

**TOWN OF BOXBOROUGH  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING**

**BOARD/COMMITTEE:** HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**DATE:** JUNE 11, 2020 **TIME:** 7:30 PM

**PLACE:** **Virtual Meeting** - this meeting is being conducted via Remote Participation, pursuant to the Current Executive Order. *Remote participation instructions are provided below.*

To Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383038490?pwd=eUo2cGdKZSsxcE5ocTRVS2NuQmtCQT09>

Meeting ID: 873 8303 8490

Password: 696230

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,87383038490# US (Chicago)

+19292056099,,87383038490# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

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Meeting ID: 873 8303 8490

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383038490>

**TOPICS EXPECTED TO BE DISCUSSED (AGENDA):**

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MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2020 MEETING

SPECIAL TOPIC MEETING:

DISPOSITION OF THE LIBRARY HALL BELL DISPLAY

SUMMARY OF RECENT EVENT

COMMUNICATIONS

DISCUSSION OF PATH FORWARD  
OWNERSHIP & RESPONSIBILITIES

RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS FROM HISTORICAL COMMISSION

STATUS OF NEW DEHUMIDIFIER AT THE MUSEUM

STATUS OF ALONZO WOODWARD SIGN

REQUEST OF TWO ROAD NAMES FOR “ENCLAVE” TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT

PROPOSED NEXT MEETING: AUGUST 20, 2020

Document: Write-up on bell history and recent event

## If bells could talk...

Alan Rohwer, 24 May 2020



To the saying “if these walls could talk” I ask the same of the Library Hall bell. The bell began its life at Boxborough’s original Meeting House & Universalist Church. The building was the meeting house required for Boxborough to become a Town and was purchased from Harvard in the 1770s and

relocated to its site on Hill Road at the top of Middle. It was the meeting house and also the town’s First Parish. As inscribed on the bell, it was cast for the Boxborough Universalist Society in 1835. In a religious split, in 1832 competing Evangelical Congregational Society was formed and starting meeting down the hill at Middle Road & Massachusetts Avenue, as it does today. The remaining Universalists continued to meet in the old meeting house until 1842, when they disbanded. The meeting house then became known as Library Hall, as it acted as the meeting house & housed the library. It remained the meeting house until the new Town Hall was built in 1901. The bell held forth over the building as it continued as the Town Library and was used to summon fire fighters for emergencies. A sad event occurred on January 9, 1953, when Library Hall was consumed in flames and burned to the ground. It is related that the rising air caused the bell to ring as the building burned and it eventually fell as the building collapsed. The scars of the fire and fall mark the condition of the bell as it appears today.



The bell was stored in the hearse house in South Cemetery and was stolen from there at one point. It was recovered and stored in the yard of a neighbor; its location was overgrown by weeds to prevent it being stolen again. In the 2003 a local Eagle Scout’s project created a display in North Cemetery, next to the original Library Hall site. The foundation outline of the hall itself contains a colonial herb garden, planted and maintained by the Boxborough Garden Club. The displayed bell has overseen traditional Memorial Day ceremonies in the intervening years.



The latest adventure in the bell’s life occurred on the evening of May 21, 2020. An out of control driver left the road and drove over and demolished the bell display, depositing the bell nearby. The rugged bell does not appear to have sustained any substantial damage. It has been removed from the site for safe keeping but it is anyone’s guess when and where it will again be put on display. Pictures of the latest excitement are on the following page.

