

MSLD Study Committee Notes #4

October 15, 2025

Study Committee Attendance: Nancy Johnsen, Lindsey MacJones, Kirsten Hoffman, Ian Urquhart, Julie Hall, Crystal Galvin, Intiya Ambrogi Isaza

Staff: Gabriela Amore, Elizabeth Sherva, Jennifer Gaugler

I. REVIEW AND VOTE ON MINUTES FROM THE 7/16/2025 PUBLIC MEETING

- A. Julie Hall motions to approve meeting minutes, Crystal Galvin seconds the motion. Meeting minutes approved unanimously.

II. DISCUSS MEETING FORMAT

- A. The hybrid meeting format did not work well due to technology and acoustic issues.
- B. From now on, committee meetings will be in-person at the museum or virtual (no hybrid).
 - 1. **Jennifer Gaugler** comment: it was easy for people to follow along virtually with the text during the Highland Park process.

III. DISCUSS PUBLIC FEEDBACK

- A. General study committee comment: Committee members have heard that we need to have a strong plan for community engagement.
- B. **BLC staff**: We will be working with other City depts to ensure that we don't have scheduling conflicts.
- C. **Nancy Johnsen**: Flyering - should the Committee flyer on household doors and when? Maybe wait until we have the date of our first community event?
 - 1. Yes, the committee agrees that flyering should occur.
- D. **BLC staff** shows an example of a newspaper ad - staff used Planning Department's as an example.
- E. **Nancy**: Setting the dates of future meetings in advance so people can plan to come will be helpful.
 - 1. Gabby Amore reminds the committee to fill out the attendance tracker to help staff finalize the study committee meeting dates.
 - 2. Potential upcoming meeting dates:
 - a) 10/29, ~~11/12~~ (need to reschedule due to BLC Hearing), 12/3, 12/17, 1/14
- F. **Nancy**: Some study committee members will go to the Farmers Market on Wednesday, 10/29, 1-6 pm, to talk to community members. **Julie Hall and Nancy Johnsen** volunteer to attend Farmer's Market 3pm - 6pm on 10/29.
- G. **Julie Hall**: It would be helpful to engage the Charlestown Historical Society and local businesses, maybe ask them to help spread the word and put something in their stores.
- H. **Gabby Amore** has shared additional written feedback from the public with the study committee before this meeting.
- I. **Nancy**: On the boundary walk, there was some concern about cost to homeowners; we discussed the possibility of hardship waivers, how to help people find resources on estate planning and how to pass their property down.
 - 1. Community Outreach event should include City Age Strong, and Mayor's Office of Housing staff.

IV. DISCUSS BOUNDARIES

- A. What were your observations from the boundary walks?
 1. **Committee** suggestion: It would be helpful to note how many members of the public attended the boundary walks.
 2. **Staff** observations:
 - a) Generally it seemed like both committee members and members of the public would like to protect more of the neighborhood if possible.
 - b) The study committee seemed unsure how to establish the hard edge of the boundary – what's in and what's out?
- B. Staff present development of different ideas and the current staff recommendation.
 1. **Staff** recommendation:
 - a) Establish a Landmark District that adheres to the original boundary proposed in the petition.
 - b) Also establish a Protection Area around the District which can regulate demolition, height, land coverage, topography, and landscape.
 - (1) The Protection Area can extend no more than 1200 feet from the boundary of the Landmark District.
 - (2) We recommend that it follows Bunker Hill Street, School Street, Main Street/Warren Street, and Lowney Way as this encompasses an area that has views to the monument.
 - c) This is very much up for discussion and to be decided by the study committee with input from the community.
 2. **Committee** members ask for clarification on demolition in the protection area, Article 85, and city-owned properties.
 - a) **Intiya** recommends that we include in the study report language about the City cooperating with the standards and criteria for city-owned properties.
 - b) **Elizabeth Sherva** suggested that city-owned properties are called out within the Study Report..
 3. **Nancy**: Discussion of protection area limitations – is it enough regulation if the protection area can't regulate exterior architectural features?
 - a) **Elizabeth**: We need to define "demolition" – it's not just full demolition – for ex. could be more than 25% of the exterior. So a complete roof replacement could trigger it.
 4. **Intiya**: We might want to specify in the standards that we don't want to regulate certain parts of landscape i.e. window boxes.
 - a) **Staff**: Yes, we can specify that. Also specify that decorations, etc. do not need to be reviewed.
 5. **Ian**: The committee gets to decide the level of review in the district?
 - a) **Staff**: Yes, exactly, they can be as specific or as lenient as you write them.
 6. **Intiya**: Why not go further south? It's similarly historic.
 - a) **Staff**: Yes, we are open to that.
 7. **Julie**: Burial ground?
 - a) **Elizabeth**: They are already protected. Development will not occur on a burial ground.
- C. STOP FOR PUBLIC FEEDBACK
 1. **Dan** (last name not audible): Is 1200 feet a fixed distance? Is it spongable, meaning taking from one area to add to another area on the other side of the zone.
 - a) *Staff: It is the legally maximum allowable distance from the landmark district boundary. It can be moved if the landmark district boundary grows. It can also encompass parcels it touches. You cannot take some of the protection area from one side and add it into another area.*

2. **Richard McCarthy:** Does designation require that anything currently existing be changed?
 - a) Staff: No.
3. **Richard McCarthy:** Are the standards established by a committee?
 - a) Staff: Yes, this one.
 - b) Richard comment: With respect to the monument area, you have a lot of different styles and materials. How do you address that?
 - (1) Staff: We can write the language in a certain way to be more generalized if needed. Example given, window must be compatible with the design and era of building. Different material types may be considered.
4. **Amanda Zettel:** Currently we have BPDA urban design (NDOD) guidelines. Would Landmark District supersede the guidelines? Protection Area too?
 - a) Staff: The NDOD is quite large and extends beyond our area of discussion. Landmark District would supersede the NDOD, but we would have to check on the Protection Area. BLC staff will confer with colleagues in planning and provide clarification at next meeting.
 - b) Also does the Protection Area need to be included in the process or can it be done later?
 - (1) Staff: We will clarify.
5. **Dan Jaffe:** Would like to see more clarification of the boundaries properties (facades and rooflines)– what is in there? What ages, styles? Also what are the sightlines? Also, I would like to see more information available before the meeting as to what is to be discussed.
6. **Marilyn Brassil:** Would like paper with all street names.
 - a) Staff: We are happy to also mail materials or provide them at the library.
 - b) Nancy Johnsen: At future meetings we can bring handouts of statutes or other information. Also printed maps. We will also put more information on the website.
7. **Erin Woods:** Too early to vote on the expansion of the district. Most people who live in the area are not yet aware.
 - a) Staff: We can send out a mailer.
 - b) Intiya: Committee members can help volunteer to deliver and put out the flyers.
8. **Johanna Hynes:** Disappointed in process. Meetings shouldn't be on Zoom only. Should be in person with a virtual option.
9. **Rosemary Macero:** Too early to make a decision on boundary. The protection area should come down into the west side of Main Street and City Square. The Landmark District should come down into the Town Hill area. Virtual meetings should be recorded and posted online. Meetings agendas posted two weeks in advance. List of meetings posted somewhere so everyone can know when they are. Who will be the decision maker in charge of giving waivers – BLC staff. How does the appeal process work?
 - a) Staff will post that information online!
 - b) Will there be tax breaks? I would like more information on that.
 - c) The community needs to be included more in the discussion of the boundary before a vote is taken. Need more publicity for meetings. Request another walk before the weather gets too cold.
 - (1) Staff: Yes, we can schedule another walk.
 - d) What is the time frame?
 - (1) Staff: We can post the workplan on the website.
10. (Name not provided): Confused by the implications of this process. Respects the architectural integrity around the monument being upheld. We might

want to include other areas. Informing the neighbors especially around the monument at this point is critical. Try to gather the neighbors so they can understand the implications for their homes.

- a) **Nancy:** Yes, we can do better on communication now that we are back into work mode. Now that people see boundaries they are worried about the possible standards and criteria. Let's make example standards and criteria available to the community so they can understand the potential implications. We can come and talk to neighborhood groups as well.

- D. Vote deferred to a future meeting – we will meet next time with a map and answers to questions from tonight.

V. NEXT STEPS: PLAN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENT

- A. Deferred to a future meeting.

VI. PROJECTED ADJOURNMENT: 8:00 PM

- A. **Julie** motions to adjourn, **Ian** seconds. Unanimous vote to adjourn.