

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**December 10, 2025**

The Commission meeting was held 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 November 12, 2025 meeting minutes**. He called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the minutes. A MOTION was made by Commissioner McDowell 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 National Register Program, and called for any recusals. Hearing none, he turned the meeting over to Ben Haley who presented the nominations with presentation slides. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is on file with these minutes.

The first nomination presented was for the **Beverly High School in Beverly**. The applicant is Brisco Village LLC with Ryan LLC as preservation consultant who prepared the nomination. The nomination is being pursued as part of federal rehabilitation tax credit project.

Beverly High School is located at 20 Colon Street in the Gloucester Crossing neighborhood of Beverly. The ambitious, large scale, Classical Revival-style high school building was designed by the architectural firm of Adden & Parker and completed in 1925

The school is significant at the local level under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of Education and Architecture with a period of significance of 1925-1965 reflecting the date of its completion to when the building was converted from the Beverly High School to the Briscoe Junior High School.

The Beverly High School is significant in the area of Education for its association with the development of Beverly's public education system. The school was developed during a period of enormous growth and change in Beverly and in secondary education in the United States. In 1903, the massive United Shoe Machinery Corporation complex was constructed in Beverly. The new plant drew a multitude of workers to the city, substantially increasing the numbers of children enrolled in the city's public schools.

More than any other early 20<sup>th</sup> century Beverly public school building, the nominated property is the best embodiment of the period's educational theory and programming and demonstrates a number of new features characteristic of public-school buildings constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. New pedagogical ideas were spreading at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to include education across a broad range of subjects with a new emphasis on laboratory sciences and vocational education and training.

Beverly's 19<sup>th</sup>-century high school building could not accommodate the expanded demands of population growth and educational change. When completed in 1925, the new high school building provided its students with multiple courses of study and extracurricular with new spaces to accommodate them. In addition to traditional classrooms, the building included laboratories, drawing, cooking, sewing, and shop rooms, spaces intended to help students develop varied life skills.

The auditorium and gymnasium were new spaces for promoting the arts, civic engagement, and physical wellness. Practical components of the new design included large, well-lit and well-ventilated classrooms, wide hallways to accommodate heavy traffic, and multiple stairwells for quick exit in case of fire.

The school is significant in the area of Architecture as an excellent and particularly well-preserved example of its type and period, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Classical Revival school in the city of Beverly embodying contemporary educational design trends. The school's notable Classical Revival style elements include its symmetry, colossal portico in Corinthian order, entrance entablature, pilasters, balustrade, quoins, cornice, medallions, and volutes.

The school is also notable for its imposing size, extensive fenestration, and hexagonal floor plan with interior light wells, central auditorium, and gymnasium. The building is distinguished by the large community auditorium centered in the middle of the structure, flanked by large light courts that provided light and air to the interior. The remainder of the interior was organized specifically around the curriculum's three courses of study: the College Preparatory Course, Commercial Course, and General Course, with individual classrooms for students in the College Preparatory and General Courses and dedicated shop classrooms for those studying the Commercial Course.

Recently rehabilitated using State and Federal Historic Tax Credits, the former school now functions as the "Briscoe Village for Living and the Arts," providing 85 residential units to low- and moderate-income seniors. It also features six live/work studios with a preference for artists. Residential units are located within the former classroom spaces. The large gymnasium has been reconfigured for use as common area space for the residents. The adjoining former locker rooms have been reconfigured for use as the live-work studios.

The auditorium's main floor, seating roughly 500, is available for community use. Notably, the Beverly High School played a part in the setting of the 2021 film CODA, which won multiple awards including the 2022 Academy Award for Best Picture.

The next nomination presented was for the **Union Belt Company in Fall River**. The applicant is 66 Troy Street LLC with Ryan LLC as preservation consultant who prepared the nomination. The nomination is being pursued as part of federal rehabilitation tax credit project.

The Union Belt Company Factory is a former industrial building located at 66 Troy Street in Fall River, Massachusetts. It was constructed between 1872 and 1904, beginning with the original four-story block that fronts Troy Street.

The setting was historically characterized by a dense collection of brick, stone, and frame buildings associated with textile mills, commercial businesses, and civic services. Large scale demolition for the construction of I-195 in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century resulted in the current condition of large parking lots around the building.

The Union Belt Company factory functioned as the manufacturing facility for Fall River's most prolific vendor of industrial belting from 1872 to 1931, when the company was dissolved. The Union Belt Company building is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A in the area of Industry for contributions the company made to the industrial growth and development of Fall River as the city's preeminent industrial belt manufacturer. The period of significance for Union Belt Company is 1872 to 1924, reflecting the date of construction of the first portion of the factory through the peak years of the company's usefulness to the textile industry in Fall River.

The Union Belt Company's leather transmission belting played a critical role in powering the machinery of Fall River's textile mills during the city's most robust period of industrial growth, the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> through the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Flat leather belting replaced cast-iron gearing and shafting systems, which were subject to frequent breakages that were time-consuming and expensive to repair, disrupting production. Leather belts ran more smoothly, preserving the transmission system, and they were also quickly and inexpensively replaced when damaged. Industrial belting manufactured in Fall River was still relatively new and small in scale prior to the organization of the Union Belt Company in 1871.

The formation of the company is attributed to William H. Chace, an experienced industrial belt maker and innovator. Prior to organizing the company, Chace served as foreman of the oldest belting manufacturer in Rhode Island. An inventor and entrepreneur, Chace also built and patented machines for improving leather belting. The company's origins began with a close association with one of Fall River's oldest textile concerns, the Troy Cotton & Woolen Manufactory, a massive mill located on the western side of Troy Street. The Troy Cotton & Woolen Manufactory constructed the Union Belt Company building beside their storage building on Troy Street and leased the building to the company for the duration of its operation.

Though there were other industrial belt manufacturers at various points in Fall River, none had the breadth of impact of the Union Belt Company, which was the largest belt manufacturer in the city, with approximately 20,000 square feet dedicated to manufacturing and about 100 workmen, and supplying the city's largest mills. The success of the Union Belt Company is recorded in its steady expansion. When the company was formed at the end of 1871 with a capital of \$24,000,

the new factory-from which it operated was four-stories and extended approximately 80 feet to the east.

Just a few years later, in 1877, the building received a two-story rear addition that extended the rear wall another 70 feet so that the building encompassed the full block from Troy Street on the west to 6<sup>th</sup> Street on the east. A two-story addition to the rear ell was completed at the end of 1904. This was the building's final alteration.

The textile industry gradually migrated out of the city and the region into the southern United States after World War I, eroding most of the textile manufacturing activity in the city, and with it, its many support industries. The dissolution of the Union Belt Company in 1931 reflected this industrial contraction. After it was sold, the building continued to serve as a light industrial manufacturing facility until ca. 1971 when it was altered for office use. The building was rehabilitated using state and federal historic tax credits completed in September 2025. The rehabilitation retained commercial use on the ground floor and converted upper floors to residential apartments.

The next nomination presented was for the **Far Alpaca Company Mills #1 and #3 Historic District in Holyoke**. The applicant is Appleton Redevelopment Limited Partnership with the Public Archaeology Laboratory as preservation consultant. The nomination is being pursued as part of federal rehabilitation tax credit project.

The Farr Alpaca Company Mills #1 and #3 Historic District was a textile manufacturing area in Holyoke, Massachusetts, comprising two of four factory complexes operated by the Farr Alpaca Company between 1873 and 1939. Its seven parcels contain all extant resources associated with the company's Mills #1 and #3 complexes, including a section of Holyoke's First Level Canal from which the company derived waterpower for its operations.

The District is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of Industry and Labor, as one of the world's largest producers of alpaca and mohair worsted products. The company was the largest employer in Holyoke in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and developed support and benefits for its 4,000-person workforce that were innovative for the time and industry. The district's resources were designed by experienced industrial architect and engineer Samuel M. Green over the course of a 20-year span.

The period of significance begins in 1901 with the construction of the earliest extant buildings and ends in 1939, when the company liquidated its assets and ceased operations during a period of broad, regional decline in the New England textile industry.

The 7.3-acre district is bounded by Appleton Street to the north, the Pioneer Valley Railroad to the west, the Cabot Street area to the south, and the Second Level Canal to the east. The district is located in an urban, formerly industrial neighborhood southeast of downtown Holyoke. Resources include nine buildings and one structure consisting of the following, including mills, warehouses, a weave shed, and a section of the First Level Canal.

The Farr Alpaca Company was incorporated in Holyoke on November 13, 1873. Its founder and namesake, Herbert M. Farr, moved his woolen goods business from Ontario to the United States in response to the Wool and Woolens Tariff Act of 1867, which had limited his growth. He and his brother-in-law/business partner, Joseph Metcalf, chose Holyoke for its abundant canal-powered water supply. At the time, only ten worsted mills operated in all of Massachusetts. The Farr Alpaca Company was distinct in its use of alpacas and mohair, a fiber produced from the hair of the Angora goat, to produce worsted goods for the clothing industry.

All of the surviving buildings in the district were designed by local industrial architect and engineer Samuel M. Green, the Farr Alpaca Company's preferred architect from 1895 to 1922. During this period, Green designed a wide range of facilities for the company's four Holyoke mill complexes, including factory and storage buildings, power plants, and employee recreation spaces, thereby supporting every aspect of the firm's industrial operations.

The district represents the most significant and cohesive concentration of Green's work. The buildings exemplify the characteristic construction techniques and industrial design principles of the period and correspond to the most productive and influential phase of Green's professional career.

The Farr Alpaca Company was known for its innovative, worker-centric business practices that became national models. By the early twentieth century, the company had become Holyoke's largest employer, with a workforce of nearly 4,000 individuals, many of whom were immigrants. Grounded in the belief that a healthy and fairly treated workforce was essential to productivity, company leadership made substantial investments in employee welfare.

By 1911, Farr Alpaca paid the highest wages in the global textile industry, and in 1914, it implemented a profit-sharing program that later influenced major corporations, including Ford. The company also provided financial assistance to the families of employees who died in the course of their work, a notably progressive policy for its time. These commitments were further reinforced through the construction of recreational facilities, such as a theater and dedicated leisure spaces, as well as the operation of two modern on-site hospitals and a staff of visiting nurses. Collectively, these measures fostered cooperative labor relations and contributed to a history in which labor strikes were rare.

The Farr Alpaca Company reached the peak of its industrial power between 1905 and 1920. In 1910, the *American Textile Reporter* described it as "one of the most remarkable textile corporations in U.S. history," noting that nearly every brick in its expansive complex was newly constructed, a clear indicator of rapid growth. The company's extensive building campaigns during this period further underscored its financial strength and success.

By 1911, *The United States Investor* favorably compared Farr Alpaca to corporate giants such as Standard Oil and Bell Telephone, emphasizing the company's minimal competition within its specialized market. Throughout the 1910s, only a small number of U.S. mills produced comparable goods, while protective tariffs on imported English worsteds enabled Farr Alpaca to dominate the domestic market.

This dominance began to erode in the 1920s, as southern textile mills surpassed their New England counterparts, benefiting from lower labor costs and closer access to raw materials. At the same time, changes in fashion, including the transition to skeleton linings, reduced demand for the company's traditional products. Farr Alpaca's expansion to the point of "unwieldy size" further limited its ability to adapt to these shifts.

In the 1930s, the company faced declining demand from the rise of rayon and other synthetics, and the growing use of automobiles reduced the need for wool coats and alpaca linings. Falling raw material prices left excess inventory. Attempts to diversify with tropical worsteds, cotton yarn, and rayon linings provided only a temporary boost. In 1931, Farr Alpaca posted its first loss since 1882, ending nearly 50 years of continuous profit.

The Farr Alpaca Company was among the world's leading producers of alpaca and mohair worsted goods from the 1870s through the 1930s. Like many New England textile manufacturers, however, it did not withstand the waves of economic restructuring and deindustrialization that emerged in the late 1930s. Between 1938 and 1939, the company liquidated its assets amid the collapse of the Massachusetts textile industry, which lost nearly half of its capacity during this period. Once an innovative leader with a global reputation, Farr Alpaca ultimately succumbed to broader economic forces beyond its control.

Between 2023 and 2025, the Bonded Warehouse B, Main Mill A, and the north half of Main Mill B were converted to housing with the financial assistance of state and federal historic tax credits. The rehabilitation retained and preserved significant character-defining features, including historic exterior entrances, exposed interior masonry walls, concrete window sills, radial brick window surrounds, and original structural elements such as beams and decking. A new roof and insulated aluminum windows, matching the historic configurations, profiles, and dimensions, were also installed. A second project that includes the rehabilitation of Main Mill C and the south half of Main Mill B is anticipated to begin in July 2026.

The next nomination presented was for the **Henry A. and Jennie Belden House in Lenox**. The applicant is Olga Weiss with Neil Larson as preservation consultant who prepared the nomination.

The Henry A. and Jennie Belden House was built in ca. 1881 in Lenox, Berkshire County, at the time of the owners' marriage. Henry Belden was in the fifth generation of his family in the town and was both a farmer and a civic figure. His house straddled both town and village both by location and design. The house is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for embodying distinctive characteristics of type and period.

The two-story house with a five-bay façade and mansard roof is significant as a distinctive example of a substantial residence designed in the Second Empire style. At the time of its construction, it was a modern design, a departure from the prevailing picturesque taste in the Lenox summer resort community.

In its most popular mode, the American Second Empire style was expressed in two-story houses with symmetrical plans, five-bay center-entrance facades, ornate front verandas and window trim, and character defining slate mansard roofs with decorative eaves and dormers. It was a

more formal and Classical version of an earlier picturesque Mansard style that was developed in the mid-1800s, and a vernacular analog to high-style French Classical architecture of the period. Mainly found in urban or suburban settings, these houses also were adapted for use as summer residences in Northeastern resorts like Lenox along with other cottages and villas designed in the Gothic Revival taste. According to one source, “until 1870, most Berkshire country houses were modest wooden buildings in the Stick [Gothic] and Second Empire styles.”

The Belden house is one of only a few mansard houses in the town that range in scale from a one-story cottage dwelling to those of more elite country house proportions. The Belden House is remarkably intact with characteristic exterior features: a slate mansard roof with bracketed cornice and pedimented dormers, symmetrical fenestration with Classical cornices and original wood sash and blinds, a broad front veranda with braces, double front doors with glazing, and bay windows. Only the rear service wing has been altered due to the updating of kitchen and bathroom spaces inside.

The interior of the house has balanced double-pile central hall plans on all three levels with original finishes. The hall and first-floor parlors and dining room retain their painted wood trim and doors along with stone mantels on hearths in the front rooms. The four rooms on the second floor are equally intact but less elaborated, and those above on the roof level have more restrained features conforming to a vertical hierarchy of rooms.

An architect is not identified with the design, and it appears that the house was the work of a local master builder using generally available plans and millwork. The Beldens clearly desired a landmark residence to reflect their position in the local establishment and their status as a new generation of community leaders. The quality of the construction benefited from the growing skills of local craftsmen who worked on the elite summer “cottages” being built in the Lenox summer resort during that period.

The next nomination presented was for the **Hatch-Clift House in Marshfield**. The applicant is Frank A. and Janet T. Sambuceti with Myron Stachiw and Claire Dempsey as preservation consultants who prepared the nomination.

Located in the Two-Mile neighborhood of Marshfield, the Hatch-Clift house is an ample hip-roofed dwelling with a long rear ell, a stone retaining wall, a row of granite posts, a small non-contributing two-car garage, and about five and a half acres of land.

The house is eligible for the National Register at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Social History and Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a well-studied example of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century property that clearly illustrates the process of adaptation over its 200-year period of significance, ca. 1750 to 1951, that characterizes so many early Massachusetts dwellings. It is also eligible under Criterion D because it has yielded information important to understanding the evolution of an early and relatively unstudied Massachusetts building type and that, with further investigation, may yield additional valuable information.

Joseph Hatch (1669-1749) has long been identified as the first owner of this property, and some early research gave the house an early date of about 1703. Current research has proven the house is not that early. Recent dendrochronology work on the house, limited in its results, is somewhat ambiguous on a potential preliminary construction date, indicating it may have been built by Joseph's son Benjamin a few years after Joseph's death in 1749 owing to an oak sill that may have been put in place in 1752. Still, Joseph's will described his property, including his "new dwelling house." Benjamin received the majority of the property upon Joseph's death, and resided here until his death in 1796. Benjamin was in turn succeeded by his son Joseph, to whom he gave half the farm in 1786.

The house was initially constructed as a 1 ½-story, gambrel-roofed building, and in that form it was occupied by three generations of the Hatch family. The suggested mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century date is more consistent with the form of the original house as it is now understood, as builders began to more fully incorporate rear tiers of rooms into their frame and plan. Rooms were clustered around a centrally positioned chimney, dividing functions between the more formal front and the more utilitarian rear of the building.

Re-clapboarding of the south, east, and north elevations of the house in the 1980s revealed the outlines of the original gambrel roof that would have improved the headroom in the garret. This also demonstrated that the house was plank-framed, a construction technique that substituted thick planks for studs in the walls commonly employed in southeastern Massachusetts.

The next long-term owners of this property were members of the Clift family, who owned the farm from 1797 to 1934, and they are primarily responsible for the house as it **appears today**. Capt. Joseph Clift, Sr. (1736-1828) was described as a gentleman when he bought the house on 80 acres in 1797 at 61. It is likely that he was planning for his old age with the purchase and in 1804 he signed this property over to his son Joseph Jr.

Available physical evidence in the house suggests that the transformation of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century dwelling house into a two-story hip-roofed Federal-style house took place at about this time. The form adopted appears in several other Marshfield examples, enclosing a traditional center-chimney plan within a larger and more costly two-story house with a fashionable high hip roof. The Clift's chose to combine familiar forms with new ornament, so that their traditional spaces would meet the new demands of refinement, perhaps as Joseph's father had in his house, which includes a similar plan. The new second floor included five rooms in the same plan as the first, with only the two front rooms heated, and trimmed with new Federal period casings, doors, baseboards, and chair rails. An important innovation during this phase of remodeling was the construction of a one-story, one-room, gable-roofed ell onto the rear of the house, constructed entirely of older reused timbers, later expanded with two further sections of the present ell.

The house and land formed the core of their eighty-acre farm that occupied by four further generations of the Clift family. Joseph Jr.'s son Wales operated a dairy and sheep farm, and in about the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century removed the center chimney and replaced it with a new generous stair hall. The final Clift generation sold the property out of the family in 1934.

The present stewards of the property are the proponents of this nomination, and welcome the opportunity to recognize the historic associations of this house and especially the important information gleaned through a thorough building archaeology campaign, through National Register listing.

That concluded the National Register presentations.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendation that the nomination for the **Beverly High School in Beverly** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. The Chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendation that the nomination for the **Union Belt Company in Fall River** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Gutro and SECONDED by Commissioner Wheeler. The Chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendation that the nomination for the **Farr Alpaca Company Mills #1 and #3 Historic District in Holyoke** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. The Chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendation that the nomination for the **Henry A. and Jennie Belden House in Lenox** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Adelman and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The Chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. The Chairman recognized Commissioner Pride asked who the applicant is for the Belden House. Mr. Haley responded that the applicant is the owner. The Chairman called for any other questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendation that the nomination for the **Hatch-Clift House in Marshfield** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner Gutro. The Chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

This concluded the National Register portion of the agenda.

Chairman Rosenberry then turned to the next item on the agenda, the FY26 Survey and Planning Grants. The chairman first called for any recusals. Hearing none, he turned the meeting over to the Director of the Preservation Planning Division, Michael Steinitz.

Mr. Steinitz presented the study reports with a PowerPoint presentation. A copy of the presentation is on file with these minutes.

Chairman Rosenberry turned to the next item on the agenda, the presentation of the **FY26 Survey & Planning Grant Invites for Full Applications**. The chairman first called for any recusals. Hearing none, he turned the meeting over to the Director of the Preservation Planning Division, Michael Steinitz.

Mr. Steinitz thanked the subcommittee of commissioners Dewitt, McDowell and Wheeler for meeting with staff before the commission meeting to review the pre-applications for the FY26 grant round.

Every year MHC passes through a portion of its annual federal budget to eligible applicants through matching grants from its Survey and Planning grants program. Projects that receive grant funding include for example historic properties surveys, National Register nominations, communitywide preservation plans, and the development of design guidelines, professional staff support, and other eligible projects.

MHC is required to pass through 10 percent of its annual federal funding to Certified Local Governments (CLGs), of which there are presently 31 in Massachusetts. For Fiscal Year 2026 that began this past October 1, MHC's federal funding situation is still unknown. If MHC receives funding level with its FY25 allocation, the 10 percent pass through requirement would be about \$115,000.

Where funding has been available the Survey and Planning grant program has also been open to qualified applicants who are not CLGs. Given the continued uncertainty regarding funding for the Historic Preservation Fund by Congress and the current administration, for FY26, MHC's has opened the program only to Certified Local Governments. Again, the Federal budget for FY26 has not been established, so we do not have an actual figure for the total award we'll be able to make.

The program is a matching reimbursement grant program. For Certified Local Governments, MHC again this year is offering a favorable 60/40 match. The application process involves two steps: the submission of pre-applications in November, followed by the selection for an invitation for full applications in December. The full applications are due in February, with grant awards to be voted on by the Commission at its March meeting.

For FY26, MHC received 6 pre-applications from 5 Certified Local Governments totaling \$188,000 in requests. The pre-applications include 3 historic properties survey projects, 1 communitywide preservation plan, 1 preservation study, and 1 building architectural study.

Full applications that you invite today will be due on February 6, 2026. Commission will vote the grant awards at its March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr. Steinitz then turned the meeting over to Commissioner DeWitt, who summarized the six pre-applications received, including two from Fall River, the newest Certified Local Government, and noted that the subcommittee concurs with the evaluations and recommendations as shown on the spreadsheet that the commissioners have before them. That concluded the subcommittee's report.

Chairman Rosenberry thanked Commissioner Dewitt, Mr. Steinitz, and Commissioners McDowell and Wheeler of the subcommittee, and then began the voting process for inviting CLG projects, calling for a MOTION to invite a Survey and Planning grant Full Application for the amount of \$48,000 from the **Boston Landmarks Commission** for the **Chinatown Neighborhood Survey Update**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. There being no discussion, the motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry next called for a MOTION to invite a Survey and Planning grant Full Application for the amount of \$20,000 from the **Fall River Historical Commission** for the **Bank Street Armory Feasibility Study and Structural Assessment**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Gutro and SECONDED by Commissioner Wheeler. There being no discussion, the motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION to invite a Survey and Planning grant Full Application for the amount of \$36,000 from the **Fall River Historical Commission** for the **Preservation Study – Fall River Waterfront Cultural District**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Pride and SECONDED by Commissioner Gutro. There being no discussion, the motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION to invite a Survey and Planning grant Full Application for the amount of \$30,000 from the **Marblehead Historical Commission** for the **Old & Historic District Survey Update – Part 2**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Adelman and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. There being no discussion, the motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION to invite a Survey and Planning grant Full Application for the amount of \$24,000 from the **Medford Historical Commission** for the **Brooks Estate Neighborhood Survey**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Sullivan. There being no discussion, the motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION to invite a Survey and Planning grant Full Application for the amount of \$30,000 from the **Nantucket Historical Commission** for the **Nantucket Preservation Plan**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. There being no discussion, the motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

This concluded the voting. Chairman Rosenberry 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 following up on the November meeting's discussion on facadectomies, and the discussion that she remembered at a commission meeting where the commission told the staff that a facadectomy doesn't meet the definition of a "preservation treatment." So she began to research the minutes of past commission meetings going back to 1982 to try to find this statement.

Around that time the Kennedy Building, opposite Filene's and the Jordan Marsh Annex in downtown Boston, was proposed to keep a façade of two walls to be added onto a twenty-plus story new glass tower located behind it. The Boston Landmarks Commission had started a landmarking process, but when the landmark study report was taken up by the full Boston Landmarks Commission a majority voted against landmarking. A number of the BLC commission members promoted a facadectomy as a preservation treatment that was acceptable to them. So what was MHC's position on facadectomies? Excerpts of minutes from around 1983 and 1984 show that the subject of the Kennedy Building continued to come up for questions from the MHC commissioners as to what was happening. The Boston Preservation Alliance proposed a lawsuit against the City of Boston for not landmarking it. At the October 1983 meeting, the MHC Director at the time advised against it based on the recommendation of the MHC's counsel.

It's of interest that the Kennedy Building received so much attention from the Commission, but it was not until late 1989 that a subcommittee on Preservation Policy was established.

Unfortunately, subcommittee meetings do not always have minutes. However, minutes for an April 1991 meeting include discussion of a proposed facadectomy for the Mass College of Art. This being the time of the great Recession, the subcommittee considered the facadectomy in the light of the downturn of the economy and its effect on financing. If a facadectomy were to occur, the subcommittee recommended that MHC staff advocate for the greatest possible preservation of the historic character defining features of the building's exterior. From the staff's point of view, a facadectomy has always been found to be an adverse effect, due to regulations that define the demolition of an historic structure in whole or in part as an adverse effect under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, in addition to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, and the National Register guidelines. Facadectomies occur as a compromise between developers and preservationists, based on financial factors including the condition of the interior of the existing building, and the costs of rebuilding versus demolition and new construction.

Ms. Simon concluded by noting that as the Commissioners requested that a discussion of facadectomies be reopened, this was the background information that she could find based on the paper minutes available.

Chairman Rosenberry thanked Ms. Simon for her remarks then called for comments from the commission. The chairman recognized Commissioner Sullivan who noted that the question came to our attention because of a recent landmark proposal from BLC and if the commission would concur with a landmark designation that BLC was advancing. Objections were given at

the time because of conflict with the facadectomy policy that was adopted or if not formally adopted became current in the 1980's. It seemed to him inappropriate for the commission to substitute its judgement about a local measure that had nothing to do with the National Register. Where BLC is proposing a local designation, that we should apply National Register criteria to a local designation seemed inappropriate to him, certainly open for discussion. The value of a facadectomy, and whether it does or does not constitute an appropriate preservation treatment is very much open for debate. Forty years ago facadectomies were a last resort. People were very much opposed to them. It was a tool used to preserve a small portion of the Kennedy's Building façade. Today, forty years later it's hard to imagine Downtown Crossing without that façade attached to the high rise building that was built behind it. It was a historical moment of in the evolution of preservation. The Mass College of Art again, was a preservation treatment that was justified in the circumstances of the time. We have numerous cases of preservation standards evolving in the face of experience. When the National Register was established relocated buildings could not be considered eligible, but relocation was very common in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – in Cambridge dozens if not hundreds of buildings were moved, including many in National Register districts – and that criterion was eventually evaluated and relaxed. So it's timely if not overdue to have another discussion of facadectomies and whether they are inappropriate in every circumstance. This comes back to the commission's sign of on BLC's landmark designation, which he believes is still on the table.

The chairman then recognized Commissioner DeWitt who said the Mass College of Art is an interesting case. It was a state building, and the state was doing a swap to benefit the important Longwood Medical area, and they did a terrific job of melding the new and the old – it was a very important facade. As far as he is aware, every project that has come to MHC related to a facadectomy has involved Boston landmarks, and often it's the case that you can see that a facadectomy is waiting to happen, for example the building on the corner of Bromfield Street, where there is no question that that is coming. But we were not voting on the creation of the facadectomy, just on what was there. He feels it is still important that we not be on record as encouraging facadectomies. Commissioner Sullivan absolutely has a valid point on moving buildings. Maybe it's possible to have a vote that while we don't support facadectomies, we do recognize it as a preservation tool when there is no other choice. The question then is do you normalize it more than you would prefer.

Chairman Rosenberry then recognized Commissioner Gutro who thanked Brona for the research. It's useful for him to see that both state and national historic preservation regulations cite [a facadectomy] as an adverse effect. Were the only two instances cited in 1983 and then in 1991, and were both voted affirmatively by the commission? Was there a subsequent commission meeting following the subcommittee meeting regarding Mass College of Art, and a vote?

Ms. Simon said no, the commission delegates the conduct of reviews to the staff, so the commission doesn't vote on reviews. But staff does seek guidance from the commission in its negotiations.

Commissioner Gutro said he respects both sides of this question, and wonders whether we need to cast a vote or should we take this as a case-by-case issue.

Ms. Simon said a question with Ferdinand's Blue Store is was this a 1986 landmark petition similar to the one Polly Harrell filed for Quaker Lane, that has now been taken up by BLC? The BLC is working through its backlog of landmark petitions. The BLC never got around to landmarking the Kennedy Store façade.

The chairman recognized Commissioner McDowell who said we should never encourage this issue, it appears to be rare, and when it comes up again, he believes it's a tool we should utilize or allow to be utilized on a case by case basis. We don't need to set any precedent today for the activity, he is not for it, but he can see as a last resort it may be helpful.

The chairman recognized Commissioner Ceccacci who thinks going case by case may be the best route, but also thinks that making a comment encouraging the BLC to reconsider since it had been voted down.

Chairman Rosenberry said our advisory with the last meeting was advising that we don't endorse facadectomy as a preservation tool. He said we could take this as a case by case issue and reconsider advisory comments going forward. Commissioner Ceccacci yes, but agreeing that facadectomy is a last resort when the choice is losing the building entirely, but not to promote it and to work as hard as possible to preserve important buildings. Often developers start out by saying let's just keep the façade.

The chairman recognized Ms. Simon who said that the use of the historic tax credit program is changing development thinking because of the number of nominations that the commission sees after abandoned properties have been restored or rehabilitated and put back into use, including the interiors of the buildings being put back into use. The tax credit program is becoming more popular with the demand for State Historic Tax Credit awards continues to grow. She noted that we are not sure on how to get the legislature to either uncap the State cap or continue increasing it.

The chairman recognized Commissioner DeWitt who said what we're seeing in some kinds of building such as mills that there's not much left inside to rehab, but for instance with schools where lockers and chalkboards are preserved, and even with more prosaic buildings these are not gut rehabs. He said the Historic Tax Credit Program is much more a model as we see it as what we hope to be preservation and not façades as wallpaper.

The chairman recognized Commissioner Sullivan who stated going back to facadectomies and a motion for BLC, facadectomies are just one class of building alteration, and we've today approved a nomination for a building in Marshfield where the original building disappeared and the significant characteristics include the generations of alterations that have occurred. With the BLC recommendation he would suggest that we have that brought back to us that supports the BLC's motion to landmark that building that references the commission's policy, if that's what it is, that facadectomies be rare and well-considered, acceptable under certain circumstances.

The chairman said this would be a motion to reconsider. Commissioner Sullivan asked whether a recommendation had been voted. The chairman said yes, it was voted on. Commissioner Sullivan then withdraw his comment.

Chairman Rosenberry then said that we will continue going on a case by case basis concerning making decisions on facadectomies and when they may or may not be appropriate. It sounds as though we are comfortable moving ahead with no MOTION on the table.

Commissioner DeWitt said he would have to concur with Commissioner Sullivan's comments that it has its place but should not be normalized. The Chairman asked if there was any more discussion on this topic. Hearing none, he asked if Ms. Simon had anything more to report.

Ms. Simon noted there were no further updates on MHC's Federal budget beyond what Mr. Steinitz has already reported. She then announced the new 2026 Commission Meeting Calendar will be emailed to all Commissioners and also be posted to our website. She invited the Commissioners to join the staff in celebrating our holiday cake and wished all a happy holiday. Finally she noted the applications for the new MPPF grant round are now online, and the due date for applications is March 13 with workshops coming up.

The Chairman then called for any new business. Hearing none, the chairman called for a motion to adjourn. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The meeting adjourned at 2:22 pm.

#### Commissioners Present

John Rosenberry

Dennis DeWitt

Michael McDowell

Donald Friary

Mark Wilson

Anne Pride

Ryan Wheeler

Edward Adelman

Douglas Gutro

Charles Sullivan

Susan Ceccacci

#### Staff Present

Brona Simon

Michael Steinitz

Ben Haley

Peter Stott

Paul Holtz

Nancy Alexson

Joshua Dorin

Shari Perry-Wallace

Liz King

Robin Forham

Cait Parker

A TRUE COPY ATTEST

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Brown