

MEETING MINUTES

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

February 14, 2018

Chairman Rosenberry called the meeting to order at 1:14 pm. On behalf of Secretary Galvin, he welcomed the Commissioners. Chairman Rosenberry next addressed the audience, thanking them for attending. For those individuals who may not have attended commission meetings in the past, Chairman Rosenberry explained the structure of the meeting and when in the process the public could address the commission.

The Chairman turned to the first item on the agenda, the approval of the December 13, 2017 meeting minutes. He called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the minutes. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Crissman and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. Hearing no questions, the chair moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Rosenberry then turned to the next item on the agenda, the Local Historic District Preliminary Study Reports, first calling for any recusals. Hearing none, he turned the meeting over to Director of Local Government Programs, Chris Skelly.

Mr. Skelly presented the study reports and distributed a copy of the presentation slides. A copy of the slides is on file with these minutes. He began with the Local Historic District Preliminary Study Report for the **Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District Expansion in Methuen**. This is a single-building local historic district located at 2 Pleasant Street. The Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District was established in 1989 and contains 169 properties. This preliminary study report is for a proposed expansion of the district to include one additional property. Nearby properties in the local historic district include the Edward Searles Guesthouse, the Masonic Lodge, the textile mill, now converted to residential units, and the Searles High School, which is now Methuen City Hall.

The First Universalist Church, constructed in 1836 was converted to residential apartments in the 20th Century. Heavily damaged by fire several years ago, it is considered a complete loss and was demolished on Saturday. Working with the current owner, the Methuen Historic District Commission is recommending that the vacant parcel be added to the existing local historic district for the purpose of assuring sensitively designed infill construction and maintaining the streetscape along Pleasant Street. According to community development department staff for the city of Methuen, the current owner is on board with this plan.

To the north of the district is the Pleasant-High Street National Register Historic District established in 1984. Some properties included in the National Register District are the Matthew Currier House; Christopher Howe Double House, 18-20 Pleasant Street; Samuel H. Harris Jr. House, 30 High Street; Joseph W. Fulton House, 26 High Street; Joseph W. Fulton House, 26 High Street and the Milton J. Tenney House, 12 Pleasant Street.

Mr. Skelly said that MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District Expansion Local Historic District Preliminary Study Report and

providing the following advisory recommendations and comments: The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the city of Methuen to expand the Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District and also that the Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the city of Methuen to investigate protecting significant historic resources through a larger local historic district in this area.

Mr. Skelly presented the **Driscoll Block Local Historic District in Springfield**. This is a single building local historic district located at 211-213 Worthington Street in downtown Springfield. The Driscoll Block was constructed in 1894. Various manufacturing and warehouse concerns have occupied this block as well as a bowling alley. It was also a Sears and Roebuck Department store in the 1930s. It was listed on the National Register in 1983. It is currently being rehabilitated utilizing funds through the Springfield Historic Preservation Trust Fund, which was created by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission and MGM Springfield. Mr. Skelly said that MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Driscoll Block Local Historic District Preliminary Study Report and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments: The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the city of Springfield to establish the Driscoll Block Local Historic District and the Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the city of Springfield to investigate protecting significant historic resources through a larger local historic district in this area.

Mr. Skelly presented the **Underwood Building Local Historic District in Springfield**. This proposed single building local historic district, also on Worthington Street, is located at 280-302 Worthington Street. The Underwood Building was built in 1916. One of the first tenants in the building was the Underwood Typewriter Company. Many automobile related businesses were also located within this building. The offices of the Eastern States Agricultural and Industrial Exposition were housed here from 1917 to 1949, becoming the Eastern States Exposition. The building is currently under demolition delay, with the owner proposing demolition for surface parking and/or new construction. Mr. Skelly said that MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Underwood Building Local Historic District Preliminary Study Report and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments: The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the city of Springfield to establish the Underwood Building Local Historic District and also that the Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the city of Springfield to investigate protecting significant historic resources through a larger local historic district in this area.

Mr. Skelly then presented the **Uxbridge Historic District Expansion in Uxbridge**. The current local historic district includes the village center of Uxbridge. It was passed by town meeting in 2004. This proposed district expansion includes 113 properties. Much of the existing and proposed local historic district is already on the National Register, with the Uxbridge Common National Register District, the Wheelockville National Register District and the Central Woolen Mills District. The proposed extension onto Capron Street includes residential properties from turn of the century. Along Mendon Street, the proposed expansion includes many fine examples of worker housing as well as the Stanley Woolen Mills on the Blackstone River. The North Main Street expansion area is residential. Proposed demolitions along this stretch are prompting interest in a local historic district. In addition to the expansion of the village center district, the proposed expansion includes a separate property in the Ironstone section of Uxbridge, several

miles from the village center. The Ironstone School was built in 1915. It is currently owned by the South Uxbridge Community Association and used as a community center. It is surrounded by contemporary residential and industrial development. Mr. Skelly said that MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Uxbridge Historic District Expansion Preliminary Study Report and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments: The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the town of Uxbridge to expand the Uxbridge Historic District.

The chair called for a MOTION to acknowledge receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the **Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District Expansion in Methuen**, and to provide the advisory comments that the Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the city of Methuen to establish the Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District Expansion and also that the Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the city of Methuen to investigate protecting significant historic resources through a larger local historic district in this area. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Field and SECONDED by Commissioner Sullivan. The chairman called for any questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The chair called for a MOTION to acknowledge receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the **Driscoll Block Local Historic District in Springfield**, and to provide the advisory comments that the Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the city of Springfield to establish the Driscoll Block Local Historic District and the Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the city of Springfield to investigate protecting significant historic resources through a larger local historic district in this area. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Avenia and SECONDED by Commissioner Levy. The chairman called for any questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The chair called for a MOTION to acknowledge receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the **Underwood Building Local Historic District in Springfield**, and to provide the advisory comments that the Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the city of Springfield to establish the Underwood Building Local Historic District and the Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the city of Springfield to investigate protecting significant historic resources through a larger local historic district in this area. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Crissman. The chairman called for any questions or comments from the commission. He recognized Commissioner McDowell. Commissioner McDowell stated that he knew the building well, and the building is in disrepair. Commissioner McDowell then asked Mr. Skelly if we knew how long the owner has had this building. Mr. Skelly said he does not know the answer. Commissioner McDowell said the owner is not for this, and he is obversely trying to take the building down and planning to do something else with it to make improvements. The chairman called for any other question or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED with two nays, Commissioner McDowell and Commissioner Pride and nine in favor.

The chair called for a MOTION to acknowledge receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the **Uxbridge Historic District Expansion in Uxbridge**, and to provide the advisory comments that the Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the town of Uxbridge to expand the Uxbridge Historic District. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner Levy. The chairman called for any questions or comments from the commission. He recognized Commissioner Pride. Commissioner Pride asked what was proposed for demolition. Mr. Skelly said the North Main Street section has three proposed demolitions on single family homes.

The chair then recognized Commissioner Field who asked about the substantial distance of the school building from the main district area. Commissioner DeWitt said he could recall several similar expansions. Commissioner Dewitt further stated that there may be a local reason and that he would be inclined to defer to the local wisdom about how it should be done. Hearing no further discussion, Chairman Rosenberry called to move the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry turned to the next item on the agenda, the Preview of March National Register nominations. The Chairman then recognized Director of the National Register Program, Betsy Friedberg. Ms. Friedberg informed the commissioners that there would be five nominations for consideration at the March 14 meeting, including: the Pan Historic District, Bolton; Columbia Road-Strathcona Road Historic District, Boston; John and Ruth Rose House, Granville; Leonard, Shaw & Dean Shoe Factory, Middleborough; and the General John and Mary Fellows House, Sheffield. Ms. Friedberg said that commissioners would receive the nomination packets in the next couple of weeks.

The Chairman turned to the next item on the agenda, the **Executive Director's Report**. He then turned the floor over to Brona Simon, Executive Director.

Ms. Simon began by reminding commissioners of the March 14 commission meeting. In addition to the National Register Nominations, votes will be required on Survey and Planning grants, and a quorum of the commissioners will be necessary. Ms. Simon then noted that the Survey and Planning Subcommittee (Commissioners DeWitt, Friary, and McDowell) will meet at 11 a.m. on March 14, before the commission meeting, to review the survey and planning grant applications and report their recommendations to the full Commission for votes that day.

Ms. Simon next reported that the 2018 Preservation Award Nominations are due on Tuesday, February 20, noting that MHC has received only a few inquiries so far. The commission will vote on the selection of Preservation Awards at the April meeting.

She then reported that MPPF grant applications are due on March 23, noting that several workshops have been conducted by MHC's grants division staff.

Ms. Simon reported on the status of the MHC's federal funding. The federal fiscal government passed another Continuing Resolution for FY18 that expire March 23rd. Regarding the state budget, she noted that the governor issued his recommendation for the next state fiscal year FY19 and his recommendation for MHC operating budget is \$942,050. This is a slight increase

over current years funding. The governor's budget is now working its way through the house ways and means committee.

Ms. Simon concluded by reporting on personnel news announcing that Lenny Loparto, Preservation Planner/Archaeologist, retired from MHC in January and wished him the best.

This completed the Executive Director's report.

Chair Rosenberry called for a MOTION to adjourn. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. The meeting adjourned at 1:44 pm.

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Commissioners Present

John Rosenberry
Charles Sullivan
Dennis DeWitt
Caitlin Emery Avenia
Dennis Fiori
Donald Friary
James Crissman
Anne Pride
Michael McDowell
Cyrus Field
Suanna Selby Crowley
Barbara Levy

Staff Present

Brona Simon
Betsy Friedberg
Nancy Maida
Andrew Miller
Chris Skelly
Michael Steinitz
Ben Haley
Erin Doherty
Edie Clifford
Patrick Powers

A TRUE COPY ATTEST

Respectfully submitted,
Shirley Brown