

**CITY OF BEVERLY
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

COMMISSION: Historic District Commission

DATE: February 24, 2022

LOCATION: Google Meet (Virtual)

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Leahy

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Hutchings

OTHERS PRESENT: Andy Goldberg, Paul Leighton, Kelly Morrison, Fay Salt, Miranda Siemasko, Thad Siemasko, Danielle Spang

RECORDER: Sharlyne Woodbury

Call to Order

Vice Chair LaMont calls the meeting to order at 7:12 pm, as Chair Finch was experiencing technical difficulties in joining the meeting. Hutchings reads the meeting information and takes roll. Chair Finch joins shortly after.

- 1. Demolition Delay Reviews #272, #273, #274 – Stephen P. Goldberg**
 - a. Demolition Delay Review #272 – Demolition of a building located at 28R Cabot St.
 - b. Demolition Delay Review #273 – Demolition of a building located at 4-6 Rantoul St.
 - c. Demolition Delay Review #274 – Demolition of a building located at 8 Rantoul St.

Finch reviews the applications under demolition delay review and the protocol for demolition delay review. He describes how the applicant applied for demolition permits for five buildings that were greater than 50 years old. Two of the buildings were newer and in a preliminary review determined they were not historically significant. Finch discusses the remaining three buildings and how a preliminary review determined that they may have historic significance, and therefore a public hearing and full Commission review is required. Finch reviews the procedures expectations of a public hearing; provides the intent and purpose for a demolition delay period.

The properties are:

26 Cabot Street, built circa 1959
28 Cabot Street, built circa 1930
28R Cabot Street, built circa 1880
4-6 Rantoul Street, built circa 1880
8 Rantoul Street, built circa 1890

Finch describes the buildings, when they are believed to have been build, and their architectural features. He states that the buildings at 26 and 28 Cabot Street have been determined to be not historically significant, and discusses the limited survey work of the properties and the area. He notes that 28R Cabot Street appears to have been moved back from its original location on the street. Finch reiterates the public hearing process, demolition delay review process, and the

Commission's responsibility, and states that only the buildings themselves are under consideration, not what they would be replaced with. He states that each of the three buildings under review will be considered individually, on its own merit.

Finch asks Atty. Miranda Siemasko, representative of property owner Goldberg Properties, to begin her presentation. Atty. Siemasko states that project architect Thad Siemasko and property owner Andy Goldberg are also present. She outlines the area under consideration, presenting a map and showing each of the five buildings proposed for demolition, and describes their historic and current uses. Atty. Siemasko reviews the properties in the immediate area currently owned by Goldberg Properties and describes the proposed redevelopment of the five properties into approximately 60 residential apartment units with related parking and a smaller commercial space. She states that the redevelopment team includes Beverly Crossing and SV Design, and emphasizes that the team has been very selective of the properties proposed for redevelopment and approached the project with the understanding that the area is a gateway to downtown Beverly. Mr. Siemasko provides overview of the site and the thought that went into selecting which properties would be part of the redevelopment. He describes the area in the context of a gateway and entryway from Salem into Beverly, and reviews the historic placement of the buildings proposed for demolition, including a review of the building locations based on the 1919 atlas of the area.

Mr. Siemasko shares photographs of the properties and how they are viewed from the street, and describes historic features and uses. He shares a historic survey of 8 Rantoul Street and discusses the changes that have been made to the building. He reviews the architectural features of each building and the changes that have been made. For 8 Rantoul Street, he notes the original sheathing and clapboard underneath a particular corner are in poor condition, and most is not salvageable. This concludes the applicant's presentation.

Finch asks the Commission for questions. Pearl inquires if any other assessment was completed for 8 Rantoul Street to further assess the building and what other historic features may be present underneath the existing cladding. Mr. Siemasko replies there were no further assessments, although he suspects that the original cladding or clapboards may be present underneath the existing cladding. He states that the windows are all replacements. LaMont asks whether there might be original material underneath the vinyl siding for the other buildings. Mr. Siemasko replies that he suspects that when the vinyl or aluminum siding was put on the buildings, the most likely went over the original siding but that the buildings are altered from their original forms. Finch notes that the building that was moved back from the street (28R Cabot Street) appears to have an altered footprint, based on the 1919 atlas.

Mason notes that the amount of properties under single ownership is sobering, and that she hopes that this isn't the beginning of more redevelopment up Rantoul Street. She appreciates the row and gabled houses that are being kept, but emphasizes that she wants to be careful about further redevelopment and continue to focus on preservation. Finch refers to the survey for 8 Rantoul Street and that the shingles shown on the 1970s photograph may have been put on the building directly over the original siding. LaMont asks who currently uses the parking lot for 28R Cabot Street. Atty. Siemasko replies she does not know the specifics but that it is owned by the applicant and used by their various tenants. Andy Goldberg states via the chat that the parking lot

is currently used for the gabled and row houses that march up the street, and speaks (not via the chat) about how the parking is used and that some of the parking will be retained for the houses along the street. Finch states that the brick building across the street was the rubber company, and that the homes were built as workforce housing for that company.

Finch opens the public hearing at 7:47 pm. Finch reiterates that the public hearing is for all three buildings, and asks the public to keep discussion to the historical significance of the properties. Finch reminds members of the public to provide their names and addresses when they speak.

Fay Salt, 66 Haskell Street

Ms. Salt informs the Commission she is in possession of a 28R Cabot Street photograph from 1902, and that the property originally housed Cullivan's Market from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. Ms. Salt discusses the old architectural details and shares the photograph via her screen. She states she will send a copy of the photo to Hutchings for historic records purposes. Members appreciate the photo and historical significance of the building, and they and Mr. Siemasko note the changes that have occurred.

Hearing no other members of the public who wish to speak, Finch closes the public hearing at 7:54 pm, and resumes the regular meeting.

Mason asks to see current photos of 28R Cabot Street again, and agrees it is nearly unrecognizable. Finch states that the only original feature that appears to be remaining is the recessed porch, and that the dentils and articulated cornice appear to be more modern. Howard states does not see anything worth saving regarding the buildings at 28R Cabot Street and 4-6 Rantoul Street, and suggests focusing on 8 Rantoul Street. Finch asks if other Commission members have any further comments on 28R Cabot Street and 4-6 Rantoul Street. Hearing no comments, Finch notes that he and Hutchings reviewed the buildings and, based on the potential public concern, determined to include the buildings in the review to ensure that members of the public received an opportunity to comment, should they wish to do so.

Finch asks Commission members about 8 Rantoul Street. Howard states it should be saved. LaMont states that although it is a cape, it fits the same pattern as the other row houses. Pearl agrees the building is evocative of historic workforce housing, and even with the modifications and considering the building by itself, it is unique for surviving this long and for retaining its historic integrity.

Hutchings addresses the Commission regarding an oversight on the staff report. She states that she incorrectly stated there were no surveys of the properties when in fact there was a 1970s survey of 8 Rantoul Street, which she has now added to the digital packets. Hutchings offers to provide the survey to others who wish to review it. Howard asks for a summary of the survey, which Hutchings provides. Lester Levy, from the Beverly Historical Commission, completed the survey in 1977. She notes that the vast majority of the information on the survey was previously provided by Atty. and Mr. Siemasko during their presentation. According to the survey, the building was constructed between 1855 and 1859, which is different from other city records that state the dwelling was built in the 1890s. The survey states the home was built in a colonial style, with a red brick foundation; the original owner Nathan H Foster, a painter. The original use was

a single-family dwelling with a painter shop. It was the first house erected by John A. Green developing lower Rantoul Street. The housing was developed as cheap tenement housing, possibly due to its proximity to the rubber factory and the docks. Finch agrees he thought the date was off, and it appears more evocative of the 1850s or 1860s, rather than the 1890s. He agrees he has concerns with losing the house, and it creates an anchor for the group of row houses. He understands why the location might be desirable as an entrance to the site, but thinks in terms of preservation it is problematic, and hopes its demolition will be reconsidered. Finch and Pearl believes this is evocative of the period.

Hearing no other comments, Finch asks for a motion regarding 8 Rantoul Street.

Demolition Delay Review #274 – Demolition of a building located at 8 Rantoul Street

Motion: Howard moves to find that 8 Rantoul Street is historically significant. Mason seconds. Pearl inquire if the vote is only for 8 Rantoul, which Finch confirms. Finch takes a roll-call vote. The motion carries 5-0.

Finch states that now that the building has been found to be historically significant, the Commission still needs to consider whether it is preferably preserved. He states that prior to considering that question, the Commission should consider whether the other buildings may be historically significant. Pearl asks for clarification on whether motions should be in the affirmative. Finch confirms yes.

Demolition Delay Review #272 – Demolition of a building located at 28R Cabot Street

Motion: Pearl moves that 28R Cabot Street is historically significant. Howard seconds. Finch takes a roll-call vote. The motion fails 1-4 (LaMont voting in the affirmative, others dissenting).

There will be no motion to determine if the property is preferably preserved as the Commission has determined the building is not historically significant.

Demolition Delay Review #273 – Demolition of a building located at 4-6 Rantoul Street

Motion: LaMont moves that 4-6 Rantoul Street is historically significant. Pearl seconds. Finch takes a roll-call vote. The motion fails 0-5.

There will be no motion to determine if the property is preferably preserved as the Commission has determined the building is not historically significant.

Demolition Delay Review #274 – Demolition of a building located at 8 Rantoul Street

Finch returns to 8 Rantoul Street, stating the next motion should be to determine if the property is preferably preserved.

Motion: Howard moves that 8 Rantoul Street should be determined preferably preserved, as a benefit to the city. Pearl seconds. Finch asks whether there is discussion on the motion.

Atty. Siemasko asks to speak to the 12-month delay period. She notes that there is a provision ordinance to impose the delay for less than 12 months if the applicant has taken steps to find an alternative location for the property or has taken steps to preserve the property. As the location is the proposed corner of a development site, Atty. Siemasko asks if the development team should take steps to support the building being moved. She asks for the Commission's perspective. Finch responds, stating that the Commission can impose a shorter delay, but the norm is to impose the full delay and for the owner/applicant to return before the delay has concluded, to explain their actions and to request the Commission lift the delay. Finch explains that, in general, the Commission tries very hard to preserve the buildings on site because the significance is tied to the site. He thinks that this building is particularly significant for its location, and that he believes the Commission would appreciate the development team considering options to keep the building on the site with the project designed in a way that allows the building to be saved. Mason agrees that moving the building would defeat the purpose of preservation, that the integrity and historic significance would be eroded. Mason suggests another buyer for the property would be ideal, but not moving it.

Following the conclusion of the discussion, Finch takes a roll-call vote. The motion carries 5-0.

Final states that when he first received the application, he was very concerned the proposal would be to demolish the row houses, and that he was pleased that they are being preserved. Finch strongly encourages the applicant to find a way for the building to be saved and preserved. Atty. Siemasko states the comments will be taken into consideration, and that the development team is in the early stages of design.

2. Approval of minutes

None available.

3. New/Other Business

Rescheduling regular March HDC meeting

Hutchings states that the City has scheduled a public meeting to provide an update on the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance on March 24, 2022 (during the regularly scheduled March HDC meeting), and asks members if they would like to reschedule their regular meeting to the following week. Hutchings notes that the public meeting for the ADU Ordinance cannot be moved, and that it may be of interest to members. Members review potential dates and agree to move their regular meeting to March 30, 2022.

Request to add item to March 2022 agenda

Pearl asks to add a discussion on the rezoning of the Bass River District to the agenda. Members agree they are concerned about public waterfront access and commercial encroachment on the historic Beverly Depot area.

Update on demolition of a historic building at 29 Ober Street

LaMont informs members that the building at 29 Ober Street has been completely razed and removed. LaMont notes the developers did not break any promises to the HDC, and that she is not sure if the seller or buyer demolished the building. Finch suggests reviewing the Demolition Delay Ordinance and amending the ordinance so that once the delay period is over, the current owner cannot transfer the determination to the new owner, effectively requiring new owners to return to the HDC for an additional review and determination. He states that other communities have done this, and it inhibits owners who are looking to circumvent the intent of the ordinance. Pearl states she would be interested in requiring an additional review with the expiration of a demolition permit, and asks if demolition permits expire in Beverly. Hutchings states she believes they do, but will check with the Building Commissioner.

City Hall and old police station renovations

LaMont asks to discuss the City Hall and old police station renovation. LaMont states she has seen an RFP for OPM, and asks Hutchings for updates. Hutchings states that an OPM will be hired for a complete analysis of the building, including review of existing conditions and systems that need upgrades. LaMont asks about the overall vision for the plan of the building. Hutchings states she does not know the exact vision, but informs members the updates to city buildings are expected to move the buildings to net-zero, which necessitate many upgrades. She states the final plan has yet to be determined, but the goal is to move the Building Department into the building. Pearl asks if the records in the basement of City Hall will be moved due to the environmental risk of storage in the old basement. Hutchings states she does not know. Mason considers building and its view from the street.

Greenergy Park

Pearl asks about Greenergy Park, emphasizing that it is an unusual and historic resource, erected during the Carter Administration. She states it should be listed on the National Register. Howard agrees. Hutchings states she can add the property to the list of priorities for National Register listing, and that Green Beverly may be interested in partnering on the project.

Pearl would like to see a climate adaptation plan for the carriage house. Due to climate change the carriage house needs to be moved or raised. Pearl peeresses concerns for addressing the historic buildings throughout the city that are at risk due to climate change. This is in the AE zone. Pearl would like a synthesized strategy for the Carriage House. Hutchings confirms the assessment report was completed in 2017.

Central Cemetery

Hutchings provides an update on Central Cemetery, stating that Councilor Houseman lobbied for the completion of the historic resource survey on the project. Hutchings states that funding is being moved to the Planning Department's budget to manage the project.

Budget

LaMont asks about the possibility of a small budget for the HDC. Hutchings discusses the likelihood and potential for additional HDC funding opportunities. Pearl notes that the Planning Department has leveraged significant grant funding for historic preservation projects in the past several years.

Chat comments from Kelly Morrison – 1PPA (copy and pasted directly from the chat):
“I just want to thank you all! As a longtime resident of Beverly, and homeowner at 24 Rantoul I care deeply about the preservation of Beverly. Thank you for the work you do! Millennials care about the overdevelopment of Beverly, the engagement is generally limited to Instagram...signing off now, have a great night!”

4. Adjournment

Motion: Pearl moves to adjourn. LaMont seconds. The motion carries 5-0.

Meeting adjourned 8:46 pm. Next meeting scheduled 3/30/22.