



SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST NEWSLETTER

FALL 2019

picture above is
The cover of the
2020 City of Homes
Calendar

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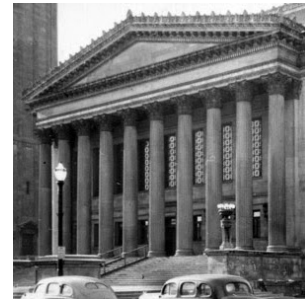
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

To better inform your decision about the upcoming election, SPT sent four questions regarding important current historic preservation topics to better understand how city council candidates stand on historic preservation in Springfield. We sent the following questions to all city council candidates and asked that they respond by October 4th. [Click here to read their responses.](#)



1) The Historical Commission protects 1,300 properties in the City's eleven local historic districts, oversees the Demolition Delay Ordinance, and reviews federal, state and municipal projects which impact historic resources. The Commission remains, however, one of the few major commissions not provided staff support by anyone trained in its area.

Would you support creation of a position trained in historic preservation to assist the Springfield Historical Commission and then advocate with the Mayor to fund the position?

2) The Historical Commission is composed of 7 members and 2 alternates. One seat has been vacant for more than 4 years. Several commissioners have poor attendance records. In the past year, several meetings have had to be canceled due to lack of quorum. Applications for work within historic districts are automatically approved if not acted upon within 60 days.

What would you as a city councilor do to ensure all Historical Commission seats are full and that Historical Commission members attend meetings?

3) The City continues to fund demolition, including demolition of historic buildings, rather than offer rehabilitation incentives. This policy reduces the tax base and disrupts neighborhoods.

What would you do as a city councilor to see that the City's first efforts are to provide rehabilitation incentives rather than to utilize demolition funds?

4) The City often holds tax-foreclosed buildings for several years, during which the structures deteriorate from lack of care. For example, the City foreclosed in 2009 on the historic Chapman & Brooks Block at 135 Lyman Street and the historic Knox Automobile Factory at 53 Wilbraham Road. Both buildings are now in far worse condition than when acquired by the City.

What would you as City Councilor do to ensure that foreclosed buildings are maintained while awaiting disposition?



413-788-9529
800-347-9529

~
**Beate Bolen &
Mathew Forte**

~
**Stephen Bosworth &
Karen A. Merchant**

~
**Matthew V. Jaquith
& Michael Rheault**

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**Karin Johnson &
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under threat. **Email your nominations**
to info@springfieldpreservation.org.
[Click here to see the 2019 Most Endangered list.](#)

NOMINATIONS FOR MOST ENDANGERED LIST

SPT is accepting nominations for our 2020 Most Endangered list. The annual list showcases historic properties that are suffering from blight, neglect, or threat of demolition. We need your help identifying buildings and places across Springfield that are

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PROJECTS

The Community Preservation Committee recommended 15 projects totaling \$1.7 million to the City Council and the City Council approved all the recommendations at their October 7th meeting. Included in the recommendations are nine projects affecting historic resources:

- \$240,000 for restoration of Forest Park Trolley Pavilion
- \$180,000 for rehabilitation of Row Houses, 174-184 Maple Street
- \$175,400 for rehabilitation of Winchester Fire Station & vacant Indian Motorcycle Building
- \$120,000 for accessibility study for Old First Church
- \$100,000 for replacement of Science Museum Roof
- \$100,000 for rehabilitation of the Female Seminary, 77 Maple Street
- \$98,000 for rehabilitation of Parsons Apartment House, 169 Maple Street
- \$50,000 for rehabilitation of Drama Studio, 41 Oakland Street
- \$48,658 for restoration of Colony Hills Local Historic District Triangle



2020 'CITY OF HOMES' CALENDAR

After a successful sell-out at the Mattoon St Art Festival, the 2020 'City of Homes' calendars are now available online and at two local retailers. Once again our calendar showcases some of Springfield's finest homes. These calendars help support the Trust's educational projects and make wonderful holiday gifts.

Calendars are \$15 and can be purchased online* by [clicking here](#) or at:

- Flowers Flowers, 758 Sumner Avenue
- The Flower Box, 596 Carew Street

**Online orders include shipping and handling fees, and should be made by December 18th to guarantee delivery before Christmas.*

NEW WALKING TOUR BROCHURES

SPT's new self-guided walking tour brochures debuted at the annual Mattoon Street Arts Festival. One focuses on historic resources in Downtown while the other focuses on the area between Chestnut Street and the Springfield Armory.

The Board authorized creation of the new brochures since the City-created Downtown Discovery Tour was outdated and



out-of-print and the City did not plan to finance a revised version. Design & Advertising Associates LLC worked on the layout while SPT members worked on the text. The brochures have been well received and are currently available at the Visitor Information Center, Museums Welcome Center, and Springfield Armory National Historic Site. We hope to place them on our website in the future.

HISTORIC PLACES OF SPRINGFIELD

87 MULBERRY ST. - NEHEMIAH & CLARA LEONARD HOUSE

Article courtesy of *Lost New England*

Although heavily altered in the early 20th century, this house at 87 Mulberry Street was built in 1870. It originally featured a Second Empire-style mansard roof, and it was the home of attorney Nehemiah Leonard and his wife Clara. Nehemiah had a successful legal career, but, as it turned out, it was his wife Clara who would go on to have a more notable career. A prominent social reformer, she led a campaign to reform women's prisons in the state, and in 1880 she was appointed to the state Board of Health, Lunacy, and Charity, becoming the first woman to serve on the nine-person board.

A few years later, her position on the board placed her in the midst of a political battle. She had been appointed by a Republican governor, but in 1883 Democrat Benjamin Butler became governor, and soon attempted to remove her from the board. He first tried to entice her to resign by offering her a lucrative state job, but after she refused he tried to have her removed on a legal technicality. He argued that, as the state law stipulated that "nine persons" should serve on the board, she was ineligible because, as a woman, she was not legally a "person." This semantic argument made it all the way to the state's Supreme Judicial Court, which unanimously ruled that Clara was, in fact, a person, and was eligible to serve on the board.

In the midst of this controversy, Clara issued a report on the conditions of the state almshouse in Tewksbury. The report amounted to a scathing rebuke of Governor Butler's criticism and false claims about the almshouse, and it severely damaged his credibility in the eyes of the public. This likely contributed to his narrow electoral defeat in the next election, which in turn ended his bid to earn the 1884 Democratic presidential nomination.

Clara Leonard lived in this house until her death in 1904, and around 1913 it was purchased by Richard Hooker, the editor of the Springfield Republican. He hired the local architectural firm of Kirkham & Partlett to expand and remodel the house, and the work included removing the mansard roof, covering the exterior walls in stucco, and building an addition to the house. As a result, the house bears no resemblance to its original exterior appearance, but it has remained well-preserved in its post-1913 condition. Today, this historic house is part of the Ridgewood Local Historic District.



Nehemiah & Clara Leonard House around 1890. Image from 'Clara Temple Leonard, 1828-1904: A Memoir of Her Life by Her Daughter.'



Nehemiah & Clara Leonard House in 2017. Image courtesy of *Lost New England*

EVENTS



"VOICES FROM THE GRAVE" CEMETERY TOUR

Tickets have been selling swiftly for our seventh annual Cemetery Tour on **Sunday, October 20th** at Springfield Cemetery, 171 Maple Street. Docent-led groups will visit costumed interpreters at the graves of George Ashmun, Mary Pynchon Holyoke, Calvin and Irene Chaffee, Josiah Gilbert Holland, Annie Curran, and Colonel Roswell Lee. [Click here to purchase your tickets today.](#) Space is limited and we expect to sell out.

SECOND SATURDAY WALKING TOURS

Carl Steele will lead a tour about the Springfield Armory Watershops. This is the final tour of the 2019 Season and will be on Saturday, November 9. This **tour is free** to all and **will meet at the Watershops, One Allen Street**. The tours is rain or shine and starts promptly at 10:30 am and will end around noon.

CONTRACTOR'S LIST

If you know a skilled craftsman that you would recommend, please let us know.

Please include:

~Name of Contractor

~Category of work

~Phone/Email/website

Send information to
jimboone@hotmail.com

SPT BOARD MEETINGS

SPT members are welcome to attend

when

Third Wednesday
of each month

6:30PM

where

Mason Wright
Retirement Community
74 Walnut Street

CREDITS

Newsletter contributors:

Bob McCarroll

Ben Murphy, Editor

Derek Strahan

Marilyn Sutin

Photography:

Michelle Langan

Greg Murphy

Jim Sharrard

Michael & Elizabeth Stevens

Derek Strahan

About the Springfield Preservation Trust

The mission of the Springfield Preservation Trust (SPT) is to preserve and protect properties in Springfield, Massachusetts which have architectural, historic, educational, or general cultural significance for public edification and enjoyment.

SPT believes historic preservation is an important part of making Springfield a great place to live, work, and visit. Historic Preservation is crucial to tourism and economic development and creating a unique sense of place. It's a means of creating jobs, attracting investment, generating tax revenue, and supporting small business.

For 45 years, SPT has been an independent voice supporting historic preservation. Over the years we have held countless events to showcase how our old buildings can be part of our modern lives and show off the historic places that make Springfield unique. We've helped pass legislation on the state and local levels that averts the needless loss of historic places. Our online resources help homeowners with restoration and educate the public on the beauty, quality and value of older homes. These activities have helped save and restore Springfield's threatened historic treasures so that they are here for future generations to enjoy.

Springfield Preservation Trust
info@springfieldpreservation.org

