historic properties and landscapes in the area. The Commission, working closely with residents and other town boards and committees will evaluate next steps, including the completion of a National Register Nomination based on the inventory.

The Commission was actively involved in a number of issues facing the town in 2002. Early in the year, the Commission participated in multiple public hearings regarding the siting of the cellular communications tower at the intersection of Main Street and County Road and encouraged the placement of the structure further back on

the property to minimize its visual impact - particularly to the nearby Harrub's Corner Historic District and to the entrance to scenic Main Street.

The Commission also engaged in public discussions related to the redesign of the Main-Parsonage-Mayflower intersection in order to mitigate the impact of the proposed introduction of traffic control on the adjacent historic Plympton Green area. While the Commission's desired outcome was not realized, the discussion nevertheless highlighted our concerns that the plan could detrimentally impact the historic character of Plympton Green and provided assurance that these concerns would be considered as the design progressed.

At the request of the Board of Selectmen, the Commission has assumed responsibility for the oversight of any decoration to the Plympton Town Green or its structures. The Commission drafted a decoration policy and request form that can be obtained directly from the commission or found on our Web page at <http://town.plympton.ma.us/cultural/hc.html>.

The Commission has been a strong supporter of the creation of Plympton's first Web site as it provides a cost-effective venue to facilitate town business, to promote the distribution of community information and to increase access to historical information regarding our community. In addition to the information noted above, the Commission's site provides access to the Demolition Delay Bylaw for Historically or Architecturally Significant Buildings, information about the Commission, and links to other historical resources. Look for the addition of other historical information as the year progresses.

The Commission looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with Plympton's residents and town government to promote the preservation and celebration of our town's historic character.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Wilhelmsen, *Chair*
Maxwell West, *Vice Chair*
Tara Wick, *Secretary*
Walter Peterson
Dorran Prescott
Jonathan Shaw
Deborah West