

**CITY OF BEVERLY
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

BOARD: Historic Districts Commission

DATE: May 10, 2021

LOCATION: Google Meet (Virtual)

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: William Finch (Chair), Suzanne LaMont (Vice Chair),
Wendy Pearl

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Caroline Baird-Mason

OTHERS PRESENT: Emily Hutchings, Susan Goganian

RECORDER: Sharlyne Woodbury

Chair Finch calls the special meeting of the Historic District Commission to order at 6:43 p.m. Finch takes a roll call and describes the meeting as a virtual public meeting as required to honor Governor Baker’s State of Emergency declared due to the national crisis of COVID-19.

Finch states the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the proposed eight signs on the grounds of the Hale Farm at 39 Hale Street, for which the City of Beverly, through the Historic Districts Commission, holds a preservation restriction. This is a special meeting deviating from the regularly scheduled fourth Thursday of the month.

1. Request for Review and Approval: Educational Signage at Hale Farm, 39 Hale Street – Historic Beverly

Finch begins discussion by addressing concerns over the locations of two of the eight signs. The first two signs, as shown on the submitted renderings, are closest to the structure. Finch notes his main concern is archeological disturbance at the site that may occur when the sign posts are to be sunk into the ground with 3-foot deep concrete footings. Goganian and Finch review the particulars of how the signs will be installed and the locations of the signs. Discussing sign 1, Goganian confirms it will not be within 6 feet of the Hale House. Finch states his concern over the proposed location, and asks if test pits have been done. Goganian states there have not been recent tests done on site for any archeological findings. Goganian comments the reason for relocating sign 1 closer to the house is to free up space at the entryway and avoid public bottlenecks since the path is narrow.

Members continue to review the renderings. Discussion centers on installing the sign posts and the implications of disturbing any archeological findings. Finch comments that digging closer to the house may disturb potential trash heaps from earlier occupancy periods. Finch notes that unlike most homes, this home’s primary façade originally faced the south side, so trash heaps would more likely be closer to the northern side of the building. LaMont questions the location of the sign 1, and the Commission and Goganian confirm the location of sign 1 is incorrect on the rendering and reviews the correct proposed location of the sign. Finch suggests relocating the sign closer to the reconstructed stone wall as it is less likely to create any archaeological

disturbance. Goganian states she is willing to move the sign closer to the wall, or back to the pathway. Finch also recommends hand digging the footings for signs 1 and 2, along with having someone onsite to observe the digging and, if necessary, identify archeological findings. Pearl inquires if the main (existing) sign will be replaced as well, and Goganian confirms that the sign will be replaced in the near future, but in approximately the same location where there are no archeological concerns.

Finch asks if there is a requirement to notify the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) of the proposed signs. Hutchings states that the existing preservation restriction does not require MHC to be notified of changes. Finch asks about the term of the prior restriction held by MHC, and Goganian confirms the other restriction expired.

There being no further comments.

Motion: Pearl moves to approve the signage project at the Hale Farm, with the following conditions:

- (1) Sign 1, as shown on the submitted plan, will be moved to the location recommended the HDC, near the path entryway closer to the street and away from the historic structure;
- (2) The holes for signs 1 and 2, as shown on the submitted plan, will be hand dug and that the digging of those holes will be monitored; and
- (3) If any archaeological findings are made during digging, activity will halt and findings will be reported to the HDC.

LaMont seconds. The motion passes 3-0.

2. New and Other Business

None.

3. Adjournment

Motion: LaMont moves to adjourn. Pearl seconds. The motion carries 3-0.

Meeting adjourned 7:00 pm.

Next meeting scheduled for 5.27.21 at 7:00 p.m.