

CITY OF BEVERLY
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**CITY OF BEVERLY
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

BOARD OR COMMISSION: City of Beverly Historic Districts Commission
DATE: 2026 MAY 28 P 7:00 February 25, 2026
LOCATION: Barnat Gallery, Beverly Public Library, 32 Essex Street
MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair William Finch; Vice Chair Suzanne LaMont; Wendy Pearl; Emily Hutchings; John Leahy; Christian Heath
STAFF PRESENT: Erin Schaeffer, Economic Development Planner
RECORDER: Kristan Patenaude

Call to Order

Chair Finch called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Recess for Public Hearings

1. Public Hearing: Demolition Delay Application (DD-26-1) – 91 Herrick Street – Northeast Hospital Corporation (owner) c/o Tyler Virden, Wise Construction (applicant)

Finch opened the public hearing for this item.

Tom Alexander, representing the applicant, explained that the building was built in 1916 [1912] for housing for nurses. The building was added onto a few times over the years and contains a hodgepodge of styles. The nursing school closed in 1972, and the building has since been used for administrative functions and outreach. In 2021, the Fire Department conducted an extensive inspection of the property and determined that it was no longer safe for occupancy, due to a number of code issues. A study was commissioned in September 2025, which discovered issues with asbestos, poor air quality, etc. In addition, the hospital hired an architectural firm to conduct a feasibility study in 2026 which found issues that make the reuse of that building for hospital purposes nonexistent. If the building were attempted to be rehabbed for business purposes, the cost would be significant. Among the issues include the need for a sprinkler system, corridors that are not ADA compliant, combustible stairs, etc. Continuing to keep the building going is a drag on the hospital, and a safety risk. The building has been vacant for five years. There are no plans to replace the building. It is proposed to be torn down and the area loamed, seeded, and left as open space. This will be a fairly significant savings to the hospital. Any historic value of the building was changed, as it was largely overbuilt with a series of additions.

Chair Finch reviewed the process for a Demolition Delay application.

Chair Finch noted that the original building is perhaps the second building on that campus, but it is not the primary building associated with the hospital.

Leahy stated that he did not previously notice the building when in the area, though it has history to it. He asked about the benefit to the community in simply retaining the building as it is. He

47 stated that it does not appear the building can be meaningfully renovated for most uses without
48 significant costs, per the architect.

49
50 Pearl noted that the hospital has been part of the economic and social history of Beverly.
51 Associations of this building with the nursing school, as part of women's history, is significant.
52 The original building can be seen, if one looks for it. While the building may be significant to the
53 City, it may not be considered preferably preserved.

54
55 LaMont stated that the building is historically significant due to its origins of a nursing school.
56 The building cannot likely be used for medical purposes anymore. However, it is still a building
57 which could be considered for another use.

58
59 Hutchings agreed that there is clear historic significance to the building in terms of public health
60 care. There are clear connections to the City's and region's economic and social development.
61 There may not be a strong value in retaining it, but she asked about deconstruction measures to
62 consider diversion of waste from a landfill.

63
64 Heath agreed that the building is historically significant to the City and adaptive reuse should be
65 considered.

66
67 Finch stated that the building has significance to the history of the hospital. Finch closed the
68 public hearing and the Commission entered deliberations.

69
70 **Hutchings:** Motion to deem the building at 91 Herrick Street, the finance building,
71 Historically Significant as it relates to the economic and social
72 development of the City, and for its importance to the development of the
73 hospital. LaMont seconds. Motion carries (6-0).

74
75 Alexander noted that another 12 months of study on this building will not make any difference.
76 The building is beyond reuse. Finch noted that, while the building is significant to the history of
77 the hospital, it is unclear if the changes to it over time lead it to be truly significant to the history
78 of the City. LaMont stated that it was the main nucleus of the nursing school. Hutchings stated
79 that it may not rise to the level of Preferably Preserved status, due to significant changes made to
80 the building over the years and limited access available to the site. She noted that there are also
81 limitations to the reuses of the building. The building does retain many of its original materials
82 and she would like to see these preserved and reused, if possible.

83
84 LaMont asked about selling or transferring responsibility of the building to another party.
85 Alexander stated that the applicant was not interested in this.

86
87 LaMont stated that this building does not rise to the level of Preferably Preserved. Pearl agreed
88 and noted that the applicant made an effort to study the lack of possible reuse of the building. A
89 sensitive adaptive reuse of the building is likely not possible. Leahy stated that the Commission
90 has to be pragmatic and practical in certain cases. Finch stated that it is an interesting building
91 but may not rise to the level of needing to be preserved.

Leahy: Motion to deem the building at 91 Herrick Street Preferably Preserved due to its historical significance to the City, its involvement with the nursing school, and significance to the history of the hospital. Heath seconds. Motion failed (0-6).

2. Public Hearing: Demolition Delay Application (DD-25-12) – 824 Hale Street – 824 Hale Street LLC c/o Whitney Savignano (owner/applicant)

Finch opened the public hearing for this item.

The owners, Whitney and Nic Savignano, explained that they purchased this house, which is next door to them, as a future house for their son. The house in question is very close to their lot line. Various architects have been hired to consider the structure, without a specific plan in mind. The intention is not to demolish the entire building, but only parts of it that are not historically relevant, or not as historically relevant as others, while preserving as much of the original structure as possible

John Harden, Olsen Lewis Architects, on behalf of the applicants, explained that, when looking at the house from the street, the section on the right was likely the original first portion of the house from the 1600s. This was a first period home. The house was then expanded laterally to the left, making a centered chimney. Most of this original structure remains intact. Behind the two front pieces, a lean-to was built. Another section was then added behind that. Finally, a back piece, which may be from the 20th century was built and attached to the center back portion of the original pieces of the home. It is clear that the front piece and the piece on the right are the original core pieces of the house and these are in reasonably good condition. Unfortunately, some of the back additions have had serious issues with ice dams and damage. The driveway is quite tight and very close to the road, making it difficult to navigate. He explained that the intention is to modify some of the pieces of the home to make it more functional and last another number of years. The applicant would like to remove the back piece of the building and construct something new, in close to the same footprint as the existing structure. This would allow for a modern kitchen, other modern facilities, and a basement. There is also an existing barn structure at the back of the property which is in relatively good condition. The barn is currently located in the setback and creates part of the issue with the driveway. One idea to save the barn is to move it on the property, adjacent to a structure at the end of the pool. This would allow for more room to navigate on the property.

Finch stated that this revised plan shows specific sections to be removed and others to be preserved. This requires a demolition permit mostly due to the unknown location of certain utilities on the property.

Dorothy Hayes, 680 Hale Street, stated that this is an important house and may be the earliest house in Beverly Farms. She is happy to see the sensitivity being shown in the proposal. She is supportive of the proposal.

Dan Lohnes, 7 Quincy Park and past President of the Beverly Historical Society, stated that the current proposal is appropriate.

The Commission read a letter from Fay Salt, 66 Haskell Street. It voiced her opposition to the proposed demolition of the building. It noted that demolition would alter the character and streetscape of the area. The letter also mentioned that the applicants seem interested in preserving the home while making it livable for family members. If the Commission finds the plans workable, with a majority of the house and streetscape being preserved, she will support the efforts.

Finch closed the public hearing and the Commission entered deliberations.

Pearl noted that importance of the historic significance of this building, including associations with the families and Beverly Farms architecture.

Finch noted that the detailing in the earliest part of the house is quintessential to prick posts in Beverly and Salem, and particularly the Hale House, with the same sizing as this house. There is a direct relationship between these buildings.

Hutchings: Motion to deem the building at 824 Hale Street Historically Significant to the City of Beverly for architectural and social reasons, and as related to the architectural significance of the existing building and community development of the Beverly Farms area. LaMont seconds. Motion carries (6-0).

Finch asked if the area outlined for proposed demolition should be considered Preferably Preserved, aside from the rest of the building. This would allow work to proceed under a remodeling permit. Pearl asked if it would be more prudent to discuss the whole house and then lift the demolition delay once a final application is submitted and permits are secured, as the current permit application refers to demolition of the whole building. Finch stated that the approval would specifically mention which components would be set for demolition and not apply for the whole building

Hutchings references the City's Ordinance, which allows the Commission to inform the Director of Municipal Inspections in writing that the Demolition Permit can be issued prior to the twelve-month time period, under two conditions. The 2nd condition, which she believes is relevant, is that the applicant has agreed to accept a demolition permit according to certain conditions approved by the Commission. It would involve two votes. This would allow the Commission to first find it to be Preferably Preserved. Following that determination, the Commission could then discuss and vote on conditions under which the demolition permit could be issued. This would result in a separate letter to the Director of Municipal Inspections, submitted concurrently, stating the conditions that the Commission supports the demolition permit and requests that no delay be placed to the extent the applicant agrees to these conditions.

Finch clarifies that this is not applying the demolition delay to the historic portions of the building, or the rest of the structure, which would impede the ability to work on the rest of the structure. Hutchings clarifies that the approach would be no delay applied at all, provided that the applicant only demolishes in its entirety these two portions agreed upon by the Commission,

including that every effort would be made to preserve exterior historical portions that are outside of the scope of the proposed demolition work.

Savignano questions whether this would require them to come back to the Board again for the same process. The Commission discusses what the best process would be. Members initially land on the fact that the revised plans submitted and being reviewed at the meeting are sufficient to satisfy as a revision to the permit, along with language in the determination. LaMont clarifies that the Commission would draft the letter which includes an explanation of what is approved and which demolition plan remains valid.

Pearl questions the procedure being discussed. Hutchings agrees and suggests a different approach, which the after some discussion, the Commission comes to agreement. The approach is summarized as a two-step approach where the board first votes on preferably preserving the building and then establishes conditions required in order to lift the delay on the areas preserved for demolition. The parts to be retained, the Commission will allow ordinary repairs to occur. Inform the Director of Municipal Inspections that the applicant has agreed to a Demolition Permit according to certain conditions, which once they are met, the Demolition Delay shall be lifted only on the portions of the building to be demolished.

Leahy: Motion to deem the entire building at 824 Hale Street Preferably Preserved for its historic and architectural values. Pearl seconds. Motion carries (6-0).

Pearl: Motion to propose conditions for lifting the demolition delay for 824 Hale Street, which shall be provided in a letter to the Director of Municipal Inspections. LaMont seconds. Motion carries (6-0).

The Commission proposed the following conditions:

1. That the most recent addition to the home, labeled #6 on the architect's drawings submitted February 25, 2026, may be demolished, per the architect's drawings.
2. That the demolition of the rear portion of the barn and relocation of the front portion of the barn, be allowed as needed.
3. That sections #1-5, as shown on the architect's drawings submitted February 25, 2026, will be preserved, to the degree shown on the architectural plans.
4. To allow for ordinary repairs, renovations, and maintenance of the structure, sections #1-5, as shown on the architect's drawings submitted February 25, 2026.
5. If any other substantial sections of the building are contemplated for demolition, the applicant must come back to the Commission.

LaMont: Motion to inform the Director of Municipal Inspections that the applicant has agreed to accept the following conditions, and that we request, per those conditions, that the Demolition Delay for 824 Hale Street be lifted as follows:

1. That the most recent addition to the home, area labeled #6 on the architect's drawings submitted February 25, 2026, may be demolished, per the architect's drawings.

2. That the demolition of the rear portion of the barn and relocation of the front portion of the barn, be allowed as needed.
 3. That sections #1-5, as shown on the architect's drawings submitted February 25, 2026, will be preserved, to the degree shown on the architectural plans.
 4. To allow for ordinary repairs, renovations, and maintenance of the structure, sections #1-5, as shown on the architect's drawings submitted February 25, 2026.
 5. If any other substantial sections of the building are contemplated for demolition, the applicant must come back to the Commission.
- Leahy seconds. Motion carries (6-0).

Reconvene Regular Meeting

3. **Determination for Demolition Delay Application (DD-25-12) – 824 Hale Street – 824 Hale Street LLC c/o Whitney Savignano (owner/applicant)**

This item was previously addressed and voted on.

4. **Determination for Demolition Delay Application (DD-26-1) – 91 Herrick Street – Northeast Hospital Corporation (owner) c/o Tyler Virden, Wise Construction (applicant)**

This item was previously addressed and voted on.

5. **Election of Chair / Vice Chair**

This item was not addressed at this time.

6. **Discussion: Update to Historic Districts Commission's Rules of Procedure (time permitting)**

No update at this time.

7. **New business, other business, or topics for future meeting agendas, if any**
 - a. **Update on Historic Resource Survey Project: Cabot-Rantoul Residential Neighborhood from Suzie LaMont, designated representative**

LaMont stated that she sent the Commission's feedback to the consultant for the project. A spreadsheet of all the properties (290 in total) from Federal to School was created, outlining their size, current use, owner, etc. Staff identified a few blocks that may be considered threatened (approximately 50).

- b. **Update from Community Preservation Committee representative Wendy Pearl, if any**

Pearl stated that there were eight applications submitted to the CPC. The first five applications received on time will be given preference and fully evaluated. Based on the discussions and budget after those initial applications, the other three will be considered. There were no historic preservation applications received in the initial submittals. The supplemental applications were all historic preservation applications. Voting on the applications may take place in April.

LaMont noted that a revised submittal for the elevator project will likely lead to there being more funding available for the other proposed projects.

c. Update from Design Review Board representative Emily Hutchings, if any

Hutchings explained that the DRB reviewed four signs at its last meeting, including one in the Downtown Historic District, True North Bank. The faces of those two signs were approved to be replaced as they were proposed to remain essentially the same.

8. Approval of Minutes, as available

a. January 28, 2026

This item was not addressed at this time.

9. Adjourn

Leahy: Motion to adjourn. Pearl seconds. Motion carries (6-0).
Meeting adjourns at 7:50p.m.