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# TOWN OF CLINTON

**COMMUNITY BRANDING & WAYFINDING PROJECT**

**FINAL REPORT AUGUST 2018**

Prepared by Favermann Design

Prepared for the Department of Housing  
and Community Development (DHCD)



## BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Centrally located in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Town of Clinton is a nearby suburb northeast of Worcester, MA. Arguably, it contains one of the most beautiful town commons, called Central Park, in New England. With a population of about 14,000, the town's ethnic heritages include Irish, Scottish, German, Québécois, Acadian, Swedish, Italian, Dominican, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Greek, and Polish. Many emigrants from County Mayo settled in the town in the early 1900s that give Clinton a mainly Irish population today.

Originally settled in 1654 as a part of Lancaster, MA, the Town of Clinton was officially incorporated as a separate town in 1850. Oddly, it was named after the DeWitt Clinton Hotel in New York, a favorite place of two of the town's founders, wealthy brothers Erasmus and Horatio Bigelow. Erasmus invented the carpet loom. This led to the Bigelow Carpet Company which became a major industrial force in Clinton. Together, the Bigelows provided an economic and civic base for the community. They endowed several local institutions including the Bigelow Free Public Library and the town common, which was named Central Park.

Over time and especially during the 19th Century, using the Nashua River as a power source, Clinton became an industrialized mill town. Many architecturally interesting examples of workers' housing are still part of Clinton's residential neighborhoods. Several large mills like Nypro's location have been converted to other manufacturing or residential use. Construction began on the Wachusett Dam in 1897 south of the town center. The dam led to the creation of the Wachusett Reservoir in 1908. This major engineering development flooded a substantial portion of Clinton and neighboring towns, which had to be in several cases relocated. This massive water project became a strategic part of the Boston Metropolitan Water System.



By the 1890s, Clinton was noted for its manufacturing of carpets and woven wire. Later bookbinding and other manufacturing were added to Clinton's industrial mix. Throughout the 19th Century, several railroads came to the town to serve its industry. These railroads included the beginnings and eventual mergers leading to the Old Colony Railroad, the Central Massachusetts Railroad and the Boston and Maine Railroad.



Clinton is bordered by the Towns of Lancaster to the north, Bolton to the northeast, Berlin to the east, Boylston to the south, and Sterling to the west. Uniquely, it is home to the Museum of Russian Icons founded by plastics engineer Gordon B. Lankton. Set in a former renovated carpet mill building from the 1840s, his company Nypro, an international injection molded plastics company, was founded in Clinton after WWII. Mr. Lankton eventually became its CEO/president.



Opened in the mid-1920s, The Strand Theatre was a movie and vaudeville house located in the center of Clinton. It operated until the late-1970's when it was shuttered for a time. After renovations, the theatre re-opened in 1995 as a movie theatre with a food bar. It remains a nearly century old entertainment institution in the town. Clinton also claims to have the oldest continuously-used baseball field in the world (1883), Fuller Field.

A geographical distinction of the town is that the civic buildings—Town Hall, Library, etc. are separated from the downtown commercial/retail area of the town. This is a disconnect that needs to be fixed. Wayfinding will be part of the solution.

## PROCESS

Under the leadership of Philip Duffy, Clinton's Director of Community and Economic Development, a Branding and Wayfinding Advisory Committee was formed. Members represented various aspects of the civic government and interested residents and merchants. Over the course of nine months, this committee met monthly to every six weeks at Clinton Town Hall to develop the branding and wayfinding program. Initially, a scope of services was worked out between Mr. Duffy and Favermann Design.

In order to move the process along, each meeting included presentations that were shared by Favermann Design to both illustrate and educate the committee members about community branding and wayfinding strategies and elements. The members of the Town of Clinton advisory committee included the following:

- Amanda Curtis, UMass Memorial Health Alliance-Clinton Hospital
- Philip Duffy, Director, Clinton Community & Economic Development Office
- Allyson Forrester, Counterpane Interiors
- Marc Iacobucci, Selectman
- Sean Kerrigan, Selectman
- Christopher McGown, Superintendent, Department of Public Works
- Marie Mueller, Director, Bigelow Free Public Library
- Rob Nierintz, Executive Director of the Strand Theatre
- Michael Ward, Town Administrator

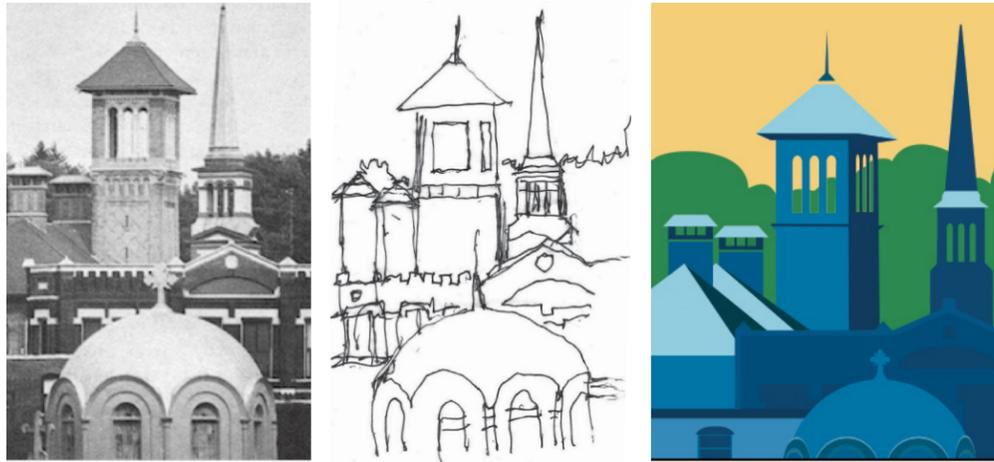


Image studies

The first meeting took place in July 2017 and looked at definitions of community branding as well as as multiple creative ways to express consistent and impactful visually-connected environments, components and ingredients that underscored the notion of strategic placemaking. On September 14, the second meeting focused on case studies of other communities that had developed community branding and then applied their distinctive brands to wayfinding as well as social media.

On October 4, 2017, the third meeting included an interactive Ideation Exercise with the Clinton advisory committee. This exercise had committee members describe the town of Clinton in various ways attempting at focusing on the essence or spirit of place of the town. Additionally, town symbols, colors and aspirations were discussed and debated. Out of the discussion came a couple of phrases that could be considered as slogans or taglines for the town's brand. The most on-point one was from Rob Nierintz, the director of the Strand Theatre, who suggested Clinton, a Cultural Reservoir. This was later emotionally embraced by members of the Board of Selectman.

The Ideation encompassed gleaning descriptive single words that included historical, compact, diverse, vistas, uncommon, rooted, resonant and mills. Multiple word descriptions and phrases involved blue collar, unexpected beauty, old fashioned, new residents, worker housing, very political, the town in the country, set in our ways and believe in tomorrow.

When asked about colors related to Clinton, committee members responded with green, gold brick red blue, maroon and gray (the color of the Dam). Town symbols or community icons included the Central Park fountain, Town Hall, Gael/Centaur, Strand Theatre marquee, mills, looms and nearby views of hills.

Additionally, the committee responded to questions about potential public art in Clinton. Interest was shown for temporary as well as permanent quality public art pieces, artistic use of lighting, discrete murals as well as creative use of storefronts, bridges and towers.

From the lists developed during the Ideation Exercise, Favermann Design's staff sought to visually "translate" the words into images as potential town branding options. At the following meeting, design options were presented to the advisory committee that included various images of historic mills, Clinton's Italianate style town hall, the ornate fountain in the town common and a view of Wachusett Dam and Reservoir. Bands at the bottom of various large gateway element signs were suggested.

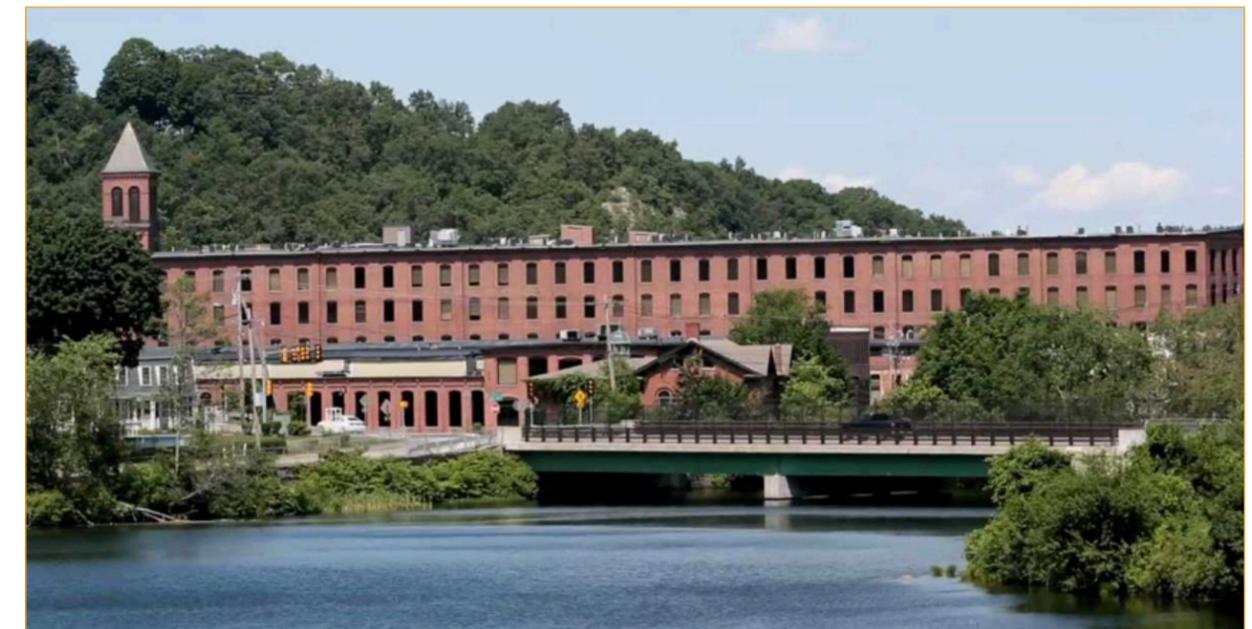
A review meeting was held to follow up on November 14. At that time the committee discussed and debated the various designs. Some designs were felt to not be "Clinton-enough." Others were liked for their color schemes, but not for their content. Recommendations were made to the design firm to refine or redo various approaches. Feeling it seemed too artificial, the "woven" band at the bottom of sign elements was rejected. Later, it was determined that there would be no bottom decorative band on the gateway signs. The Town Hall was felt to not elicit the essence of Clinton. Over the next few weeks, taking all of the comments in consideration as directions, the Favermann staff reworked various designs.

At a follow-up meeting/workshop on December 19, 2017, designs were once again reviewed by the advisory committee. At that meeting, Community and Economic Development Director Philip Duffy presented a photograph of building tops of prominent Clinton structures to the group and suggested that Favermann Design work with this as a direction. The black and white image was previously used in an older planning report. Following the meeting, Favermann Design began to work with the image.

Over the next several weeks, this image was color transformed and simplified by the designers. A number of color options were developed. These design studies were shared with the committee for review by email in early January 2018. Additionally, the design options were applied to wayfinding and signage elements to illustrate the design options effect and their visual impact. From feedback, more refined designs were created and then emailed to Phil Duffy and committee on January 25. Part of the overall design were "artwings" that are sculptural forms attached to taller light poles that turn in the wind similar to weathervanes.

On February 13, a meeting was held with the committee to review and discuss the most recent designs. At that meeting the design and the wayfinding elements were approved by the committee. It was then going to be scheduled for a presentation and vote by the Clinton Board of Selectmen.

On May 16, Favermann Design met with the advisory committee at 4 PM for a final review to go over the 6 PM presentation to the Clinton Board of Selectmen.



Minutes from the Clinton Board of Selectmen meeting of May 16, 2018:

### **DOWNTOWN WAYFINDING DESIGN PRESENTATION- FAVERMANN DESIGN**

Chairman Sargent invited the consultant forward. Community & Economic Development Director Phil Duffy and Design Consultant Mark Favermann were before the board. Mr. Duffy explained to the board he had been working with business members of the community and Administrator Ward, Selectmen Kerrigan & Iacobucci and Superintendent of DPW McGown on a wayfinding committee. The committee had been working with consultant Mark Favermann of Favermann Design to design wayfinding signage for town. Mr. Favermann explained wayfinding is the physical manifestation of branding of a community. It showcases the character of a community, reflecting it in a positive way. He explained it has been a long process working with the advisory committee on the design, he shared the design that had been chosen. He presented a slide show of images to form the design to be used, he explained it can be used as banners, wayfinding signs, informational signage branding in the community. The signage can be implemented in phases. Mr. Duffy explained the committee has identified some locations to start. Mr. Favermann explained less is more. Chairman Sargent asked when the signage would be installed. Mr. Duffy explained pending funding hopefully some can be completed this summer. Selectman Dziokonski asked what types of signage will be used, it isn't indicated on the map of locations. Mr. Duffy explained that is to be determined. Discussion continued on the "Cultural Reservoir" phrase that is used on the signage, it was reviewed the committee wanted to represent all that Clinton has to offer. Selectman Iacobucci explained he and Selectman Kerrigan served on the committee and there was a lot of good input from all the members, he thanked all who served on the committee.

Selectman Kerrigan agreed thanking all the committee members, stating there were a lot of strong opinions. He is pleased with the final outcome, he explained this is another active step in the development of the downtown to showcase what Clinton has to offer. He reviewed part of the phases of signage will include the designation of the neighborhoods like "Burditt Hill" or "The Acre". Chairman Sargent stated it is great work from the committee and overall will be an improvement to the community. Mr. Favermann asked for the board to vote to accept the design. Selectman Connolly made a motion to accept the wayfinding branding signage as presented and approved the next steps of implementation to be worked on by the advisory committee. Selectman Iacobucci seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous 5-0.

Note: at the presentation to the Board, one selectman got quite emotional over the notion of the slogan "A Cultural Reservoir" and felt that it captured a true feeling of his youthful memories of the Town of Clinton. Another selectman felt that he would have to explain to his constituents what the phrase meant.



### **SUMMARY**

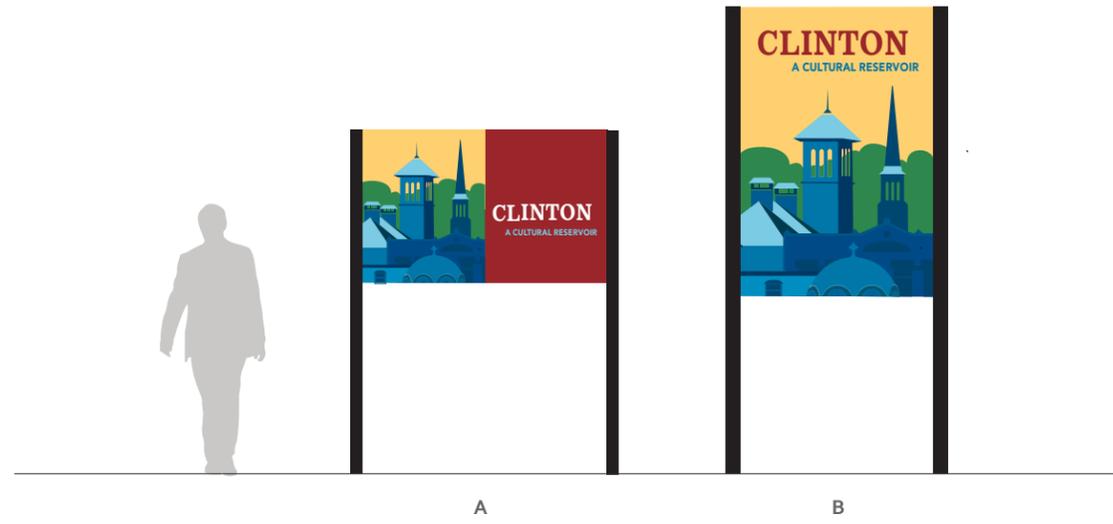
The branding and wayfinding design process for the Town of Clinton was an intense, thoughtful process. The advisory committee members worked diligently to develop best possible program for Clinton. The first steps of implementation process are to apply the elements to town-owned parking facilities. Other signage elements will be implemented as need and budget develop and can be integrated into other ongoing town development projects.



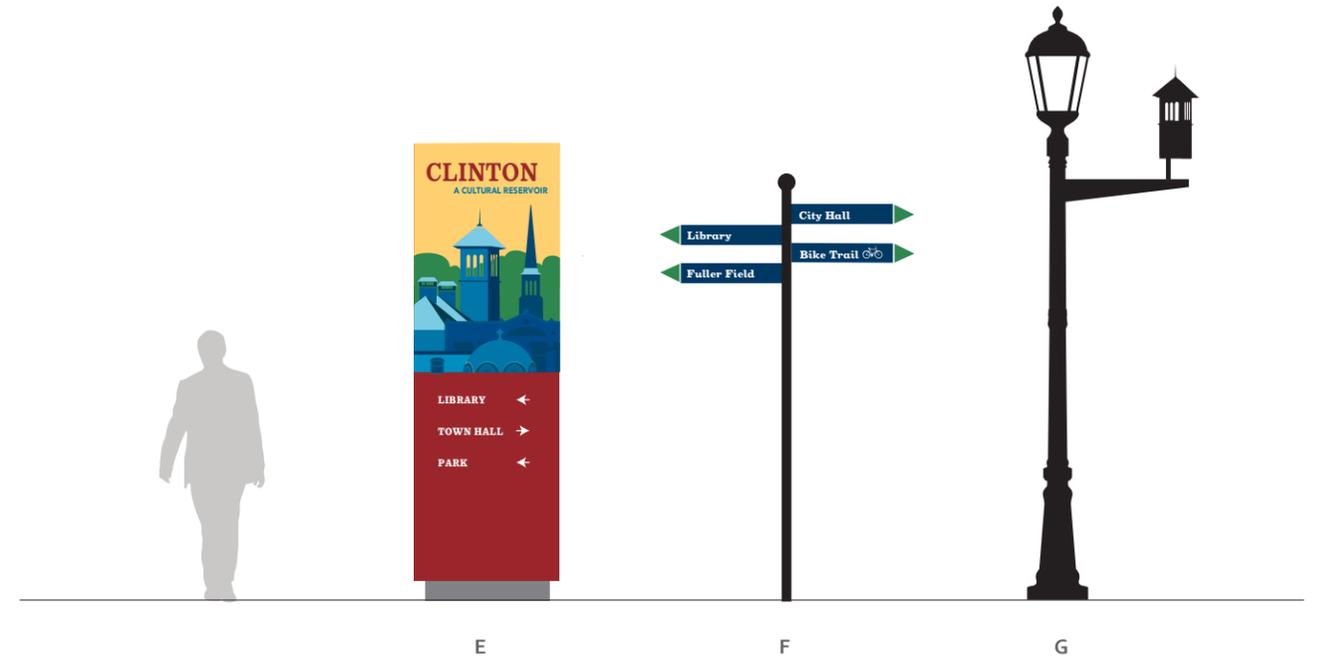
Mill Workers' Housing



## GATEWAY ELEMENTS



## FAMILY OF ELEMENTS



## FAMILY OF ELEMENTS

