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Historical Commission Repairs and Resets Historic Mile Marker

FRAMINGHAM, MA – On Friday, September 29, the Historical Commission reset a historic 1,768-mile marker at Buckminster Square. This marker has stood for almost 250 years on Main Street in Buckminster Square marking the distance of 23 miles between Framingham and Boston. The rough-cut granite marker reads “23 miles from Boston 1768” and is one of a series of markers found in Framingham noting the distance to Boston.

Several years ago, while at its previous location on the sidewalk in front of a Main Street residence, the mile marker had been struck by a snowplow and was broken in two. This past spring, the Historical Commission contracted with Fannin-Lehner Preservation Consultants of Concord to repair the broken marker and reset it at Buckminster Square. During the work, a historic image was found that showed the mile marker had been broken previously, knocking it down to its current, shorter height. Fannin-Lehner Preservation Consultants cleaned the stone, joined the two broken pieces, and then attached a new section of stone to the bottom of the marker to bring it up to its full historic height. The marker was then set on the island in Buckminster square with the minuteman statue, a safer location for the marker further away from the road.

During the 1980s, Framingham’s five granite mile markers were documented. The 20 and 21-mile markers are located on Old Connecticut Path, in the front yards of residences. The 22-mile marker that originally stood on Cochituate Road went missing about 20 years ago. The 24-mile marker still stands on Pleasant Street. All of the granite markers bear the same inscription as the 23-mile marker at Buckminster Square.

Often these mile markers are erroneously called “Franklin mile markers.” They are attributed to Benjamin Franklin’s time as postmaster general and are believed to have been placed by him, or ordered by him, to mark the mileage along the American colonies’ post roads. However, there is no evidence that Franklin ever placed any markers himself during his travels or even that he ordered the placement of mile markers. Instead, these mile markers were likely placed by the residents of Framingham, marking the progress to Boston along the rural roads of town.

The Historical Commission would like to thank Fannin-Lehner Preservation Consultants for their careful work to clean, repair, and set the mile marker. They would also like to thank members of the Town’s Department of Public Works for their help installing the marker on the traffic island.

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