



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Brian McNiff
Telephone: 617-727-9180

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COMMUNITY HOUSE, HAMILTON, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Community House in Hamilton for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March 9, 2011, meeting. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich architectural, cultural, archaeological, and historic resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the Community House in the National Register is a testament to the importance of this well-preserved building and the role it has played in the history of Hamilton and Wenham.”

The Community House, 284 Bay Road, is a 1½-story brick building designed in the Colonial Revival style by prominent Boston architect Guy Lowell, well known for designing the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The building was constructed in 1921 as a social, recreational, cultural, and educational center for local residents, and continues to function in that capacity, having served the communities of the adjacent towns of Hamilton and Wenham for nearly 90 years. The Community House was made possible by the Community Service of Hamilton and Wenham, Inc. (CSHW), and through the generosity of George Snell Mandell and his wife Emily, prominent local residents who financed the building’s construction. Mandell enjoyed financial success running The Boston Transcript, the city’s principal afternoon daily newspaper from 1830 to 1941. The Mandells’ son Samuel was killed in World War I, and he is memorialized with a bronze statue by Anna Coleman Watts Ladd, which occupies a central limestone niche on the building’s façade. When erected, the Community House included a large auditorium space, sitting room, library, and kitchen on the first floor, a meeting room on the second floor, and a game room, bowling lane, and men’s lounge at the lower level. A bowling alley wing was added in 1960 and was converted to medical offices in the 1980s. The Community House is remarkably well preserved, and little of the building fabric has been removed. Since 1984, the lower level has been occupied by the School’s Out program, a daycare facility for local families. CSHW continues to sponsor numerous educational, cultural, and social programs to benefit residents of Hamilton and Wenham.

The Community House is one of 7 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation’s official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

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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