

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

**June 11, 2025**

The Commission meeting was held remotely in a Zoom meeting starting at 1:00 PM

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 **April 9, 2025 meeting minutes**. He called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the minutes. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. 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 Liz King 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 **Rocky Marciano House in Brockton**. The applicant is property owner (Mark Casieri) Public Archeology Laboratory as preservation consultant who prepared the nomination

The Rocky Marciano House is a two-family house in Brockton that is significant at the local, state, and national level under Criterion B in the area of Entertainment/Recreation for its association with the boxing career of Rocky Marciano, the only heavyweight champion to retire undefeated. The house is in the Ward 2 neighborhood of Brockton, just south of the city center.

The property is on the south side of Dover Street, across from James Edgar Park, in a densely developed residential neighborhood.

The house is a two-story, wood-frame house constructed in a restrained Colonial Revival style. The two-story porch on the north elevation was built in the 1950s, replacing an earlier porch; the new porch was paid for by Marciano. The house retains integrity of association, setting, feeling, location, and design. In the backyard is a recreation of his heavy bag and a hole in the ground where he stood to practice his punches.

Born Rocco Marchegiano, his parents, Perino and Lena, purchased the house in 1943, while Marciano was in the Army. During his service overseas, Marciano discovered his talent for boxing. He returned to his parent's home in 1946, which marks the beginning date of the period of significance.

The main arc of Marciano's boxing career occurred while he lived at this property, from his first professional fight in Holyoke, through his rise to national fame as a heavyweight boxer. His first title bout for Heavyweight Champion of the World was against Jersey Joe Walcott in September 1952, defeating him in the 13th round. The period of significance ends in 1953, when Marciano and his wife Barbara purchased a home on Harlan Drive, about a mile southwest of the subject property. Marciano continued to box professionally and held the Heavyweight Champion of the World title until 1956, when he retired with a record of 49-0, and moved his family to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. He died in a plane crash in 1969.

Rocky Marciano's career influenced the name and fighting style of the title character of the Rocky movies, and there have been numerous commemorative efforts, including a postage stamp and a bronze statue of Marciano at Brockton's Marciano Stadium.

The next nomination presented was for the **School Street-Main Street Historic District in Brockton**. The applicant is being considered for listing through the Historic Resources of Downtown City of Brockton dating to the Height of the Shoe Industry, 1840-1946 multiple property documentation form. The applicant is Epsilon Associates as preservation consultant who prepared the nomination.

The School Street – Main Street Historic District encompasses about 3 acres in the City of Brockton in Plymouth County, Massachusetts. It is located in “Downtown Brockton” as defined in the “Historic Resources of Downtown Brockton Dating to the Height of the Shoe Industry, 1840–1946” Multiple Property Documentation Form, and meets the Registration Requirements for “Historic Districts” within this context.

The district is roughly bounded by School Street to the north and east, East Elm Street to the south, and Main Street, the city's primary north-south corridor, to the west. This locally significant historic district features the previously listed Brockton City Hall, and four contributing commercial resources built between 1893 and 1946. These construction dates mark the beginning and ending of the period of significance. Two noncontributing resources are located within the Brockton City Hall property.

As mentioned, there are four contributing commercial buildings. Specific resource subtypes include Multiple-Story Commercial, Hotel, and Bank. The original and later uses of these

commercial buildings during the period of significance include hotel, mixed-use retail and office, department store, and bank.

As the home of an expansive collection of businesses providing a variety of retail, financial, and professional services to the area, Downtown Brockton was a regionally significant commercial center. Situated at the heart of Downtown Brockton, the School Street – Main Street Historic District is representative of this important and diverse commercial zone and thus satisfies Criterion A in the area of Commerce.

The earliest commercial building in the district is the original late 19<sup>th</sup>-century section of the Hotel Keswick – Fraser Dry Goods Company Building. Constructed in 1893 as a hotel, it is one of about a dozen hotels built around the turn of the century in Downtown Brockton. The building was fully occupied by Fraser's department store in 1914, and a large addition was constructed for Fraser's in 1946. The five-story Kennedy Clothing Company Building was built in 1917. Its ground-level retail space was occupied by the Kennedy Clothing Company, a regional retailer, while its upper floors housed offices for a range of professionals. The F. W. Woolworth Company Building was built in 1931 as a chain of the national department store, known for pioneering the "five-and-dime" retail format. Built in 1911 and expanded in 1922, the Home National Bank was the first purpose-built building for the Home National Bank, an important local institution established in 1874.

The contributing and previously listed resources in the district embody the characteristics distinctive to their resource types and subtypes, and their eras within the period of significance. These commercial and institutional buildings meet the registration requirements as outlined in the MDPF and satisfy Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a collection. Represented by a diverse range of styles including Romanesque Revival, Renaissance Revival, Classical Revival, Art Deco, and Moderne, these commercial and institutional buildings illustrate the evolution of downtown's built environment from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The three attached buildings on Main and East Elm streets are multi-story masonry commercial blocks ranging from two to five stories with shared party walls. While diverse in their architectural styles, the uniform setbacks of these resources and the near continuous presence of ground-level storefronts provide for a relatively cohesive commercial corridor.

The Home National Bank is a well-preserved example of the Classical Revival style in Brockton. Its style, form, and ornamentation are typical of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century bank buildings; however, the building's limestone façade, featuring full-height columns, gives a sense of monumentality that is complimentary to that of the neighboring Brockton City Hall. Individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places and protected by a preservation restriction held by the MHC, Brockton City Hall meets the general registration requirements for institutional buildings

outlined in the MPDF. The building possesses a high level of integrity and ornamentation specific to the Romanesque Revival style.

The next nomination presented was for the **Earl Company Factory in Leominster**. The applicant is 34 Tremaine Street LLC with Epsilon Associates as preservation consultant who prepared the nomination. The nomination is being pursued as part of federal rehabilitation tax credit project.

The Earl Company Factory is located approximately a half mile northeast of downtown Leominster in Worcester County. The factory building is located on a .89-acre lot at 34 Tremaine Street, a dead-end road extending approximately 450 feet from Mill Street near its junction with Main Street. The utilitarian Earl Company Factory consists of the original 1899 wood-frame factory with a connected brick power house, freestanding brick smokestack, and a stone retaining wall. Several modest early 20<sup>th</sup>-century additions are located at the east, south, and west elevations of the building. The Earl Company Factory is significant at the local level, and its period of significance extends from 1899, its construction year, to 1975, marking 50 years from the present and representing the building's continued association with Leominster's plastics industry into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Earl Company Factory is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Industry for its role in Leominster's evolving comb and plastics industries, which dominated the local economy from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to late 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Leominster was often referred to as the "Comb City." Constructed in 1899, the factory was purpose-built for the Earl Company, a horn and celluloid manufacturing firm. The Earl Company and its successor firm, the T. A. Earl Company, were short-lived, operating in the building until only 1902. The factory was subsequently home to two long-term industrial tenants that manufactured combs and plastics: the Howe Comb Company from 1903 to 1931, and the Cornelius E. Buckley Company, Inc., from 1940 through the end of the period of significance in 1975 and beyond, maintaining operations until 2008.

These businesses associated with the Earl Company Factory are representative examples of small-scale manufacturers within Leominster's locally significant comb and plastics industries, having produced a variety of horn, celluloid, and plastic goods. The products made by the factory's first two tenants were typical of those produced across Leominster manufacturers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and included combs, hairpins, and buttons. Specializing in the manufacture of religious items such as clerical collars, the Cornelius E. Buckley Company represented a unique departure from this dominant product line.

The Earl Company Factory satisfies Criterion C as a well-preserved and representative example of a frame comb factory in Leominster. During the early industrial period, the production process was relatively simple, and few tools and little space were needed, and comb makers often worked from their homes. To accommodate for new machinery and manufacturing processes that emerged during the mid- to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, comb factories from this period were larger than their predecessors with open floor plans. Still utilitarian and vernacular, these two- or three-story frame factories had rectangular or, less frequently, L-shaped footprints, allowing for bands of windows that provided ample light and ventilation.

The Earl Company Factory is a representative example of a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century comb factory in Leominster, embodying the characteristics of the resource type, which was common between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century but today is represented by few extant examples. It possesses many associated character-defining features including its overall massing, form, and height, and, most significantly, the continuous rows of windows at each story that historically provided a well-lit interior.

Between 2022 and 2024, the building was rehabilitated and converted for multi-family residential use. The project utilized state and federal historic preservation tax credits. The completed rehabilitation met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and the building retains a high level of integrity. As part of the project, asbestos siding installed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was removed and underlying deteriorated wood clapboards and trim were replaced in kind. Deteriorated historic windows were removed and new historically appropriate wood replica windows were installed. The masonry exterior of the brick power house was repaired and repointed.

Prior to its rehabilitation, the factory had generally open floor plates from the basement to the second floor, supported by brick piers at the basement and exposed structural wood posts at the upper stories. These and many other character-defining features such as exposed ceilings, wood trim, and interior brick, have been retained and remain visible in common areas and the building's 17 new residential units.

The next nomination presented was for **The Van der Heyden in Springfield**. The applicant is Van der Heyden Apartments LP with Epsilon Associates as preservation consultants who prepared the nomination. The nomination is being pursued as part of federal rehabilitation tax credit project.

The Van der Heyden, at 770–780 State Street, is a five-story brick and cast-stone Classical Revival-style apartment building located at the northwest corner of State and Sherman streets along the commercial southern boundary of Springfield's McKnight neighborhood. The building

occupies the southern half of the 10,354-square-foot parcel. Recently rehabilitated, the building retains integrity and is significant at the local level. The period of significance spans 1914 to 1915, marking the start and end of the building's construction.

Satisfying Criterion C in the area of Architecture, the Van der Heyden is locally significant as a well-preserved and representative example of an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Classical Revival-style apartment building in Springfield. Constructed in 1914–1915, the apartment building embodies distinctive characteristics of its type, period, and method of construction. The Classical Revival style is well-represented among multi-family residential buildings in Springfield, particularly after 1910 when the City's new building code mandated the use of masonry for apartment buildings greater than two stories in height. The building's relatively austere detailing is seen at the ornate cast-stone entrances with heavy brackets and pediments at the south and east elevations and the former storefront piers at the first story. Other character-defining features emblematic of the style include the primary elevation's buff-brick exterior, the splayed-brick window lintels with projecting keys at the second story, cast-stone belt coursing, and the low-peak parapet walls at the façade.

The Van der Heyden also stands out among Springfield's other early 20<sup>th</sup>-century apartments for its E-shaped footprint. While light wells and recesses providing residential units with ample light and ventilation are common in apartments from this period, the Van der Heyden is the only identified local example to feature two light wells at the façade. Rather than utilizing its deep recesses to employ a version of the courtyard plan as seen elsewhere in Springfield, the Van der Heyden is the only identified early 20<sup>th</sup>-century apartment with façade recesses to have an enclosed first floor featuring ground-level commercial space, additionally making it a rare extant example of an originally mixed-use residential and commercial building in Springfield.

Between 2023 and 2025, the building underwent a sensitive rehabilitation that utilized state and federal historic tax credits. Meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, exterior work included the repair and repointing of masonry. Non-original windows and doors were removed and more historically appropriate replacements installed. The historic corridor layout at the upper stories was retained. Interior upgrades were made to finishes while maintaining the pre-existing 45 units of housing. The first-floor residential lobby features original marble sidewalls and the building's five original staircases remain.

The final nomination presented was for the **Skim Milk Bridge and Causeway Historic District in West Bridgewater**. The applicant is Massachusetts Dept. of Fish and Game and the Town of West Bridgewater with the Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. as preservation consultants who prepared the nomination.

The Skim Milk Bridge and Causeway Historic District is located in the southwestern corner of West Bridgewater, Plymouth County, Massachusetts. The district contains four contributing structures constructed ca. 1801: the Skim Milk Bridge, a five-span, clapper-type, stone bridge; an earthen berm causeway; and two clapper-type stone culverts that were built to carry a local road over the Town River and the adjacent Cedar Swamp.

The Skim Milk Bridge and Causeway Historic District is significant at the state level under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as a rare, surviving example of stone clapper bridge construction methods in Massachusetts. The district comprises a relatively intact example of an early stone clapper bridge and causeway system in Massachusetts. The period of significance for the Skim Milk Bridge and Causeway Historic District begins and ends in 1801, the earliest documented date of the bridge and causeway.

Clapper bridges were among the earliest forms of stream crossings. Unlike stone or brick arch bridges, clapper bridges do not require specialized skills to construct. They were built in many countries as vernacular solutions for crossing shallow streams, with the oldest known example constructed more than 800 years ago in China. English settlers brought their knowledge of traditional clapper bridge construction methods with them to the American colonies.

Bridgewater was incorporated as the first interior town of Massachusetts in 1656, and by 1680 the Town began to direct construction of bridges and causeways at important river crossings. The construction of the Skim Milk Bridge and Causeway were related to the development of a small village south of Flaggy Meadow in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This 1801 map of West Bridgewater and the western section of Bridgewater provides the earliest documentary evidence of the Skim Milk Bridge and Causeway. It derived its name from local lore that the water had the off-white color of skimmed milk, possibly due to the disturbance of surrounding sandy clay soil during its construction. The bridge and causeway were built on a road that ran south from Maple Street, east of present-day Scotland Street, to what is now Elm Street in Bridgewater.

Skim Milk Bridge was in use as an important river crossing in West Bridgewater for 75 years. It survives as a rare and notable example of a multi-span, clapper-type bridge in Massachusetts. It is among the oldest, longest, and most intact examples of its type and is the only known clapper bridge in the state with an associated causeway that includes clapper culverts.

A comparable example is the Adams Street Bridge over the Neponset River in Dorchester and Milton, which was constructed in 1765, and later examples such as the Oliver's Mill Bridge over the Nemasket River in Middleborough. Those bridges are more architecturally refined than the Skim Milk Bridge, which is a vernacular early example of the type.

The road with the Skim Milk Bridge and Causeway was commonly referred to as the Scotland Road or Scotland Street. By 1861, Scotland Street was described as “crooked, narrow and out of repair.” Residents along the route petitioned Plymouth County to create a wider and straighter aligned road to the west. In 1875, after the completion of a new Scotland Street alignment and New Bridge, the Skim Milk Bridge and Causeway were officially discontinued and removed from the town road network. The by-passing of the Skim Milk Bridge and Causeway in 1875 likely saved the structures from the significant alteration or removal that would have been required if they were incorporated into the automobile road system in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As of 2024, the former road, bridge, and causeway remain accessible to pedestrians as a recreational walking path, and the surrounding land is owned by the Town and the State’s Department of Fish and Game for conservation purposes.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendation that the nomination for the **Rocky Marciano House in Brockton** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner Ceccacci. 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 **School Street-Main Street Historic District in Brockton** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sullivan 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 **Earl Company Factory in Leominster** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner Ceccacci. 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 Van der Heyden in Springfield** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner Ceccacci. 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 **Skim Milk Bridge and Causeway Historic District in West Bridgewater** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Wheeler. The Chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. The Chairman recognized Commissioner



DeWitt who asked if there were any plans for restoration of the bridge. Ms. King said that she was not aware of any plans, but did not know if there was someone representing the Town who could speak to this. The Chairman recognized Joan Pierce, Mass Department of Fish and Game who thanked the Commission, MHC Staff, Town of West Bridgewater, Tim Hay, Town Conservation Agent, and consultant, Steve Olausen of the Public Archaeology Laboratory. Ms. Pierce stated that there are no plans for restoration at the moment. These bridges are difficult to restore, and this bridge has been in its current condition for a long time. It's a wonderful structure and we hope to keep the bridge the way it is. Commissioner DeWitt agreed that it is a wonderful structure and hopes it will last for many more years. The Chairman called for any further 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 presentation of the June National Register nominations. The Chairman thanked Ms. King and then he noted again that there were no recusals.

Chairman Rosenberry then turned to the next item on the agenda, the **Local Historic District Preliminary Study Reports**. 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.

#### **Old Corner Bookstore and Cunningham House, Boston**

Mr. Steinitz first presented the **Old Corner Bookstore and Cunningham House in Boston**. The City of Boston is proposing to landmark the Old Corner Bookstore and the Cunningham House at 283 Washington Street, 3-11 School Street, and 277 Washington Street. The designation of the Old Corner Bookstore was initiated in 1994 by petition of then Boston Landmark Commissioner Matthew Kiefer submitted to the Boston Landmarks Commission. In 2023 Historic Boston, Inc. proposed an amendment to the petition to include the designation of the adjacent Cunningham House. At a public hearing on February 14, 2023, the Boston Landmarks Commission voted to accept the amendment to the petition.

The Old Corner Bookstore and Cunningham House are located on two parcels at the northwest corner of School and Washington streets in downtown Boston. Both properties are owned by Historic Boston, Inc. The ground floors of 283-285 Washington Street and 277 Washington Street are occupied by restaurants. The ground floor of 11 School Street is occupied by a retail shop. The ground floor of 5-7 School Street is currently vacant. The upper floors of the buildings are occupied by offices. The Old Corner Bookstore was designated a Massachusetts Historic Landmark in 1970, and was listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

The nearest designated properties to the Old Corner Bookstore are the Winthrop Building and the Old South Meetinghouse across Washington Street, each individually listed in the National Register, and Newspaper Row on Milk Street, a National Register district. Old City Hall, also individually listed in the National Register, is to the northwest on School Street. The immediate surroundings include adjacent six- and seven-story, late 19<sup>th</sup> & early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial

buildings on School Street, the seven-story Pi Alley Garage on Washington Street, and the directly to the southwest, the open triangular plaza with the Boston Famine Memorial. Across Washington Street are the Old South Building, the Old South Meetinghouse, and the Transcript Building, the latter part of Newspaper Row.

The **Old Corner Bookstore**, constructed in 1718, has been altered many times over its history. In 1964, a restoration by Historic Boston, Inc. returned the building to its 1828 appearance. The 3-1/2 story building has a distinctive slate gambrel roof with dormers in the east gambrel. Brick walls are laid in English Garden Wall bond. Corners are ornamented with brownstone quoins. Projecting ground floor display windows are a reconstruction of their early 19<sup>th</sup> century appearance.

The **Cunningham House**, built ca 1728, is a 3-1/2 story building with Flemish bond brick walls and projecting string courses between floors, a slate roof with dormers and end chimneys. Although significantly altered over time, the three – bay building facade with ground floor storefront was restored in the 1970s based on historic photos.

**5-7 School Street**, built in 1828, is a three-story, six-bay, brick building laid in common bond with two storefronts. Built in 1828, or possibly earlier, **11 School Street** is a three-story, three-bay, brick building laid in Flemish bond with a ground floor storefront.

After a significant fire in 1711, wooden construction was prohibited in central Boston. The current Old Corner Bookstore was built in 1718 by Thomas Crease to house his apothecary shop and residence. The building's association with book publishing began in 1828 when the first floor was leased to publisher Timothy Carter, who also undertook the construction of the adjacent brick buildings at 5, 7 and 11 School Street. In 1832 the bookselling business was purchased by Allen & Ticknor, subsequently Ticknor & Company, and by 1854 Ticknor & Fields, the famous innovative and influential American publishers whose authors included Dickens, Tennyson, Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Louisa May Alcott and many others, and who also published the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *North American Review*. Bookselling continued here under subsequent businesses until 1893, following which the buildings were occupied by a variety of commercial tenants through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Adjacent to the Thomas Crease Apothecary Shop, Andrew Cunningham built a brick 3-1/2 story residence in 1728, depicted here in a late 19<sup>th</sup> century photo. Cunningham's 1752 probate inventory reveals that the 18<sup>th</sup> century occupants of the building included two enslaved persons, known only to us by their names Boston and Fanny. In 1795 this building was rented to a publisher, who converted the first story to a shop, and the building continued to be occupied by publishers and booksellers for the next 100 years.

In 1960, this group of buildings was saved from demolition for a large parking garage by the creation of a new organization, Historic Boston, Inc., which acquired the buildings with the intent to restore the exteriors and rehabilitate the interiors into viable, commercial rental properties, with some long-term leasing commercial tenants also contributing funds to pay for preservation work. Landmark designation is being pursued proactively by Historic Boston, Inc.

to ensure that future work on the exterior of the buildings will be performed appropriately under the Standards and Guidelines that come with landmark status.

Recommendations of the Boston Landmarks Commission staff:

Because of the survival of 283 Washington Street as the oldest extant commercial building in Boston, and for the survival of the Old Corner Bookstore and Andrew Cunningham House as rare extant examples of residential Georgian architecture in downtown Boston, for the association of the Old Corner Bookstore with the nationally significant publishing firm of Ticknor and Fields, and more generally the role of the Old Corner Bookstore complex and the adjacent Cunningham House as a 19<sup>th</sup> century Boston literary hub of booksellers and publishers, Boston Landmarks Commission staff recommends that the Old Corner Bookstore and Cunningham House be designated as a Boston Landmark.

Recommendations of the Massachusetts Historical Commission staff:

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Landmark Study Report for the Old Corner Bookstore and Andrew Cunningham House and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

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

### **Old South Meeting House, Boston**

Mr. Steinitz then presented the Old South Meeting House in Boston.

The City of Boston is proposing to landmark the **Old South Meeting House** at 310 Washington Street and 2 Milk Street. The designation of the Old South Meeting House was initiated in 2020 by petition of then Boston Landmark Commissioner Lynn Smiledge submitted to the Boston Landmarks Commission.

The Old South Meeting House occupies two parcels on the northeast corner of the intersection of Washington and Milk streets in downtown Boston. The proposed landmark includes a third triangular parcel adjacent to east side of the Meeting House, containing a 1-story retail building. All three parcels are owned by Revolutionary Spaces, Inc. The landmark includes a fourth parcel that is the alleyway north of the Meeting House, owned by the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority.

The Old South Meeting House was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960, was designated a Massachusetts Historic Landmark in 1965, was listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places in 1970, and is a contributing property to the Boston National Historical Park, listed in the National Register in 2015.

The nearest designated properties to the Old South Meeting House are the Newspaper Row National Register District across Milk Street, and the Old Corner Bookstore and the Winthrop Building to the north on Washington Street, both individually listed in the National Register. The International Trust Building, a block to the southeast on Milk Street, is listed in the National

Register and was designated a Boston Landmark in 1978. The immediate surroundings include the Irish Famine Memorial plaza across Washington Street and the 11-story, Beaux Arts style Old South Building to the north. Across the plaza are the Old Corner Bookstore and the 1972 colonnade of the former Boston Five Cents Savings Bank by Kallman and McKinnell, architects of Boston City Hall. Newspaper Row is across School Street. The west wing of the Old South Building wraps around the Meeting House and the one-story brick retail building that is included in the proposed landmark.

Built 1729-30, with design credited to carpenter Robert Twelves, with Joshua Blanchard as master mason, Old South Meeting House blends Georgian style with earlier New England meeting house design. While the interior of the building has undergone many well documented phases of historic renovations and restorations over time as detailed in the Study Report, the exterior survives much in its original appearance. A square tower is centered on the front gable, and the building is lit throughout by semicircular arched windows, with ox-eye windows in the front gable and tower side faces. The 80-foot high brick tower is surmounted by an octagonal wooden steeple with a 20-foot high, copper clad spire topped by a gilded weathervane. The tower clock was installed in 1770.

In the years leading to the Revolution, Old South Meeting House was the site for large public meetings of resistance following the Boston Massacre, and was a staging ground for the Boston Tea Party. During the occupation of Boston British troops gutted Old South and famously used it as a riding school. While appreciation of the building's significant historical associations was evident by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, with commercial development of the neighborhood, and following the devastation of the Great Boston Fire of 1872, the congregation relocated to the Back Bay, and in 1876 the building was put up for auction and sold, and demolition commenced. Saved by public protest and fund raising, the building was turned over to the Old South Association in what is considered a watershed event in the nascent historic preservation movement. Structural stabilization was followed at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by a major restoration campaign based in part on physical and documentary evidence.

Current planning concerns include proposed downtown zoning changes that would permit 700 foot high towers, and that would remove the current protections afforded to the Meeting House in the Newspaper Row/Old South Protection Area. While demolition of Old South is unlikely, new construction could have adverse view, shadow or structural impacts on the building.

#### Boston Landmarks Commission Staff Recommendations:

As a significant and rare example of colonial era church construction that combines an early Georgian exterior influenced by Christopher Wren with traditional 17<sup>th</sup> century interior proportions and seating plan, and because of its association with events leading to the American Revolution, its association with outstanding personages in American history, and its role in the formative, 19<sup>th</sup> century origins of the American historic preservation movement, BLC staff recommends that the Old South Meeting House be designated as a Boston Landmark.

Massachusetts Historical Commission Staff Recommendations:

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Landmark Study Report for the Old South Meeting House and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

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

### **19 Kenton Road, (Jamaica Plain)**

Mr. Steinitz then presented **19 Kenton Road in Boston (Jamaica Plain)**.

The City of Boston is proposing to landmark **19 Kenton Road** in the City's Jamaica Plain neighborhood. The designation was initiated in 2024 by petition of a group of registered voters submitted to the Boston Landmarks Commission.

19 Kenton Road occupies a double house lot in a residential neighborhood off of Washington Street in the Stony Brook area of Jamaica Plain. The house is a two-family residence, presently vacant, in private ownership. It is among of group of houses that was documented at a reconnaissance level as part of the MHC's earliest efforts at architectural survey in the late 1960s. The nearest designated resources are Franklin Park to the east, and the Sumner Hill Historic District to the west, both about a quarter mile distant, and both listed in the National Register.

Kenton Road is characterized by a mix of modest, mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century single- and multi-family residential buildings, with Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Second Empire and Queen Anne elements representative of the period. Earlier buildings are interspersed with some later 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century three-decker infill, and while there have been the typical sorts of alterations over time, the street retains a good degree of integrity to its 19<sup>th</sup> century character with a variety of building forms and architectural elements.

Believed to have been constructed between 1843 and 1856, 19 Kenton Road is a 2-1/2 story, wood frame, gable-front house, with a large rear ell. The house is clad in wood clapboards with simple wood corner boards, and retains most of its distinctive original architectural features. The rakes of the front gable, the cross gable and the dormers all feature large decorative brackets, and the eaves of the dormers have exposed rafter tails. On the main façade the two windows in the gable have arched hooded openings, as do the windows in the two dormers on the southeast roof slope of the main block. The main entry retains its original rectangular sidelights, but the entry portico is a simple 20<sup>th</sup> replacement of what probably was a more ornate Italianate original similar to others that survive on the street.

Kenton Road, originally Greenwood Avenue, first appears on an 1843 map on a large land holding amassed by prominent Boston businessman and real estate developer Isaac Harris Cary, who was responsible for much of the development of the Stony Brook area as improved transportation access and the development of local industries stimulated residential development in Jamaica Plain. 19 Kenton Road first appears on maps in 1856, likely as a rental property built by Cary. Early residents of Kenton Road are documented to have been white-collar middle class families. Cary sold the property in 1879 to George Carter, a clerk who commuted to Boston, and the first owner-occupant. The property appears to have returned to Cary family ownership, then

was subdivided and sold again to Richard Cahill, a liquor salesman. Renters over time included a photographer, a milkman, a driver, a trucker, a carpenter, and a stair builder. In the 1920s inspection records indicate the building fell into disrepair and vacancy, but was subsequently repaired, with a two-story piazza added to the rear in 1928, the front porch modified in 1937, and asbestos siding (since removed) applied in 1948.

The current owners have proposed the replacement of the building on its double lot with a new, six- or eight condominium unit building. Neighbors, who initiated the landmark petition, are seeking to have the development preserve the existing building and construct a second building on the lot to accomplish the six-unit development. The Boston Landmarks Commission invoked a 90 day Article 85 demolition delay at a public hearing on February 25, 2025, which expired on May 26, 2025. However, under the City's landmark ordinance, demolition is further delayed while the BLC considers the landmark application.

#### Boston Landmarks Commission Staff Recommendations:

For its associations with the prominent Boston businessman and real estate developer Isaac Harris Cary, for associations with the early development of Jamaica Plain as a streetcar suburb, and as an example of an early Italianate style, two-family dwelling that contributes to an architecturally distinctive enclave of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century residential buildings, BLC staff recommends that 19 Kenton Road be designated as a Boston Landmark. BLC staff also recommends future consideration of Kent Road as an Architectural Conservation District.

#### Massachusetts Historical Commission Staff Recommendations:

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Landmark Study Report for 19 Kenton Road.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission concurs with the recommendation of the Boston Landmarks Commission staff for the future consideration of Kenton Road as an Architectural Conservation District.

#### **Anna Harris Smith House, (Dorchester)**

Mr. Steinitz then presented the **Anna Harris Smith House in Boston (Dorchester)**. The City of Boston is proposing to landmark the Anna Harris Smith House at 65 Pleasant Street in the City's Dorchester neighborhood. The designation was initiated in 2007 by petition of a group of registered voters submitted to the Boston Landmarks Commission.

The Anna Harris Smith House, also known as the Samuel Clapp House, is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Whitby Terrace and Pleasant Street at the eastern edge of the Jones Hill neighborhood in Dorchester. The house is presently classified as two-family residential; it is occupied as a residence by the owner.

Although not listed in the National Register, in 2006 in a Certified Local Government opinion, the Boston Landmarks Commission staff found the Anna Harris Smith House to be eligible for

listing in the National Register of Historic Places. MHC staff concurred with the BLC staff opinion.

The Jones Hill area to the west and south of the property and the Pleasant Street residential area to the north have been documented by Boston Landmarks Commission historic properties surveys. The nearest group of designated properties is the Uphams Corner National Register District, listed in 2024, and the William Trotter Monroe House on Jones Hill, designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976 and a Boston Landmark in 1977.

The Jones Hill area is a large and architecturally distinguished late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban Dorchester neighborhood. The immediate vicinity of the Anna Harris Smith House is characterized by three-deckers to its north and south, and by two-families to its immediate rear on Whitby Terrace. Single-story historic commercial blocks also are nearby along the Pleasant Street corridor, and the 1908 Edward Everett Elementary School is 300 feet to the south.

The Anna Harris Smith House is a recently restored, hip-roofed, five bay Federal period building built in 1804 with a central lobby entry and paired chimney stacks. The house faces east toward Pleasant Street and is set well back on its lot. Originally L-shaped with a rear ell, the building was expanded to the rear with additional extensions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The building is clad in wood clapboard. Windows are 12-over-12 and 6-over-6 sash, most of them hand crafted as part of the restoration campaign.

The house was built in 1804 by Samuel Clapp on the site of a 17<sup>th</sup> century house that had been destroyed by fire. Samuel Clapp was a cooper and a member of the prominent Clapp family of Dorchester. The house remained in family ownership for three generations for the next 100 years. Its most significant association is as the birthplace and long-time home of Clapp's granddaughter, Anna Harris Smith, a music teacher, author, newspaper editor, and prolific public speaker. Smith was the founder of the Animal Rescue League of Boston in 1899. At that time there was no animal welfare organization that would accept and care for surrendered animals. The League's mission soon extended from cats and dogs to working animals, primarily horses. Smith and the League were influential nationally in the development of humane animal welfare practice. At the time of her death in 1929 the League was caring for 100,000 animals at 9 locations in the Boston area.

In 2009 Historic Boston, Inc. secured a two-year purchase option on the building and entered into a partnership with the North Bennet Street School's restoration carpentry department to restore the building's sills and its exterior to its 1804 appearance. HBI also repaired the foundations and chimneys before selling the house to a first time homeowner who undertook the rehabilitation of the interior as two residential units.

#### Boston Landmark Commission Staff Recommendations:

For its associations with the locally prominent Clapp family, including Anna Harris Smith, who was born in the house in 1843, and lived there until 1908, and who founded the Animal Rescue League of Boston, and as the best-preserved example of a five-by-two bay, Federal period

residence in the Dorchester neighborhood, BLC staff recommends that the Anna Harris Smith House be designated as a Boston Landmark.

#### Massachusetts Historical Commission Staff Recommendations:

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Landmark Study Report for the Anna Harris Smith House and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

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

Chairman Rosenberry thanked Mr. Steinitz, and called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Preliminary Study Report for the **Old Corner Bookstore and Cunningham House in Boston**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. The commissioner 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 then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Preliminary Study Report for the **Old South Meeting House in Boston**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner Ceccacci. 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 **19 Kenton Road in Boston (Jamaica Plain)**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Sullivan. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. The Chair recognized Commissioner DeWitt, who said he would like to confirm his understanding, that this is a vote to recommend to BLC both the creation of the landmark, and to encourage the creation of the district. Mr. Steinitz reported that the Study Report recommends both landmark designation and future consideration of the area as an architectural conservation district. MHC staff concurs with the recommendation for an architectural conservation district, and that is staff's recommendation for consideration by the commissioners. The Chair then recognized Commissioner Sullivan who said he would in that case like to withdraw his second of the Motion. The Chair agreed. Commissioner Sullivan then decided to maintain his second to allow discussion. Commissioner DeWitt asked if the staff would address their concerns regarding landmarking. The Chair recognized Mr. Steinitz who responded by saying architecturally the building is somewhat altered, the associations with the developer, occupants and owners are not very well developed in the Study Report, and staff questioned whether there was a strong enough case made for individual landmarking versus a district. The Chair then asked if there were any remarks from the commission concerning the Motion on the table or to amend the MOTION. Mr. Steinitz added that staff generally defer to local recommendations and findings, and we do concur with the Study Report's recommendations



regarding a district. Commissioner DeWitt asked if the staff felt the Boston Landmark should be held to a higher standard than for example to a National Register listing. Mr. Steinitz said not at all. Commissioner DeWitt further stated that he's seen National Register listings that are not so inconsistent with what we saw in this study report. Mr. Steinitz agreed that yes the area would likely be eligible as a National Register district, and 19 Kenton Road would contribute to such a district. The Chairman then asked if there a Motion to amend the MOTION. Chairman Rosenberry recognized Commissioner DeWitt's MOTION to amend the MOTION to include both encouragement of individual landmarking 19 Kenton Road, and as well as a future Architectural Conservation District. Commissioner Sullivan SECONDED. The Chairman called for any other questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, the Chairman 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 **Anna Harris Smith House in Boston (Dorchester)**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner Ceccacci. 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 turned to the next item on the agenda, the **Massachusetts Preservation Project Fund (MPPF) Grants, Round 31**.

Chairman Rosenberry first called for any recusals. Commissioner Sullivan recused himself from the discussion and voting on the William Ellery Channing Eustis House in the Town of Milton. The Chairman, then turned the meeting over to Paul Holtz, Co-Director of the Grants Division. A copy of the presented spreadsheet is on file with these minutes. He thanked Commissioners DeWitt, McDowell and Wheeler for serving on the MPPF grants subcommittee prior to the meeting. Mr. Holtz distributed a spreadsheet with information on each recommendation. He then gave an overview of MPPF Round 31, saying that MHC received 29 total applications: 28 for development projects; 1 for pre-development projects and 0 for Acquisitions; 12 applications were from municipalities, and 17 from nonprofits. Mr. Holtz said MHC staff recommended 21 projects for MPPF grants. He then gave a short presentation on each of the recommended projects. Commissioner McDowell provided a brief summary of the MPPF grants subcommittee meeting. He noted that the subcommittee members are in approval of the list of recommendations before the commission, and to approve MHC staff recommendations for the selection of the 18 projects for MPPF awards.

Chairman Rosenberry thanked Mr. Holtz, and then began the voting process as follows:

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$50,000** to the **William H. Smith Apartment Building in Boston (Roxbury)**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner Wheeler and SECONDED by Commissioner Sullivan. The commissioner called for questions or comments

from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$50,000** to the **League of Women for Community Service for the Farwell Mansion in Boston (South End)**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Sullivan. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$80,000** to the **Fall River Public Library** in the **City of Fall River**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner Wheeler. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$65,000** to the **Holyoke City Hall** in the **City of Holyoke**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner Sullivan. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$50,000** to the **Church on the Hill in Lenox**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner Ceccacci. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$75,000** to the **High Rock Cottage** in the **City of Lynn**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner Wheeler. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

At this point Commissioner Sullivan recused herself from the discussion and voting on the William Ellery Channing Eustis House – Historic New England (SPNEA) in the Town of Milton.

Chairman Rosenberry noted that due to Commissioner Sullivan recusal on the William Ellery Channing Eustis House - No quorum was present to vote. The vote will take place at the next Commission Meeting September 10<sup>th</sup>.

At this point Commissioner Sullivan returned to the meeting.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$50,000** to the **Rev. Adonijah Bidwell House** in the **Town of**

**Monterey.** A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$50,000** to the **Nahant Life-Saving Station** in the **Town of Nahant**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner McDowell. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$50,000** to the **James Arnold-William J. Rotch House** in the **City of New Bedford**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$50,000** to the **New Bedford Whaling Museum** in the **City of New Bedford**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner Sullivan. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$20,000** to the **Old Center Cemetery** in **New Marlborough**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$65,000** to the **Greenlawn Cemetery-Dickson Memorial Chapel** in the **City of Salem**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner Wheeler. Commissioner DeWitt called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$20,000** to the **Sheffield Free Church** in **Sheffield**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$80,000** to the **Town of Somerset** for the **Swansea Friends**

**Meetinghouse** in the **Town of Somerset**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$70,000** to the **Robert Treat Paine, Jr. House** in the **City of Waltham**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner Ceccacci. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$50,000** to the **Martha's Vineyard Preservation Trust** for the **Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society Grange Hall** in **West Tisbury**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION to accept the MHC staff recommendation to award an MPPF grant in the amount of **\$75,000** to the **Centre Burial Ground** in the **Town of Weston**. A MOTION TO ACCEPT was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The commissioner called for questions or comments from the commission. 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 **Executive Director's Report**. He then turned the floor over to Brona Simon, Executive Director.

Ms. Simon began by giving an update on the MHC's federal funding for the current, FY2025 federal fiscal year that was approved by Congress and was signed into law for the fiscal year that started October 1, 2024. The allocations from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), which is a special trust fund supported by the revenues generated by the federal government from selling offshore oil and gas leases. The FY25 Historic Preservation Fund is at level funding with that of federal fiscal year FY24. However, with the new administration, no SHPOs or THPOs (Tribal Historic Preservation Offices) have been allocated their share of the Historic Preservation Fund for the current federal fiscal year that started last October. As of now these federal funds have not been released while the Office of Management and Budget, which is managed directly under the President, scrutinizes all allocated FY25 federal program funds and is eliminating funds that appear not to meet the current administration's goals and priorities. By use of AI, OMB is using certain key words to weed out funding for many organizations. For example we understand that in the competitive HPF grants programs – separate from SHPO funding – research on women's history has been eliminated, because women is one of the key words that doesn't meet the goals of this administration.

Ms. Simon noted that because we have not been able to access our federal fiscal year 2025 HPF funds, all of the Survey and Planning grant applications reviewed and approved by the Commission this year have been put on hold by MHC staff, as we have not received the funding yet to pass through to the awarded municipalities and Certified Local Governments.

Ms. Simon then asked if there were any questions and recognized Commissioner Ceccacci, who asked what other states are doing. Ms. Simon said that some states have laid off portions of their staff. Ohio laid off twelve staff, and New Hampshire and Connecticut will lay off staff - it varies state to state. Massachusetts is fortunate in that we have a legislature that's maintaining funding that we need from the state. Commissioner Sullivan asked if the staff operations would be able to continue in the absence of federal funds. Ms. Simon said she has committed to staff that she'll do everything she can to keep them on board. We already have too many vacancies and it's getting difficult to carry out our responsibilities. On the state side the Executive branch has put out a freeze on hiring and on advertising to fill any vacancies.

Chairman Rosenberry added that the Governor's office and the Legislature are at a point of a wait and see approach on what the actual overall impacts will be from the loss of federal funding. The goal would be to plug the holes with supplemental budgets, and as for MHC's budget, we are a part of the process. When we know more on what the federal budget impact will be our office is ready to advocate on the state level for support for MHC. He noted that MHC has been on the radar of the Legislature recently. The Homes Act, a major housing production bond bill, included a commitment to extend the provisions on the Tax Credit Program to 2030 and to increase the cap on available Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits. So that suggests that the Legislature supports preservation in Massachusetts, and that we are fortunate in that regard. But again, we are in a wait and see holding pattern at the moment.

Ms. Simon noted that MHC will not be laying off employees anytime soon thanks to our State funding and other opportunities that we have.

Ms. Simon then announced that there are no Commission meetings in July and August and that the next meeting will be on September 10<sup>th</sup>. She then wished the Commissioners a great summer and she looks forward to seeing everyone in September.

This completed the Executive Director's report.

The Chair then called for any new business. The Chairman then informed the commissioners on a bill that has surfaced during this session that would make sweeping changes to the Local Historic District Commission language in Mass General Laws Chapter 40C, as well as to Demolition Delay processes to try to make them more uniform, and would appear to limit the flexibility that city and towns currently enjoy with their demolition delay processes, among other changes to the statute. He said if there is any interest from your organizations it is Senate Bill 1428 and House Docket. Bill HD4331- a late filing - that matches the Senate Bill. The Senate Bill was heard by the Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government yesterday. He stated we will likely submit written comments at some point soon. The Committee asks for any written testimony to be submitted within two weeks of the hearing, due to a rule change under which joint committees need to report legislation out within 60 days of a bill's hearing.

Chairman Rosenberry then announced under new business that for the September commission meeting we will be working to transition to a hybrid format for any of the commissioners or members of the public who wish to participate in the meeting in person. We will return to the meeting space located at MHC's Columbia Point building in the Patriots Meeting Room. The Chairman described briefly the hybrid meeting technology to be installed and tested in that room over the summer that will allow meetings to be held in person while the remote meeting Zoom platform will also continue to be available to the commissioners and to the public.

That said, the Chair wished the Commissioners a happy summer.

The Chair then called for a MOTION to adjourn. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner McDowell. The MOTION CARRIED, and the meeting adjourned at 3:08pm.

Commissioners Present

JOHN ROSENBERY  
SUSAN CECCACCI  
MICHAEL MCDOWELL  
DEREK HEIDEMANN  
HEATHER WILSON  
DONALD FRIARY  
RYAN WHEELER  
DENNIS DEWITT  
CHARLES SULLIVAN

Staff Present

BRONA SIMON  
NANCY ALEXSON  
PETER STOTT  
PAUL HOLTZ  
ROSS DEKLE  
MICHAEL STEINITZ  
SHARI PERRY-WALLACE  
JOSH DORIN  
GIANNA ORTIZ  
LIZ KING

A TRUE COPY ATTEST

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Brown