

# Westford group seeks establishment of historic districts commission

By GORDON B. SEAVEY

WESTFORD — A group of citizens, supported by several organizations, will ask the selectmen next week to appoint a study committee with the view of establishing a historic districts commission here.

Purpose of such an act, similar to those already adopted in most surrounding towns and many other areas in the commonwealth, is to preserve historical buildings and sites of importance to the community as well as the state and the nation.

The group says that they wish to preserve the present colonial and historical atmosphere of Westford before some of these buildings and sites are swallowed up by "progress."

Spearheaded by a husband and wife team, Donald and Carolyn DeMita of 33 Main Street, the group has asked to meet with the selectmen Tuesday.

They will present petitions, some of which were gathered at the recent Apple Blossom Festival, signed by interested persons as an indication of the need for Westford to take action soon to preserve much of its heritage.

**THE GROUP** also has the support of the conservation commission, headed by Dennis Ma-

guire; the historical society of which Roscoe Corey is president, and the League of Women Voters, Mrs. Carol Luminello, president.

Although relative newcomers to town, the DeMitas have already learned that Westford has much to offer from the older generations to those who now make the town their home. They note that Westford was one of the earliest settlements and its colonial landmarks are scattered over a large range.

A leader in early secondary education, its Academy being founded in 1792, it was also a leader in agriculture and industry. Its common where Minutemen drilled and gathered to march to the Old North Bridge in Concord, is as charming a center as one will find in New England, they say.

**RECORDS SHOW** that with the exception of Lexington, Westford sent the most men to battle in 1776.

Preservation of a historical heritage of this sort presents a sense of security to the older citizens and a link with the oncoming generations, they say.

The first enabling act for historic districts was passed by the legislature in 1960. Bedford, a community slightly larger than Westford and

long considered a sister town because it was incorporated on the same day, September 23, 1729, was among the first to take advantage of the protection provided by the new law.

A study committee there was organized in 1962 and their findings and plans were presented to the town meeting in 1964, where it was immediately approved.

Bedford town leaders say that such action has prevented destruction of several important sites, has been able to maintain much of the charm of the suburban community, and has met with general favor among the inhabitants.

The Westford group is anxious to start making studies of the town's needs and to take inventory of its many historical assets. Later local ordinance as stringent or as lenient as desired could be passed, requiring a two-thirds vote to become effective.

DeMita thought that a study committee should be made up of many segments of the citizenry, including those interested in developing the town as a residential its old colonial and those who wish to preserve its old colonial and 1800-era charm.

The meeting will be at the town hall at 8 p.m. when the group will present its suggestions in detail.