

# Women petition developers not to let go of history

By Gordon B. Seavey

Disturbed by tinkering with Westford's long history and also using an incorrect description of a fast-growing commercial area, nearly a hundred local women are petitioning town officials and builders of potential commercial projects to "Stop, Look & Listen" before new names are coined and old names thrown to the winds.

The area concerned is at the junction of Boston, Littleton (Route 110) and Carlisle roads, long known as Minot's Corner. In

the south part of the town and near Route 495

These women are sending a two-pronged message that the name of Minot's Corner is a most valuable part of the town's heritage and that Westford Valley Marketplace for a new shopping mall is inappropriate.

In a petition carrying names of native daughters as well as newcomers, the message is clear: Do not substitute "Four Corners" for the two-century old name of Minot's Corner. Second, do not

name this section of Westford a valley.

The message, in no uncertain terms, is being directed to the planning board, the selectmen and the proposed builders — and with a word of warning to news reporters and editors.

As for ignoring the time-honored name of Minot's Corner, located in a busy spot in Westford's 30 square miles of territory in which there are a score of other 'four corners', the petition reads:

For some time, we have noticed in Westford the name 'Four Corners' being used to denote the location of Minot's Corner. Has this busy intersection had its name officially changed? If so, why has this revered title been dropped?

Is not there a special marker to designate this area, placed during the 250th celebration of the town and the bicentennial, to confirm its historical importance?

"Our Revolutionary history tells of Captain (later, a major) Jonathan Minot who lived at the crossroads of two ancient highways and who led a company of Westford Minutemen on foot to Concord Bridge on April 19, 1775. This fact alone should be sufficient to keep his name in current history."

They could have added that a 23-year-old son, Joseph, was killed at Bunker Hill while serving under Captain Joshua Parker and Col. John Robinson, also of Westford.

## Use of words

As for using the word "valley" as part of a new \$4 million shopping mall signature, the petition further reads:

"In naming places, it would seem we might be more accurate. For example, if we are to have a new area designation near Minot's Corner, let its name not include the word 'valley', such as has been proposed by the developers in preliminary plans

presented to the planning board."

In describing the geographical features of this section of town as being nothing that resembles a valley, the petition reads:

"Westford is a town of round hills and rolling landscapes. In itself, it is not a 'valley'. The dictionary says a valley lies between hills or mountains and usually has a river flowing through it. This is not so at Minot's Corner."

## Woman power

The petition ends with the strong suggestion from the all-woman survey, most of whom may be potential customers in the shopping area:

"We hope the developers of this project will see the logic in this terminology and make the necessary changes before it is too late."

Many will remember when an attempt was made a few years ago to attach the name "Valley View School" to the present elementary school now named the John Robinson School. The idea was dropped when it was determined that there was no valley to view and it was far more appropriate to honor the town's distinguished Revolutionary officer.

A spokeswoman for the petitioners said that, by contacting women of all ages in various sections of the town, a more accurate picture of the program could be assessed.

Although several men, hearing of the petition, expressed desire to add their names, it was explained to them that this is an all-woman project, i.e. woman power.

The men, however, are giving the matter their moral support.

Among the sponsors of the petition to protect the town's heritage are: Alice Day, Helen Desmond, Lois Jewett, Irene Walls, Eva DeForge, E. Ruby Regan, Marcia McCarthy, Helen Bayley, Jane Hinckley, Jean Downey, Dorothy Swanson, Lou-

ise Healey, Ruth Hall, Charlotte Stone, Lillian Scott, Nancy Russo, Kittle Marrone, Cecilia Healy and Helen Milot.

Also Beth Shaw, Avis Day, Helen Garrigan, Dorothy Lorentzen, Patricia Lahue, Anna Scanlon, Sue Bonner, Susan Powers, Mary Lambert, Mildred Perkins, Clarie Westwood, Cecile Lacombe and Priscilla Chapin.

Others include: Karen Campbell, Pamela Flavell, Madeline Sambito, Charlotte Scott, Sylvia Turner, Ruby Benson, Maxine Link, Carol Engel, Kristin Szylvian, Carole Jewett, Mary Sarris, Eleanor Haley, Sally Strauss, June Kennedy, Vicki Blouth, Norma Treat and Annie Vanbever.

The list also includes: Alan Emmet, Madonna MacKenzie, Claire Thompson, Ann Dowling, Yvonne Connell, Jean Fletcher, Georgette Athorn, Virginia Moore, Bertha Healey, Dorothy Fletcher, Margaret Robes, Gertrude Membrino, Shirley Tuttle and Gertrude Comey.

Also Ellen Harde, Jean Chisholm, Claire Mabce, Gladys Ferguson, Barbara Upperman, June Armstrong, Janet McCarthy, Celia Denisevich, Ursula Szylvian and Frances Cooper.

Among the balance are Elizabeth Sladek, Peggy Martinson, Shirley MacDougall, Deborah Shaw, Bernice Picking, Natalie Semple, Barbara Seavey and Margaret Blanchard.