2018

Guide to the Bridgewater Improvement Association Records, 1901-Current

Orson Kingsley
Bridgewater State University

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Bridgewater Improvement Association
Administrative History

The Bridgewater Improvement Association (BIA) was founded in 1901 as the Bridgewater Village Improvement Society. The organization’s objective upon being created was to create a better town, both to look at and to live in. The original constitution stated the focus of the group: “the promotion of order, beauty, and public welfare.” Arthur C. Boyden, head of Bridgewater State Normal School from 1906 to 1933, was voted the first president of the BIA in 1901.

From its inception in 1901 to the present, the BIA has dedicated itself to the beatification of Bridgewater without the help of taxpayer dollars. In 1966 Flora T. Little, who joined the BIA Executive Board in 1904 and was a long-time member, set up a trust fund for the organization called the “Little Tree & Park Fund.” In the late 1970s the BIA was responsible for the creation of the fountain in front of the Academy Building in Bridgewater. Upon the Academy Building’s large-scale renovations between 2015 and 2017, the BIA helped the town’s cause by reconstructing the fountain they originally put in during the 1970s. The organization is still active within the Bridgewater community.

Scope and Content Note

The collection focuses on annual and regular meeting minutes dating back to 1901, as well as financial documents pertaining to the numerous projects and yearly expenses the BIA spent on beautifying and bettering the town.
Box and Folder List

Box 1
Folder

1. Ledger – annual meeting minutes, 1901-1948
2. Ledger – annual meeting minutes, 1949-1966
3. Ledger – meeting minutes, 1913-1945
4. Ledger – meeting minutes, 1946-1972
5. Ledger – meeting minutes, 1972-1991
10. Meeting minutes, 1989-2003
11. President’s files, 1993-2001
12. Meeting minutes, financials, president’s files, 2002-2008
13. Meeting minutes, financials, president’s files, 2009-2016

Box 2
Folder

1. Constitution and list of members of the Bridgewater Village Improvement Society, 1901
2. BIA constitutions/by-laws, 1960, 1990, undated
3. Articles of Organization (went from BIA to BIA, Inc.), 1969
4. BIA mission and areas it maintains, c. 2016
5. BIA brochure, 1957
6. Copy of land deed for “Little Park,” 1934
7. Flora T. Little Trust (creation of), 1966
10. Mary Caroline Bryant Trust, includes information on money she gave the Ousamequin Club as well as the BIA, 1965-1993
11. Edward A. MacMaster Trust (creation of), 1966
12. Quitclaim Deed, Louis N. Vinios to BIA dealing with part of Central Square, 1988
15. Adoption of new BIA seal, undated
16. BIA Proclamation from town of Bridgewater, c. 2016
18. BIA invoices, 1995-2009
20. BIA membership information, 1980-2000
21. Research on BIA origins in 1886
22. BIA early history write up and research, 2016
23. BIA history research, early 1900s
24. BIA history research, 1920s
25. BIA news clippings, 1960s
26. BIA history, news clippings, projects, and financials, 1970s
27. BIA history, news clippings, projects, and brochures, 1980s
28. BIA history and news clippings, 1990s
29. BIA history research (includes walking tour notes) from early 2000s, 2000-2009
30. BIA history and news clippings, undated
31. Documents pertaining to original fountain at Academy Building, 1976-1978
32. Photographs of original Academy Building fountain, c. 1979
33. Slides of past projects, 1970s-1980s
34. Slides from “Progress of Little Common,” 1979-1983
35. BIA work at the new Scotland Field, 1978-1979
37. BIA projects—Pleasant Street, undated
38. Documents on projects, 1996-2001
39. BIA and Town Hall renovation, 2010-2011
41. News clippings on new Academy Building fountain, 2015-2017
42. Photograph album of BIA projects, 2013-2017
43. Videos—100th anniversary reception; Walking Bridgewater program, 2001, 2002
   (Notes on BIA early history taken by Benjamin Spence are at the back of this box for the time being)