

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**November 12, 2025**

The Commission meeting was held remotely in a Zoom meeting starting at 1:00 p.m. in a Hybrid meeting and remotely on Zoom. The in-person portion was held at the State Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Blvd.

Chairman Rosenberry called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. On behalf of Secretary Galvin, he welcomed the Commissioners. Chairman Rosenberry next addressed the visitors, 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 visitors could address the commission. Chairman Rosenberry then took attendance to determine that a quorum was met.

The Chairman turned to the first item on the agenda, the **approval of the September 10, 2025 meeting minutes**. He asked if any Commissioners had any alterations or corrections to the September minutes. Hearing no questions or comments from the commission. He called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the minutes. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Wheeler and SECONDED by Commissioner Gutro. Hearing no questions or comments from the commission, the Chairman called the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then turned to the next item on the agenda, the Local Historic District Preliminary Study Reports, first calling for any recusals. Commissioner Sullivan and Commissioner Mark Wilson recused themselves from the discussion and voting on the Lower Green Local Historic District in the Town of Newbury. The Chairman, then turned the meeting over to Michael Steinitz, Director, and Preservation Planning Division. Mr. Steinitz presented the study reports with a PowerPoint presentation. A copy of the presentation is on file with these minutes.

**East Amherst Local Historic District, Amherst**

Mr. Steinitz first presented the Preliminary Study Report for the **East Amherst Local Historic District in Amherst**. The Town of Amherst is proposing to designate its third local historic district, covering the neighborhood known as East Amherst. The proposed district would protect 55 parcels along Main Street, and North and South East streets, in East Amherst, a predominantly residential neighborhood.

The Amherst Historical Commission recognized the historical and architectural significance of the area in the 1980s, and in 1986 the East Village Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Amherst Historic District Commission has identified the East Amherst as a priority for consideration for local historic district status given its significance to the town and its location along two major thoroughfares.

The proposed boundaries of for the local historic district largely follow those of the National Register district on the north, east and south. To the west the proposed district would add five

properties that were not included in the National Register district, primarily on the east side of Salem Street. The Study report notes additional properties meriting consideration for protection west along Main Street between the proposed district and the Dickinson Local Historic District, but these were considered beyond the scope of the current initiative.

Settlement of the eastern part of Amherst dates to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, and a second parish was established here in 1783. Growth of the village in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was spurred on by an uptick in small-scale commercial and manufacturing activities with the development of stores, a tannery, boot and shoe manufacture, and most importantly carriage manufacturing. Local palm leaf hat manufacturing, in which Amherst became a leading national producer by the 1850s may also have begun in East Amherst. Little direct evidence of these activities survives, but the area is characterized by the homes built for many of these entrepreneurs and their employees in this period. Following the arrival of the railroad in Amherst Center in 1853, the town's focus of development shifted west.

The proposed district includes a number of the town's earliest surviving buildings: The Noah Dickinson House (1754), the Baggs Tavern (ca. 1770), the Daniel Kellogg House (1758), and the Ebenezer Mattoon House (1782). The district also includes a number of brick dwellings, the earliest being the 1814 Kellogg House, with three later buildings all dating to ca. 1840. Other buildings include a variety of single and multi-family houses in Greek Revival, Italianate and Queen Anne styles of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Institutional buildings include the Second Congregational Church of 1839, and the adjacent Parish Hall built in 1859, and the East Street Elementary School, built in 1894, and reconstructed after a fire in 1936. There is some contemporary infill, for the most part it is compatible in scale with the predominant historic architecture of the area.

### **MHC Staff Recommendations**

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the East Amherst Local Historic District and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the Town of Amherst to establish East Amherst Local Historic District.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the Town of Amherst to continue to investigate protecting additional significant historic resources through larger or additional local historic districts.

### **Ferdinand's Blue Store, Boston**

Mr. Steinitz next presented the Boston Landmarks Commission Study Report for **Ferdinand's Blue Store in Boston**. The City of Boston is proposing to landmark the Ferdinand's Blue Store – Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Center at 2260-2270 Washington Street in Nubian Square in the Roxbury neighborhood. The designation was initiated in 1989 by a petition from registered voters submitted to the Boston Landmarks Commission.

The subject property is prominently located at the intersection of Washington and Warren Streets in the heart of Nubian Square, formerly Dudley Square. The area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 as the Dudley Station Historic District, in recognition of its historical and architectural significance to the Roxbury neighborhood and the City of Boston

Ferdinand's Blue Store was purpose built in 1895 as a showroom and department store for furniture, home décor and housewares. Founder Frank Ferdinand had started his Roxbury furniture retailing business at this location in 1869, and the growth of the business coincided with the explosive growth of Roxbury's streetcar suburbs and the demands for new furnishings that came with new housing and a booming population. The 1895 Blue Store was the work of architect John Lyman Faxon, who was responsible for its iconic design. Trained at MIT, among his principal works are the First Baptist Church in Newton, the First Congregational Church in Detroit, the Twelfth Baptist Church in Boston, East Boston High School, and the Hotel Victoria in Boston, and the Rollins Chapel at Dartmouth College.

Located at the Dudley Station commercial epicenter of Roxbury's transportation infrastructure, Ferdinand's thrived and expanded through Roxbury's peak years of prosperity in the 1920s into the 1940s, but suffered as a result of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century real estate, transportation and urban policy decisions that contributed to Roxbury's decline as a vibrant community. Ferdinand's operated as a family-run business until the store was sold in 1971 after a hundred years of operation. The property then sat vacant for several decades

In 2007 the Boston Redevelopment Authority acquired the building as part of then Mayor Menino's Dudley Vision project to relocate municipal functions here with a new city office mega-complex to help jump start the revitalization of Dudley Square. The project involved the demolition of the over 90 percent of the 1895 Blue Store with the exception of the signature portion of its façade, which was proposed to be incorporated into the new building.

Under MHC's review the project proposing near total demolition of a significant building contributing to a National and State Register listed historic district, and the construction of a large new complex out of scale with the existing district, was necessarily found to be a major adverse effect. Moreover, the Commission's established policy has been that so-called facadectomies, by destroying the overall architectural integrity and functional history the building, cannot be considered a positive preservation treatment by the MHC. With the building substantially demolished it no longer would be a contributing resource to the National Register district. At the same time the Boston Landmarks Commission, which in contrast with the MHC, has been accepting of facadectomies as an acceptable treatment, enthusiastically supported the project. The MHC accepted mitigation for the adverse effect and the project proceeded. The new building, named the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Center after the first Black City Council President, opened in 2015 as the new headquarters for Boston Public Schools.

Looking at the now restored façade, Ferdinand's Blue Store was erected to conform with its flatiron-shaped lot; the narrow, corner end contains the main entrance. Highly detailed, the facade was built of limestone, terra-cotta, decorative brick and granite, topped with a large, ornamental copper cornice featuring cast lion heads. Display windows for viewing merchandise flank the main entrance. The display windows at floors one and two are surrounded by Doric

pilasters and limestone entablature. The second and fifth levels present six large oval windows above the main entrance and at each end of the facade. Extending the emphasis in these bays are tripartite windows on the third and fourth floors with Renaissance-inspired, carved limestone detailing. Floors three and four are clad in cream, yellow and tan brick set in a banded pattern. The trim at the third and fourth floor is terra-cotta, which was used to clad the fifth floor and mimic the intricately carved limestone, including an elaborate frieze. Marble medallions were installed at the top floor.

### **Boston Landmarks Commission Staff Recommendations:**

Because of its significance as a renowned furniture retailing establishment that contributed to the development of Roxbury's principal business district from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and as a prominently sited example of department store architecture with Baroque and Renaissance Revival stylistic elements, designed by architect John Lyman Faxon, Boston Landmarks Commission staff recommends that the historic façade of the former Ferdinand's Blue Store and the air space above the five-story portion of the Bruce C. Bolling Building facing Nubian Square be designated as a Boston Landmark.

### **Massachusetts Historical Commission Staff Recommendations**

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Landmark Study Report for the Ferdinand's Blue Store and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission concurs with the recommendations of the Boston Landmarks Commission staff.

### **Quaker Lane, Boston**

Mr. Steinitz next presented the Boston Landmarks Commission Study Report for **Quaker Lane** in **Boston**. The City of Boston is considering landmark designation for Quaker Lane, a group of intersecting public pedestrian walkways and service alleys located in the Financial District of Downtown Boston. The designation was initiated in 1985 after a petition to designate was submitted by a Boston Landmarks Commissioner to the Boston Landmarks Commission.

Quaker Lane consists of the public street and sidewalk areas that extend from 11 Congress Street to 50 Devonshire Street, and from 25 Congress Street to 31 State Street. Properties that border Quaker Lane are all late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century high-rise office buildings with the exception of 19 Devonshire Street, which is a high-rise constructed in 2019. The 1896 Second Brazer Building (the red square) was designated a Boston Landmark in 1985 and individually listed in the National Register in 1986. Directly northwest of the block containing Quaker Lane is the Old State House and the site of the Boston Massacre.

Nineteenth-century granite paving lines three spurs of Quaker Lane, although more than half of it was relocated from Devonshire Street. Quaker Lane also has nineteenth-century bluestone paving. The roadway surface of Quaker Lane is precast concrete pavers at the two southernmost spurs, and paved asphalt at the east-west connector between Devonshire Street and Congress Street. The northernmost spur is concrete sidewalk. Shown here are grey granite cross-hatched

paving, pink granite, granite paving with modern concrete pavers, and asphalt and concrete surfaces

The evolution of Quaker Lane is well depicted cartographically. The first suggestion of a section of Quaker Lane may date to the construction here of Boston's First Church in 1632. In 1708 this was named Half-Court Square. The Quakers met in a building here from 1710 to 1808. That year the monumental seven story Exchange Coffee House, then the largest building in Boston, was built here. After that building was destroyed by fire in 1818, the block was subdivided, and the current configuration of Quaker Lane first appeared. The name Quaker Lane was not actually applied until 1930, in recognition of the association of the area with the 18<sup>th</sup> century Society of Friends meetinghouse.

### **Boston Landmarks Commission Staff Recommendations**

While indisputably the site of important events in Boston's early cultural, political, economic, and social history, no physical above-ground material from the 17th or 18th century Quaker Lane survives, extant buildings adjacent to Quaker Lane date primarily from 1894 to 1914, with one built in 2019, and the granite and bluestone pavers, many of which have been relocated here from elsewhere, date to the mid to late 19th century. Boston Landmarks Commission staff therefore recommends that Quaker Lane does not satisfy the criteria for designation, and that it not be designated as a Boston Landmark.

### **Massachusetts Historical Commission Staff Recommendations**

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Landmark Study Report for Quaker Lane and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission concurs with the recommendations of the Boston Landmarks Commission staff.

### **Powder Point Local Historic District Expansion, Duxbury**

Mr. Steinitz next presented the Preliminary Study Report for the **Powder Point Local Historic District Expansion in Duxbury**. The Town of Duxbury is proposing an addition to one of its 14 existing local historic districts, by adding the property at 339 Powder Point Avenue to the Powder Point Local Historic District. All of the private properties included in Duxbury's existing local historic districts were volunteered for inclusion by their owners following outreach by the local historic district commission. As a result the majority of these are single-property districts. In addition three town-owned properties are protected. This volunteered addition would add a fourth discontinuous property to the 3 properties at 14, 30 and 233 Powder Point Avenue that currently make up the Powder Point Local Historic District.

Many historic properties on Powder Point (blue dots) have been identified by the town's historic property inventory. Marked in Green are some of the town's existing local historic districts. To the west (in red) is the large Old Shipbuilder's National Register Historic District that extends north-south along Washington Street. The densely developed Powder Point neighborhood

retains many residences that date from the areas turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century seasonal resort development, but infill, alterations, and teardown replacements are also common.

The development of Powder Point is representative of Duxbury's post-shipbuilding era evolution as a summer resort following the arrival of the railroad in 1871. In 1899, Duxbury developer Frederick Knapp filed a subdivision plan for Point End that included the subject parcel, and by the time of the 1903 Plymouth County Atlas the house and carriage house/garage had appeared on this lot. Knapp had already sold the lot in 1897 to the first owners, the sisters Almaretta and Eunice Critchett, both school teachers living in Watertown. Following Eunice Critchett's death in 1928 the property was sold to Harrison and Elizabeth Lord Souder, and it remained in this family's ownership for the next 90 years, until 2019.

Designed in the Craftsman style, the shingle-clad Critchett House is 2-1/2 stories with a high hip roof with deep eaves and exposed rafter tails, and topped by a balustrade widow's walk. The main block is cubic form, and the house is distinguished by its raised, open wraparound porch with turned posts. The property retains its original carriage house/garage. The property is a well-preserved example of Duxbury's architectural development ca. 1900.

### **MHC Staff Recommendations**

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Town of Duxbury Local Historic District Study Report and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the town of Duxbury to expand the Powder Point Local Historic District to include the Critchett House and Garage at 339 Powder Point Avenue.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the town of Duxbury to continue to investigate protecting additional significant historic resources through larger or additional local historic districts.

### **Lower Green Local Historic District, Newbury**

Mr. Steinitz next presented the Preliminary Study Report for **Lower Green Local Historic District in Newbury**. The Town of Newbury is proposing to designate its first local historic district, covering the Town's Lower Green and buildings and landscapes that surround it. The proposed district would protect 24 parcels at the Town's southern border where High Street (Route 1A) crosses the Parker River into Rowley. The northern portion of the proposed district includes a 30.8 acre portion of the undeveloped Old Town Hill Reservation owned by the Trustees (formerly the Trustees of Reservations). Abutting the Lower Green to the west, and also included in the proposed district is the 4 acre Newman Road Pasture, owned by the Essex County Greenbelt Association.

Two properties in the proposed district are protected by perpetual preservation restrictions held by Historic New England, and a third property is a museum property owned by that organization. A fourth property is owned by the Sons and Daughters of the First Settlers of Newbury. The

proposed district is otherwise essentially residential, with the one commercial use an art gallery in a converted barn. Town owned properties include two burial grounds, the 3 acre Lower Green itself and the 3.5 acre parking lot and boat ramp of the Town Landing that marks the southern entrance to the district coming off the Parker River Bridge.

The general area of the proposed district north of the Parker River was the first focus of European settlement in Newbury in 1635, and the site of the town's first meetinghouse and tavern. The focus of settlement soon shifted further north, but the Lower Green remained important as a crossing focus of the Parker River, first by ferry, and after 1758 by a succession of bridges. Through the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the area remained agricultural, although by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was some seasonal resort and recreational development related to the River. With the Massachusetts Tercentennial and the Town's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the 1930s there was a growing antiquarian interest locally that led to the relocation of at least three early buildings in the area to preserve them. A key figure at this time was the preservationist and philanthropist Florence Evans Bushee, daughter of the president of the Boston Five Cents Savings Bank, who in 1925 inherited the family's extensive Newbury estate farm on Newman Road, and who took an active interest in the protection of the area's historic landscape through acquisition, and who subsequently conveyed properties in the proposed district to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities and to the Trustees of Reservations or otherwise assured their protection.

The earliest building in the district is the Jackman-Willet House, reported to date to 1683, a rare surviving one-story, First Period building, acquired in 1930 by the Sons and Daughters of the First Settlers of Newbury, and relocated twice, once in 1932, and again in 1982 to its present location on Cottage Road.

The Dole-Little House was build circa 1715 using material salvaged from an earlier building. It was acquired in 1951 by Florence Evans Bushee who engaged restoration architect Roy Baker to undertake a substantial restoration in 1954 to its then-presumed 17<sup>th</sup> century appearance. In 1975 the property was bequeathed to SPNEA, now Historic New England, which maintains it as a house museum. The 1728 Seddon Tavern was acquired and relocated to Lower Green Road by Florence Bushee in 1933 to save it from a realignment of High Road. It was however destroyed by fire not long after its relocation, and Ms. Bushee then engaged Roy Baker to oversee a reconstruction of the building in 1940. It was subsequently sold by Florence Bushee's estate with perpetual preservation restrictions held by Historic New England.

The ca. 1770 gambrel roofed building on High Road known as the Ferry House, is reputed to have been a toll house for the river crossing. It was relocated on its site in the 1930s to make room for the widening of Route 1A. It too was acquired by Ms. Bushee in 1966, and sold by her estate in 1976, again with preservation restrictions held by Historic New England.

The centerpiece of the Lower Green itself is the 1877 Lower Green Schoolhouse, which with declining enrollments operated continuously for only 20 years, then intermittently until 1909, after which the town used it for storage until 1975 when it was restored as part of the bicentennial, and has since been a museum operated by the Newbury Historical Commission. Other buildings located around the Lower Green include the 1790 Plummer – Humphreys House

with its historic outbuildings including its large 19<sup>th</sup> century barn, and the ca. 1780 Woodbridge – Plummer House.

Two town-owned burial grounds are included in the proposed district: the First Settlers Burial Ground, located on a discontinuous parcel north of Lower Green on High Road, and the 1786 Evergreen Cemetery at the end of Cottage Rd, with many late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century markers. Additional historic properties along High Road north of the Lower Green are included. One notable exclusion from the proposed district is 277 High Road, facing the Lower Green across High Road on the east, which is not being included due to owner opposition.

Much of the planning impetus for this local historic district initiative came from two development projects, one to the west and one to the east of the district. The first was the demolition and redevelopment of the of the Old Town Hill Farm complex immediately to the west of the Lower Green, the former estate farm of Florence Evans Bushee depicted ca. 1940, and more recently ca. 2010, and as the subdivided and redeveloped property appears now. Preservation Massachusetts listed the Lower Green in Newbury on its most endangered resource list in 2010, but Old Town Hill Farm was nevertheless demolished in 2013. Subsequently a second subdivision and development just east of Lower Green along the south side of Cottage Street added five large modern residences opposite the 17<sup>th</sup> century Jackman-Willet House, and just west of the Evergreen Cemetery. In response to Newbury a residents' petition the Select Board appointed a local historic district study committee in November 2022, and the study report is the result of their research and engagement with property owners in the proposed district and town residents generally.

### **MHC Staff Recommendations**

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the Lower Green Local Historic District in the Town of Newbury and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the Town of Newbury to establish the Lower Green Local Historic District.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the Town of Newbury to continue to investigate protecting its other significant historic resources through additional local historic districts.

That concluded Mr. Steinitz's presentation.

Chairman Rosenberry then proposed to take up the motions in reverse order beginning with Newbury, so that Commissioners Sullivan and Wilson could more easily recuse themselves for the first vote and then rejoin the meeting for the rest. At this point Commissioner Sullivan and Commissioner M. Wilson recused themselves from the discussion and voting on the Lower Green Local Historic District in Newbury.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Preliminary Study Report for the **Lower Green Local Historic District in Newbury**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. The chairman recognized Commissioner Adelman who asked about the role the Commission usually takes in terms of the actual proposals, for example in the case of the Lower Green Local Historic District, the proposed preservation ordinance would exclude the review of walls, fences, and roofing color. Does this meeting get into these details or is it up to the towns in terms of what they decide to regulate in their local historic districts? The Chairman responded that for meeting purposes that we normally don't get into that level of detail, but would defer to the town or to MHC staff and the town to address those details. The Chairman recognized Mr. Steinitz who stated that unless the town were proposing something that would not be allowed under the statute, then the town has flexibility in terms of what they do and do not include. The Chairman then called for any other question or comments. Hearing none, he moved the MOTION. The MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

At this point Commissioner Sullivan and Commissioner Mark Wilson returned to the meeting.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Preliminary Study Report for the **Powder Point Historic District Expansion in Duxbury**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, the Chair then called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Preliminary Study Report for the **Quaker Lane** in the City of **Boston**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner Wheeler. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. The chairman recognized Commissioner Friary who commented that he is puzzled this is not being accepted. The buildings are of a considerable age, being more than a hundred years old. He recalls a magnificent fire escape on one of the buildings. How the buildings have changed over the years doesn't seem to be a reason to disqualify it from the current recognition. The chairman recognized Mr. Steinitz who said that the buildings are not included in the proposed landmark. The proposed landmark consists solely of the street and public way surfaces of Quaker Lane. The buildings are not under consideration. Commissioner Friary acknowledged that this partially answered his question, but that he still thinks it's a very important place in Boston, because of its Quaker background and because of the street pattern there, even though the street materials have changed. He said he would be inclined to give it greater recognition than what it's getting. The Chair then called for any other any other questions or comments from the commission. The chairman recognized Commissioner DeWitt who stated that by his understanding this is a nomination that goes back to 1985 by Polly Herrill, a well-respected person at the time, but the BLC staff state they don't know why she initiated it. It appears that Boston is clearing this away. Commissioner Friary's comments are well taken, and Commissioner DeWitt stated that he supposes if one disagrees with the motion one could vote nay or abstain. He agrees that the spiral staircases are magnificent. The chairman recognized Commissioner Ceccacci who asked if it would be possible to suggest that a new nomination be made, which would include the surrounding

buildings? The chairman said yes a recommendation could be amended and put forward in that manner. The chairman then recognized BLC Executive Director Elizabeth Sherva, who wished to respond to some of the comments. She said that BLC staff looked at the Quaker Lane area, and it's truly just the area way. The fire escapes are just part of the historical buildings, not the actual area way. In addition, BLC's archaeology team stated that they had no archaeology concerns under the roadway, as it has been previously disturbed. The layout of the streets is not an original layout, which was thought to be an original layout when it was petitioned, but it's really an evolution of the roadway in the area. There was a Quaker Meeting House and a Quaker Burial Ground, but the burial ground was moved early on. When BLC staff looked at the road pattern we considered what are we actually landmarking here? It comes down to airspace. That this is an evolution of roads, and not a roadway system that today looks like it did in colonial times, was another factor for us. The chairman thanked Mrs. Sherva then called for any other questions or comments. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The vote passed – 9 affirmative, 3 nays, one abstention:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Mark Wilson	Susan Ceccacci	Dennis DeWitt
Charles Sullivan	Donald Friary	
Heather Wilson	James McCurdy	
Michael McDowell		
Ryan Wheeler		
Derek Heidemann		
Edward Adelman		
Douglas Gutro		
John Rosenberry		

Chairman Rosenberry recognized Commissioner Adelman who asked if this vote precluded any future proposal to take action relative to this area. The chairman responded that the decision goes back to the City of Boston. The chairman recognized Mr. Steinitz who stated that any vote by the Commission is purely advisory and not binding on anything. The chairman then recognized Commissioner DeWitt who noted that the Commissioners can in considering MHC staff recommendations, choose to modify them, and could have added an advisory recommendation to BLC that in the future they consider a landmark district that would include the surrounding buildings. The chairman recognize Mr. Steinitz who noted that one of the surrounding buildings is already a landmark, and two others have pending landmark status.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Preliminary Study Report for the **Ferdinand's Blue Store in Boston**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner Gutro. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. The chairman recognized Commissioner DeWitt. He thinks the commission in its own dealings has had a long tradition of not approving facadectomies, which is what we have here. When this nomination began its long process in Boston in 1989 (it became a part of a National Register district in 1985) the building was intact. It wasn't redeveloped until recently. He understands why Boston is doing what it's doing with this façade, and it's great that the façade has been preserved, but not the fact that the building

hasn't been preserved, and although Boston is free to do whatever it will do and probably will, approving this would be a bad precedent for MHC. He would suggest that MHC's acknowledgment recommend not landmarking it because it's a facadectomy, just to put us on the record of not having approved a facadectomy. (At this point the voice recording cuts off momentarily.) Commissioner DeWitt would like to modify the MOTION. The chairman called for a SECOND for Commissioner DeWitt's MOTION to amend the recommendation to not recommend landmarking. Commissioner Wheeler SECONDED the MOTION. The chairman recognized Commissioner Sullivan who said he will not accept the amendment. A procedural discussion followed regarding the original motion and the motion to amend. The chairman then said we have a Motion to acknowledge receipt with staff recommendations and another Motion to amend the existing recommendation to advice against landmarking the facadectomy, which has been SECONDED, which would amend the underlying recommendation. The chairman then called for questions or comments from the commission related to Commissioners DeWitt's MOTION to amend the recommendation to not advise landmarking a facadectomy. The chairman recognized Commissioner McDowell for asked for clarification of the original MHC staff recommendation. Mr. Steinitz said the MHC staff recommendation is to accept the recommendations of BLC staff to landmark the Blue Store façade. The chairman recognized Commissioner Gutro who remarked that there would be extraordinary merit in this group weighing in on facadectomies. Although this is not the time and place, he would like to have a discussion about this and to make a decision as a board. Moving forward should we be doing X or Y, or should we take it case by case? Until then he's just placing his vote based on Staff recommendations. He asked to put the question of facadectomies on the agenda to have an open discussion on what to consider and if we want to set a policy on facadectomies. The chairman recognized Commissioner Sullivan who stated he's been on the commission for many years and doesn't remember a policy decision about facadectomies. There may be some issues with the National Park Service recommendations for Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation for historic buildings against facadectomies. But this is an action that supports a City of Boston initiative to create a local landmark. The façade of this building is a fact on the ground - it's subject to inappropriate alteration unless it's protected. The fact that it's a facadectomy he thinks is immaterial to the requested action by the Boston Landmarks Commission. What is the difference to the Massachusetts Historical Commission even if we did have a policy, which he is not aware that we do. The chairman said we do have a policy, and asked Mr. Steinitz if he could offer any clarification. Mr. Steinitz deferred to Ms. Simon, who said she remembers very clearly that when Valerie Talmage was director of the commission the Kennedy store in downtown Boston was being proposed for demolition for a new mega-structure, and the Boston Landmarks Commission advocated for a facadectomy to preserve the front façade from the second story to the fifth story and have the new building attached to it. Our commission at the time had a standing subcommittee on preservation policy that took up the issue of facadectomies and what the commission's position should be to guide the staff in Review and Compliance. Did the commission want staff to go against the Secretary of Interior's Standards and the criteria of eligibility for listing in the National Register to make an exception for facadectomies? The subcommittee said no that a facadectomy is not a preservation treatment. It might show up in consultation as a mitigation of saving a piece of a building, but not as a preservation treatment and not qualifying it for listing in the National Register. So at the staff level in Review and Compliance we have been following the commission's adoption of their position on facadectomies since she has been at MHC for over forty years. Ms. Simon then stated that we

will definitely take this up again, but she just wanted to give commissioners some background on the policy. We will have to go into our paper archives to find the exact wording of the commission's policy on facadectomies and start from there. The chairman recognized Commissioner Sullivan who returned to his one main point which is that, this is an existing façade of original construction that is subject to inappropriate alterations that would be prevented by the adoption of the Boston Landmark designation. The chairman recognized Commissioner DeWitt who said his vote is assumes that Boston will go ahead and landmark it, and Commission Sullivan's point is well taken. But that's not the same as MHC endorsing a facadectomy that may set a precedent, and put MHC on the record. The chairman recognized Ms. Simon who said that one more aspect of this Preliminary Study Report would be to landmark the air rights above the new construction behind the façade, and this could possibly be very important to protect the air rights. The Bolling Building is a huge intrusion in an otherwise pristine historic district. We would not want to see that intrusion enlarged vertically, but she thinks that's the reason why the City Council may vote this down because the Boston Planning and Development Agency has already changed the zoning height in Downtown Boston to be so extreme that it will be casting new shadows on the Boston Common and the Boston Public Garden. She stated we don't know how far their reach is going to be to keep it increasing the zoning heights across the City of Boston and this proposal may not be guaranteed to be designated as a landmark. Hearing no further discussion, Chairman Rosenberry moved the MOTION TO AMEND the MHC staff recommendation to acknowledge receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the Ferdinand's Blue Store in the City of Boston, but to advise that MHC does not consider a facadectomy a proper preservation treatment. The vote was Yes-8, No-4, and Abstain-1 the MOTION PASSED.

Yes

No

Abstain

Dennis DeWitt  
 Michael McDowell  
 Ryan Wheeler  
 Derek Heidemann  
 Donald Friary  
 Edward Adelman  
 James McCurdy  
 Susan Ceccacci

Douglas Gutro  
 Mark Wilson  
 Charles Sullivan  
 Heather Wilson

John Rosenberry

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Preliminary Study Report for the **East Amherst Local Historic District** in **Amherst**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner Gutro. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, the Chair then called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

This concluded the voting. Chairman Rosenberry then turned to the next item on the agenda, the **Preview of the December 10, 2025 National Register Nominations**, and recognized Ben Haley, National Register Director, who informed the commission that there would be five nominations on the agenda for the December 10 meeting.

**The Five Nominations Are:**

Beverly, Beverly High School  
Fall River, Union Belt Company  
Holyoke, Farr Alpaca Company – Mills #1 and #3  
Lenox, Henry and Jennie Belden House  
Marshfield, Hatch-Clift House

Copies of the nominations will be sent to the Commissioners about two weeks prior to the meeting and Mr. Haley asked that any commissioners who would like them electronically to get in touch.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Haley for the preview of the National Register agenda for December, and he then turned to the next item on the agenda, the **Executive Director's Report**. He then recognized Brona Simon Executive Director.

Ms. Simon began by updating the commission with MHC's Federal Historic Preservation Fund budget, which was awarded to MHC in August for FY25. Regarding this current federal fiscal year, FFY26, the Senate voted for a continuing resolution, which would extend level funding until January 30, 2026. She said the house is expected to take a vote tonight. The most frequent question that staff are asked is how the ongoing federal government shutdown is affecting MHC. She stated that the shutdown has minimal effect on MHC because we are operating at full staff and carrying out our full responsibilities on both our federal and state historic preservation programs. One of the main issues is that the entire staff at the National Register office at the Park Service is closed, so we are unable to send them any of the National Register nominations that the commission votes on. But we are continuing on our mandate to carry out our responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act and to bring to you, the State Review Board, at the December meeting the National Register nominations that Ben Haley just mentioned. We are continuing our regular schedule of National Register nominations, which is to bring them to you four times a year, in December, March, June, and September.

Ms. Simon next noted that in MHC's Review and Compliance Program Section 106 reviews, we have not seen a significant drop in the number of projects being submitted that require our review. Many Federal agencies have delegated their Section 106 responsibilities to the grant recipient, or in the case of community development block grants, to run the rehabilitation grants out of the local community and development planning office. The Mass Highway Department is still sending projects for their Section 106 reviews that are funded by the Federal Highway Administration, so we are still seeing transportation projects including the replacement of the Cape Cod Canal bridges. The only other Federal agencies that have been impacted are the National Parks, which are all closed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also is affected, so we are not seeing any grants to farmers to do things like drill new wells or irrigation systems, or put up solar over their crop fields.

Ms. Simon then announced that for the Mass Preservation Projects Fund which is a Capital Bond program, the state Administration and Finance Agency has authorized MHC to initiate its State FY27 MPPF Round. The MHC grant staff is preparing application materials. She then reported

on the federal-funded Survey and Planning grant program. Although we are still waiting to see what the FY26 budget will contain, we have to prepare to run a Survey and Planning Grant program from the HPF. Although our FY26 funding situation is unknown, we need to be prepared to pass through at least ten percent of the funding to CLGs, so we are opening the grant program to CLGs only. We are keeping on schedule and will need to have a Survey and Planning Subcommittee meeting before the December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, for which we need three volunteers. The Chairman then asked for three volunteers. Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner DeWitt and Commissioner McDowell volunteered. The Chairman thanked them for volunteering.

Ms. Simon then invited all Commissioners for Holiday Cake located at MHC's Columbia Point building in the Patriots Meeting Room after the December 10<sup>th</sup> commission meeting.

That concluded the Executive Director's report.

Chairman Rosenberry asked the commissions if they have any new business to announce. The chair recognized commission Sullivan who would like to make a MOTION to add to the December's agenda a discussion on facadectomies and a discussion on the preservation policy and the context of the preservation policy being adopted years ago. Perhaps that information could be circulated before the meeting. Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the recommendation. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner Gutro. The chairman called for any other question or comments Hearing none, he moved the MOTION. The MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then announce that we will continue in a hybrid format with our commission meetings located at MHC's Columbia Point building in the Patriots Meeting Room. The Chairman also asking for any comments on today's technical issues or if you had any questions on hearing during the meeting to please notify him with your remarks.

The Chair then called for a MOTION to adjourn. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The MOTION CARRIED, and the meeting adjourned at 2:32pm.

#### Commissioners Present

John Rosenberry

Dennis DeWitt

Michael McDowell

Donald Friary

Mark Wilson

Derek Heidemann

Ryan Wheeler

James McCurdy

Edward Adelman

Charles Sullivan

Susan Ceccacci

Douglas Gutro

Heather Wilson

Staff Present

Brona Simon

Michael Steinitz

Ben Haley

Peter Stott

Paul Holtz

Nancy Alexson

Robin Osten

Shari Perry-Wallace

Liz King

Robin Forham

Carter Jackson

Cait Parker

A TRUE COPY ATTEST

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Brown