



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Brian McNiff
Telephone: 617-727-9180

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**SECRETARY GALVIN TO PRESENT 2013 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO
NORTH CHELMSFORD TOWN HALL**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the North Chelmsford Town Hall to receive a 2013 Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic Preservation Award.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is proud to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of this year’s awardees,” said Secretary Galvin. “The projects the Commission is recognizing this year are particularly diverse and represent the many creative ways that significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. The restoration of the North Chelmsford Town Hall has reinstated an underutilized building as a source of civic pride and a significant community resource.”

The Greek Revival-style North Chelmsford Town Hall was constructed in 1853 as the town’s first freestanding town house; it was enlarged in 1886. Town meetings alternated between North Chelmsford Town Hall and the Old Town Hall, built in the center of town in 1879, until the town voted in 1885 to hold all meetings in the newer, central Old Town Hall. For many years thereafter, the North Town Hall served as a polling place and community center, hosting local clubs, benefits, lectures, plays, and dances. From 1967 to 1981, the building housed the town’s School Administration offices. Thereafter, until its recent rehabilitation, it had stood vacant, used only for storage, and covered by vinyl siding that obscured its exterior’s distinguishing architectural elements. In January 2009, the local Housing Authority announced it was buying the North Chelmsford Town Hall and the Old Town Hall, with plans to turn the buildings into seventeen residential units. Chelmsford residents rallied to prevent the sale, convincing the town to restore the buildings and return them to community use. In April 2010, Town Meeting approved \$5.5 million of Community Preservation Act funds for the restoration projects, and work began in the fall of 2011. The North Chelmsford Town Hall’s vinyl siding was removed, revealing features such as dentils and pilastered cornerboards. Members of the Chelmsford Historical Commission carefully searched the structure for evidence of early paint finishes, and returned the building to its 1886 colors. With the exception of an original attic window, all windows were replaced with windows that matched the originals. On the interior, all wood floors were refinished and all wood trim was restored or replaced with new molding milled to match the older wood. The ceiling of the upper hall was repaired, and now has both recessed lights and period-appropriate chandeliers based on one that had been found in the attic. The North Chelmsford Town Hall reopened as the town’s Community Center on September 14, 2012.

This is the 35th year of MHC’s Preservation Awards program. Projects are considered annually for awards in the categories of Rehabilitation and Restoration, Adaptive Reuse, Education and Outreach, Archaeology, Stewardship, and Landscape Preservation. Individuals are considered in the categories of Individual Lifetime Achievement and Local Preservationist. Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Secretary Galvin will present the awards at an afternoon ceremony on May 23, 2013, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The North Chelmsford Town Hall restoration project is one of 12 projects, individuals, and organizations to be honored.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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