

City of Barre, Vermont

Mayoral and Emergency Manager Proclamation

A PROCLAMATION RELATING TO SAVING NATIONAL REGISTER PROPERTIES AND RETAINING HOUSING FOR RECOVERY

WHEREAS, the Barre City Code of Ordinances Section 2-277(2) states, in pertinent part: “. . . 2) During any period when disaster threatens or when the city has been struck by disaster, within the definition of this article, the mayor may promulgate such regulations as he deems necessary to protect life and property and preserve critical resources. Such regulations may include, but shall not be limited to, the following: [. . .] c) Such other regulations necessary to preserve public peace, health and safety. d) Regulations promulgated in accordance with the authority above will be given widespread circulation by proclamations published and uttered by newspaper and radio. These regulations will have the force of ordinance when duly filed with the city clerk and violations will be subject to the penalties provided in state law and local ordinance”; and

WHEREAS, 20 V.S.A. § 16 further authorizes Barre City to make, amend and rescind orders and rules as necessary for emergency management purposes; and

WHEREAS, Barre City’s emergency management officials, including the Health Officer and the City Council, have approved legal statements declaring a state of emergency due to the major flooding and landslide damage that has recently occurred within Barre City; and

WHEREAS, Barre City’s Municipal Plan set forth a goal “for Barre city’s unique heritage, historic resources, and cultural assets to be preserved, celebrated and contribute to our community’s physical, economic and social revitalization”; and

WHEREAS, Barre City’s Municipal Plan further establishes a policy strategy to create a strong identity around granite-related history and attractions by increasing the visibility of these resources, improving coordination between destinations, and integrating them more effectively into the regional tourism promotion system; and

WHEREAS, the City of Barre has many buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, three of which are the most important sites documenting the Italian immigrant experience in Barre: the Labor Hall on Granite Street, Hope Cemetery on Maple Avenue, and the Italian Baptist Church on Brook Street; and

WHEREAS, Barre City additionally faces a worsening housing crisis with homelessness, housing insecurity, low vacancy rates, and housing impacts due to flooding and landslides – with early estimates indicating that the flood could have substantially damaged at least 10% of the City’s housing stock just two months before cold autumn weather sets in; and

WHEREAS, Barre City has long recognized public interests and municipal impacts relating to demolition, and prior to the adoption of the Unified Development Regulations, demolitions permits were issued by the Barre City Council.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT all demolition of buildings on the National Register of Historic Places within the City of Barre is temporarily prohibited until such time as the City Council adopts interim zoning or permanent zoning bylaw amendments, and notwithstanding any issued permits or the City’s current Unified Development Regulations, unless such demolition is authorized by a two-thirds majority by the City Council; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT, with an exception for permits to demolish residential buildings to create new housing units with no net loss of dwelling units on the subject site, all demolition of buildings within the City of Barre containing dwelling units deemed structurally suitable for rehabilitation for re-housing/residential occupation by the Barre City Health Officer is inconsistent with the City’s Municipal Plan, the City’s ability to confront the multitude of problems created by the flooding, and the City’s present and future ability to provide housing, and is therefore temporarily prohibited, notwithstanding issued permits and the current Unified Development Regulations, until such time as the City Council adopts interim zoning or permanent zoning bylaw amendments, unless such demolition is authorized by a two-thirds majority of the City Council.

Provisionally issued this 28th day of July, 2023
Amended and confirmed this 31st day of July, 2023

Mayor Jake Hemmerick

Emergency Management Director Keith Cushman

The image shows two handwritten signatures. The first is in black ink and appears to be the signature of Mayor Jake Hemmerick. The second is in blue ink and appears to be the signature of Emergency Management Director Keith Cushman. Both signatures are written over the printed names of the respective officials.