

**CITY OF BEVERLY  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION: Historic District Commission

DATE: January 28, 2021

LOCATION: Google Meet (Virtual)

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: William Finch (Chair), Suzanne LaMont (Vice Chair),  
Caroline Baird-Mason, Wendy Pearl

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Emily Hutchings, Mike Collins, Denise Deschamps, Fay  
Salt

RECORDER: Sharlyne Woodbury

Vice-Chair LaMont chairs and opens the meeting at 7:12 pm. Chair Finch experiences technical difficulties and joins the meeting shortly thereafter.

LaMont describes the meeting as a virtual public meeting with special meeting format as required to honor Governor Baker's State of Emergency declared due to the national crisis of COVID-19.

**1. Gruppe Mural – Presentation and Discussion by Commissioner of Public Service  
Mike Collins**

Mike Collins describes the project to the HDC, detailing how the building had to be removed from the painting. Collins notes that the project was difficult to undertake, but the painting was successfully removed and taken to an art conservation professional in Williamstown, MA, fully intact. Collins discusses the framing, mounting, restoration work and budget for the project, and states that the painting will ultimately be put on display on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Beverly Public Library. Pearl notes that the art center has a comprehensive tool used for reporting and detailing on the restoration work, and requests that this report be on placed file with the HDC and with other City departments for future reference.

There being no further comments.

Motion: Pearl moves to approve the scope of work as conforming with the AIC standards.  
Mason seconds. The motion carries 4-0.

**2. Beverly Historic Preservation Plan – Final Presentation Discussion and Vote**

Hutchings presents to the HDC the preservation plan, providing a presentation on the reasoning for the plan, the phases of the plan's development, the plan's structure, and next steps now that the plan is complete. Hutchings informs the Commission they are not obligated to vote on the plan, no action is required or necessary; however, voting to adopt or accept the plan would provide additional credence and strength when pursuing recommended actions. Mason advocates

that the HDC formally vote on the plan and present it to the City Council. Members agree. Pearl advised linking the table of contents to the chapters in the document if it is placed online, in order for the public to easily navigate the document.

There being no further comments.

Motion: Pearl moves to approve the Historic Preservation Plan. Mason seconds. The motion carries 4-0.

### **3. Beverly Historic Preservation Plan – Consideration of preliminary implementation steps**

Finch notes that Hutchings has recommended actions 1-15 as the first to consider for implementation for the plan. Commissioners discuss the actions and review priorities. LaMont advocates for confirming a fifth member to the Commission.

Mason suggests setting aside a few actions to identify within an annual work plan so that the Commission can be proactive to critical and sensitive areas in the city. Members also discuss providing an annual report. Finch suggests that such documents should be outlines only, to ensure the HDC is not overburdened with a bureaucratic process.

Members further discuss raising awareness through public outreach and establishing greater relations with City boards and entities, and with the community.

Pearl suggests prioritizing becoming a Certified Local Government to increase legitimacy and secure additional funding opportunities.

The creation of a local historic district for downtown Cabot Street is discussed. Members review the process of developing a 40C (local historic) district and what would require more strict regulation opposed to following downtown design guidelines. The unique character of the area is discussed, and members note they do not want to impose difficult restrictions on property owners, but would like the requirements to be appropriate to the district. Discussion continues on how the City anticipates approaching downtown Cabot Street, including zoning revisions, amending its Downtown Design Guidelines, and expanding the National Register Historic District. The HDC suggests reviewing models for local historic districts in art-centered commercial areas in other cities, such as Cambridge or Somerville, MA, or Savannah, GA.

There being no further comments. No action is taken at this time.

### **4. Rules and Discussion: Rule of Procedure**

Hutchings reviews the Rules of Procedure, specifically the election of members, which was discussed at the previous meeting. Hutchings and LaMont review the technical language of the elections of members and their terms as well as the how often elections are held. Members discuss the continuity of the language of member appointment versus officer election. After

review of language, members discuss the replacement of officers or laws of succession in case officers need to step down. Members recommend edits, to be reviewed at the next HDC meeting.

There being no further comments. No action is taken at this time.

**5. Dodge's Row Cemetery: Consideration of Letter of Support for CPA Application**

Members state their approval of Hutchings' letter and application as well-written and thorough. Pearl informs the HDC that, as a member of the Beverly Community Preservation Committee (CPC), she has consulted with the Ethics Commission about whether she could vote as an HDC member to submit a letter of support to the CPC. The Ethics Commission found no conflict of interest regarding this matter. Pearl volunteers to recuse herself if necessary, but members state their acceptance of the Ethics Commission's standing.

Motion: LaMont moves to submit the letter of support for the Dodge's Row Cemetery project, including a preservation plan and National Register nomination. Pearl seconds. The motion carries 4-0.

**6. Approval of minutes**  
**a. December 10, 2020**

Motion: Mason moves to approve minutes as submitted. LaMont seconds. The motion carries 4-0.

**7. New/Other Business**  
**a. Out building structures**

Finch notes that a demolition application has been submitted for a detached garage at 7 Pearl Street extension. The home and garage were both constructed in 1937. Finch confirms this garage is not historically significant. Members discuss the historical significance of certain outbuildings and suggest creating an inventory. Pearl asks if they could work with the community on such an endeavor, and suggests engaging the public via social media to post photos of outbuildings they see that might qualify as historic. Members ask if working with Historic Beverly would be an option for such an action. Fay Salt, 66 Haskell Street, is recognized by the Chair, and notes that Historic Beverly has limited resources but suggests that the HDC recruit volunteers for these project types. LaMont asks about abandoned properties, and asks about whether the City has an inventory. Hutchings states she will follow up with the Building Inspector. Pearl asks if they are looking for truly abandoned properties or properties behind on taxes or in poor condition. LaMont expresses interest in both variables. Members state their interest in protecting buildings that are at risk of demolition by neglect. Hutchings states she has a list of properties from the Assessor's Office with conditions for their present structure, which would be a good place to start.

**b. Captain Robert Haskell House**

Hutchings states that the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) is reviewing the Captain Robert Haskell House at 680 Hale Street, which has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Hutchings informs members that the MHC is set to review the subject at their March meeting.

**c. CPC applications**

Pearl provides an update and reviews the five applications submitted. Members discuss the applications.

**8. Adjournment**

Motion: Finch moves to adjourn. LaMont seconds. The motion carries 4-0.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 pm.

**Next meeting scheduled for 2.25.21.**