

TOWN OF SHEFFIELD
Ashley Falls Historic District Commission
Notice of Public Hearing



The Ashley Falls Historic District Commission (AFHDC) will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 5:30PM at the Town Park Pavilion on Frederic Lane**. The purpose of the hearing is to solicit comments on proposed procedures to simplify and expedite the approval of projects in the Ashley Falls Historic District.

Explanation – The AFHDC has been discussing ways to simplify and expedite the approval of projects in the Ashley Falls Historic District. The Commissioners clarified that work covered by the Ashley Falls Historic District Commission bylaw falls into three general categories – all of which apply only to exterior architectural features visible from a public way:

- a) **minor and routine repairs** (for example, replacing small areas of siding; small paint repairs that don't change the color);
- b) **larger projects and repairs that do not result in any obvious change to the existing condition** (for example, repainting the entire structure in the same color scheme; reroofing with material that is substantially similar to the existing in color and texture; replacing windows with in-kind replacements; repaving a driveway in the same material);
- c) **All other projects**

After discussion, the Commission recommended that work falling into category **a) minor and routine repairs**, should be brought to the attention of the Commission prior to beginning the work. After notification, the work could proceed without the need to issue a Certificate. Completed work would be reported and noted in the minutes of a regular Commission meeting.

Work falling into category **b) larger projects and repairs that do not result in any obvious change to the existing condition**, would require an application for a Certificate of Nonapplicability. That Certificate would indicate the work to be done and the proposed materials. The Commission has an expedited process that can be used in most instances to issue a Certificate of Nonapplicability.

Category **c), all other projects** are those that would result in changing the appearance of the Historic District. They require a Certificate of Appropriateness, and would be subject to the review process which includes input from owners of adjoining property. *ies*

The Commission seeks the input of the public, and especially owners of property in the Ashley Falls Historic District, on these recommendations.

Ashley Falls Historic District Commission
Town of Sheffield
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APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE

If your property falls within the Ashley Falls Historic District, before you can do any demolition, construction, alteration, replacement of windows, fencing, paving, change of paint color or other exterior work on your buildings and grounds (excluding landscaping), you must apply for and receive a Certificate from the Ashley Falls Historic District Commission. You must do so regardless of whether or not you require a building permit to carry out the work.

When applying for a Certificate, please use this application form. The form, accompanying documentation, and other information needed for the Commission to make its determination should be emailed to AFHDCCommission@gmail.com. If you wish to submit your application on paper, please mail five copies to the address above. If your project involves new construction (including additions), please contact the Commission so that we can apprise you of the documentation required before we can begin consideration of your application.

There are three types of certificate available, a Certificate of Appropriateness, a Certificate of Nonapplicability, and a Certificate of Hardship. For further information about these, please consult the Ashley Falls Historic District by-law, a copy of which may be obtained from the Town Clerk, or found at our website www.sheffieldma.gov/ashley-falls-historic-district-commission. Other information about the Commission, and a map of the Historic District, can also be found there.

Within 14 days of receipt of your application, the Commission will hold a meeting that is open to the public about your application. **(Please note that this requirement has been suspended by Massachusetts law during the Covid emergency.)** If the Commission determines that your application involves exterior architectural features excluded from review, the Commission will inform you whether you may proceed immediately, or will promptly issue a Certificate of Nonapplicability so that you can proceed. If the Commission determines that one of the other Certificates is required, it will normally call for a public hearing on the application, to which you and your neighbors will be invited. Shortly thereafter, the Commission will meet to act upon your application.

The Ashley Falls Historic District Commission is eager to help make the application process as easy and transparent as possible, and to assure that you have filed for the appropriate certificate. We urge you to contact us with any questions or requests for assistance by email at AFHDCCommission@gmail.com. Advance consultation with the Commission can help avoid later delays. If you wish to talk with the Commission, please send your phone number to the Commission's email address and one of the Commissioners will contact you promptly.

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www.sheffieldma.gov/ashley-falls-historic-district-commission