



TOWN OF DEERFIELD

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Selectmen Policy 2014-05

HISTORICAL COMMISSION ARCHAEOLOGICAL ACCOUNTABILITY POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy requests that archaeologists, prior to excavating the Town's rich archaeological resources, inform the Deerfield Historical Commission (DHC) of their intent and provide the Commission with the basic information regarding their research.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Deerfield is home to a large number of Native American, Dutch and English sites dating from 13,000 years ago through the Contact Period of the 1600s and continuing on through the Colonial Period into the present.

The early sites have been identified and excavated by both amateur and professional archaeologists. The artifacts that were collected are a non-renewable resource providing an insight into our past. Over time, these artifacts have found their way into private collections as well as museums and university repositories. Notes and articles have been written about some of these sites and about the artifacts that were excavated from them and many have been published in professional/scientific journals and monographs. They have contributed to the foundation of modern American archaeology.

Unfortunately, a number of these collections have been lost or discarded and others relegated to university storage, unseen by other researchers and interested members of the community. If more excavations are carried out in Deerfield without any local government oversight we are concerned that we will irreversibly lose an important aspect of our history.

POLICY

To better monitor archaeological sites and investigative surveys in the Town of Deerfield, the DHC requests:

- (1) That archaeologists who are mandated by law to acquire a Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) permit because of their institutional affiliation, submit to the Commission the following documents prior to initiating any archaeological survey:
 - a. a copy of their Massachusetts Historical Commission permit (Form D)
 - b. a research design plan and the scope of proposed work
 - c. a contract agreement with the land owner if the excavation is to take place on private land (a contract is not required if the excavation is on town or state property)
 - d. a property ownership plot plan showing boundary pins
 - e. a site preservation plan – both short and long term
- (2) that once the archaeological survey is underway, members of the Commission – or their designated agent – be allowed to visit the research site
- (3) that when the archaeological survey is complete, the Commission be provided with:
 - a. the site report and artifact inventory which will be securely stored in the Commission's files
 - b. a plan for preservation of artifacts from the survey along with information related to their accessibility by other researchers and interested members of the community

In addition, although not currently required by state law to obtain a MHC permit, non-affiliated archaeologists working on private property in Deerfield with the permission of the landowner, are encouraged to inform the DHC of their plans. They are also encouraged at the conclusion of their work to file a site form and site report with the MHC which will assign the site a number and add it to the state's site inventory.

Note: Private land owners who plan to host archaeological research projects on their property are strongly encouraged to have a signed, written contract in place with the archaeologist. They should be aware of their liability as land owners and should also be aware that they retain ownership of any artifacts found on or in the ground unless that ownership is transferred to the archaeologist via such a contract.

GOAL

The DHC has prepared this policy in order to promote more openness and information-sharing between affiliated archaeologists and the Town of Deerfield through its Historical Commission. In addition, the Commission is prepared to assist researchers by providing public records of historical relevance along with "local knowledge" about the sites involved.

Archaeologists, in turn, could assist the Town in its plan to create a sensitivity map as well to protect cultural sites from destruction brought about by erosion, development or vandalism. This policy is not intended to impede archaeological work but instead to foster a spirit of cooperation between the Town and the archaeologists who carry out research there.

Effective: January 28, 2014