

MEETING MINUTES

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

February 8, 2017

Chairman Maresco called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm. He welcomed the commissioners and thanked them for their attendance. The chairman then turned to the first item on the agenda, the **approval of the December 14, 2016 meeting minutes**. He called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the minutes. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Field and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. Hearing no discussion, the chairman moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Maresco then welcomed the public, noting that the meeting was being taped, and asking individuals to state their names and affiliation if they spoke.

The Chairman then turned to the second item on the agenda, **Local Historic District Preliminary Study Reports** for:

Duxbury, King Caesar Local Historic District;
Duxbury, Stetson Place Local Historic District;
Duxbury, Surplus Street Local Historic District;
Duxbury, Washington Street Local Historic District;
Newton, Newton Highlands Local Historic District;
Springfield, Apremont Triangle Local Historic District

Noting that votes would be required, Chairman Maresco called for any recusals, and hearing none, turned the floor over to Chris Skelly, Director of Local Government Programs. Mr. Skelly began by explaining MHC's advisory role as specified in the local historic district act—MGL, Chapter 40C. He then turned to a PowerPoint presentation with photographs and maps of the proposed local historic districts (LHDs). He distributed copies of the PowerPoint images to the commissioners in attendance. A copy is on file with these minutes.

Overview of Duxbury: Mr. Skelly noted that Duxbury currently has six LHDs, and is currently proposing four more. He explained that the town of Duxbury reaches out to property owners to explain how LHDs work, and that proposed districts only include the property of owners who wish to be included. Thus the proposed LHDs can be either single-property districts or discrete areas in which scattered properties make up the LHD. Mr. Skelly then described the four proposed Duxbury Historic Districts as follows:

Duxbury, King Caesar Local Historic District: This is a single-building LHD covering the 1809, Federal-style mansion built for Ezra Weston II, who was known as King Caesar due to his worldwide preeminence as a shipbuilder and merchant. The property has been owned by the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society since 1965 and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

Duxbury, Stetson Place Local Historic District: This is a single-building LHD, located at 44 Stetson Place. Dating to the last quarter of the 19th century, the house was probably built by Charles F. Stetson as part of a set of four similar properties on the north side of Stetson Place.

Duxbury, Surplus Street Local Historic District: The district consists of seven properties scattered along Surplus Street. Among them are the 1853 Asa Brewster House at 26 Surplus Street, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Old Shipbuilder's NRDIS) in 1986, the Zenas Winsor House (ca. 1806) at 112 Surplus Street, the Jonathan Delano House (ca. 1810) at 184 Surplus Street, and the John Weston House at 204 Surplus Street, which may date to 1729. There are many other notable properties along Surplus Street that are not included in the proposed LHD. Among them are the 1834 John Pierce House at 205 Surplus Street, the Seth Bartlett House at 37 Surplus Street, and 33 Surplus Street, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Old Shipbuilder's NRDIS) in 1986.

Duxbury, Washington Street Local Historic District: Consisting of three scattered properties, the district includes the Henry Wadsworth House (ca. 1853) at 265 Washington Street, the 1805 Snow Magoun House at 291 Washington Street, and the Ahira Wadsworth House (ca. 1800) at 338 Washington Street. The three properties are among 212 resources that were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 as the Old Shipbuilder's National Register District.

Following the summary of the four proposed Duxbury LHDs, Mr. Skelly reported that MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the four Local Historic District Preliminary Study Reports and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments: 1) The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the town of Duxbury to establish the King Caesar, Stetson Place, Surplus Street, and Washington Street Local Historic Districts; 2) the LHD study committee should investigate protecting additional significant historic resources through a larger district or additional local historic districts in the subject areas.

Chairman Maresco called for a MOTION to acknowledge receipt of the preliminary study reports for the four proposed Local Historic Districts in Duxbury, and to concur with MHC staff's advisory recommendations. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner Crissman. The chairman called for questions. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Newton, Newton Highlands Local Historic District: The proposed LHD includes 276 properties in a residential neighborhood with a commercial village center located north of Route 9. In 1986 a National Register District was established in the southern quarter of the proposed LHD. The NR boundary was increased in 1990. The proposed LHD is primarily wood-frame, single-family houses dating to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but there is some new construction that evokes historic styles. The study report notes that residents are concerned about recent demolitions in the area.

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Local Historic District Preliminary Study Report and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments: The MHC encourages the city of Newton to establish the Newton Highlands Local Historic District.

Chairman Maresco called for a MOTION to acknowledge receipt of the preliminary study report for the Newton Highlands Local Historic District, and to concur with MHC staff's advisory recommendation. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner Field.

The chairman called for questions from the commission. Commissioner Friary asked if paint color would be reviewed. Mr. Skelly said no. The chairman then recognized Bob Burke in the audience. Mr. Burke is on the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Council, and he co-chaired the LHD study committee. He spoke of being born in his house in Newton Highlands and of his appreciation for the village's historic integrity. He introduced Barbara Smiley, a volunteer who inventoried the properties in the proposed district. Both Mr. Burke and Ms. Smiley expressed concern about the potential for real estate developments to change the character of the neighborhood. Chairman Maresco thanked Mr. Burke and Ms. Smiley for their preservation efforts and called for additional questions or comments from the commissioners. Commissioner Cosco asked if any pending development proposals would be impacted by the establishment of the LHD. Mr. Skelly said that any projects that already had permits issued would be grandfathered. Commissioner Field then asked if Demolition Delay procedures were being considered. Ms. Smiley gave an example of one property that had been the subject of Newton's Demolition Delay ordinance, stating that the owners waited out the delay period and then made their alterations. She expressed concern about that approach becoming a pattern. Commissioner Field asked about the length of Newton's demo delay period. Mr. Burke said it was one year, except in the case of National Register-listed properties, which have an 18-month delay.

Hearing no further discussion, Chairman Maresco moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Springfield, Apremont Triangle Local Historic District: The proposed district, located north of downtown Springfield, includes ten properties, consisting of early 20th century commercial buildings surrounding a small park. The park is a World War I memorial named for the battle at Apremont, France. The proposed LHD includes the 1910 Hotel Kimball (now condominiums), the 1915 YMCA, and the McIntosh Building, which housed shoe manufacturers. It also includes the 1924 building of Tarbell and Watters, an auto parts distributor that is one of a number of former automobile showroom, parts, and service buildings in the proposed LHD. Most of the properties in the proposed LHD are within the boundary of the Apremont Triangle National Register Historic District, listed in 1983. The Springfield Historical Commission has demonstrated support for establishing the local historic district, and city revitalization planning efforts are underway.

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Local Historic District Preliminary Study Report and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments: The MHC encourages the city of Springfield to establish the Apremont Triangle Local Historic District.

Chairman Maresco called for a MOTION to acknowledge receipt of the report and to concur with MHC staff's advisory recommendations. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Wilson and SECONDED by Commissioner Crissman. The chairman called for questions. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Chairman then turned to the third item on the agenda, a **Report on FY15 Survey and Planning Grant projects** (no vote required), and turned the floor over to Michael Steinitz, Director, Preservation Planning Division.

Mr. Steinitz reviewed the Survey and Planning Grant process, explaining that cities and towns across the Commonwealth can compete for MHC's preservation planning grants. The matching grants (50 percent from MHC) facilitate the hiring of qualified professional consultants to undertake survey and planning projects.

Mr. Steinitz then turned to a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the highlights of a number of the eighteen FY15 projects, noting that the survey projects alone added approximately 1,500 properties to the statewide inventory of historic resources. The survey projects, which are summarized in the attached printout of the PowerPoint presentation, included Beverly, Phase III of a survey of Boston's North End, Bourne, Chelmsford, Clinton, Gloucester, Marblehead Coastal Zone, Medford (East Medford), North Adams, Randolph, Somerville (Union Square), Swampscott, and Whitman. Additionally, the Survey and Planning Grant program helped to fund a National Register nomination for Manchaug Village in Sutton. Mr. Steinitz turned the floor over to Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director, to report on the nomination project.

Ms. Friedberg said that Manchaug Village, the third NRHD nomination for villages of Sutton, is the town's largest manufacturing village. The planned mill village began in 1826, and retains well-preserved examples of workers' housing as well as more high-style residences, industrial buildings, and commercial buildings. Ms. Friedberg said that the consultant, Kathleen Kelley Broomer, prepared a thoroughly researched and well-written nomination. The project also had the enthusiastic assistance of the local project coordinator, Jen Hager. Two public informational meetings have been held in the community, and the nomination appears to have universal support. It has also generated a village oral and photographic history project as well as fostering excitement about historic preservation. The nomination will be presented to the Commission at the June meeting.

Mr. Steinitz then concluded the presentation of the FY15 S&P grants by summarizing a project undertaken by the City of Salem to conduct a topographic survey of the historic Fort Pickering site on Winter Island. The project used Terrestrial Laser Scanning

technology to create a precise digital topographic record of the site, even extending into the interiors of the site's three underground chambers. The data created will serve as baseline for future rehabilitation and restoration work on the site. As a demonstration of the potential of the digital survey to convey a better understanding of the site, Mr. Steinitz then ran a "fly-through" animation based on the digital data that conveys precise three-dimensional views of both the surface topography and features and the underground chambers.

Chairman Maresco thanked Mr. Steinitz and called for any questions or comments. Hearing none, he moved to the next item on the agenda, the **March National Register Agenda Preview** (no vote required), and turned the floor over to Betsy Friedberg, Director of the National Register Program.

Ms. Friedberg informed the commissioners that there would be five nominations to review at the March 8 meeting. She read the full list: the Boston Fish Pier; the Columbia Road-Devon Street Historic District; the Riverside Village Historic District, Gill; a boundary increase to the 2007 Heath Center Historic District; and the Worcester State Hospital Farmhouse. Ms. Friedberg said that commissioners would receive the nomination packets in the next couple of weeks.

The chairman thanked Ms. Friedberg. He then noted that Commissioner Fiori had just left the meeting at 2:30, and that since there was no longer a quorum, the commission could not continue to engage in a deliberative meeting or entertain any votes, but that it was permissible to proceed as an informational meeting with the **Executive Director's Report**. He then turned the floor over to Brona Simon, Executive Director.

Ms. Simon began by reminding commissioners of the Conflict of Interest law that must be reviewed and acknowledged every two years by each of them, as special employees of the Commonwealth. She said they would each be receiving the required information via email.

Ms. Simon then noted that the Survey and Planning Subcommittee (Commissioners DeWitt, McDowell, and Wilson) would meet at 11 a.m. on March 8, 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 2017 Preservation Award Nominations are due on February 17, 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 24, noting that several workshops have been conducted by MHC's grants division staff.

Ms. Simon reported that the new State Register of Historic Places has been printed and is available for distribution. Commissioners who would like a copy can pick one up after

the meeting or request it be sent by mail. She also noted that historic designations are searchable online through MACRIS.

Ms. Simon then reported on the availability of small grants from the State Historic Records Advisory Board for preservation of veterans' collections, sites, and memorials. The funds need to be spent by June 30. She recommended visiting the State Archives website for more information. She also said that under the grant program, MHC reviews the restoration of gravestones and other memorials related to veterans. Chairman Maresco noted that Senate President Rosenberg was instrumental in establishing the grant program, which is in its second round.

Ms. Simon concluded by recognizing publication of Building Old Cambridge, which was written by Commissioner Charles Sullivan and his coauthor Susan Maycock. Twenty years in the making, the exhaustively researched and heavily illustrated 944-page book on Harvard Square and its surrounding neighborhoods was published in November.

Chairman Maresco called for a motion to adjourn. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner Crissman. The meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.

Commissioners Present

Michael Maresco
John Cosco
James Crissman
Cyrus Field
Dennis Fiori
Donald Friary
Anne Pride
Charles Sullivan
Mark Wilson

Staff Present

Brona Simon
Phil Bergen
Karen Davis
Betsy Friedberg
Nancy Maida
Andrew Miller
Chris Skelly
Michael Steinitz
Peter Stott

A TRUE COPY ATTEST

Respectfully submitted,
Karen L. Davis

