

MSLD Study Committee Meeting #2

June 18, 2025

STUDY COMMITTEE ATTENDEES:

(online)

- Fadi Samaha

(in-person)

- Nancy Johnsen
- Lindsey MacJones
- Jeff Gonyeau
- Kirsten Hoffman
- Ameeth Deenanath
- Crystal Galvin
- Linda Neshamkin
- Julie Hall

GUESTS:

- Johanna Hynes
- Amanda Zettel
- Mary's iphone (online)

MINUTES

(1) Discussion of public feedback

a. Report from **BLC staff**:

i. Mayor's Coffee Hour feedback

1. Staff heard a lot of support for the district and interest in expanding it.

ii. CNC 5/6 meeting feedback

1. Staff attended to answer questions and explain the process. Heard both concerns and questions which were answered by staff. Attendees seemed generally supportive of the district and possible expansion of it.

b. Study committee feedback - what have you heard?

i. **Crystal**: The CNC mtg was a good opportunity to address any misinformation and clarify the goal of the district. People are interested in discussing expanding.

ii. **Nancy**: There are a lot of ideas out there, for example designating the monument which is federal property. BLC did a good job of parsing out competing jurisdictions and issues and we had a good dialogue that night with the council. People are very sensitive to the historic significance of the neighborhood and they want Charlestown to stay looking like Charlestown. People are also interested in expanding to the training field. Nancy asks: How did that area fit into the development of the square? Do these two areas tell a story together? How would you develop standards for both?

1. **Elizabeth Sherva (BLC staff)**: Yes, we have to look at the story, how things were developed and plotted, when they were built.

iii. **Jeff G**: How were the boundaries decided?

1. **Amanda Zettel**: Support of the residents. 5 buildings on the square were owned by developers at the time and were proposing concerning changes so they wanted to get the petition in quickly. Does not follow the NR district.

- iv. **Linda:** If you look at it stylistically, the training field makes a lot of sense.
 - v. **Julie** has heard three concerns:
 - 1. Does this mean we'll get gas lamps? People want them!
 - 2. Will they tell me how to paint my house? (BLC staff: No.)
 - 3. Will I be able to park? (BLC staff: Not in the jurisdiction of the Landmarks Commission.)
 - vi. **Lindsey:** Most people haven't heard of this or have but don't know what it is. We should figure out how to reach out to people outside of the typical circles.
 - 1. **Elizabeth (BLC staff):** Do your neighbors sign up for the ONS newsletters?
 - 2. **Gabby (BLC staff):** We also have a newsletter for this study committee!
 - 3. **Nancy:** Some of the local newspapers are picking it up – we should continue to encourage them to share correct information.
 - a. Maybe we survey people; have community events with sticky notes.
 - b. We need an “elevator pitch” blurb so people know where to go to sign up for info, etc.
- (2) Discuss boundaries of proposed district
- a. **BLC staff:** We have heard many requests to expand the boundaries. Here are some suggestions we have heard from the public and precedents we could look at:
 - i. Mayor's Coffee Hour feedback
 - 1. Include Winthrop Sq (training fields)
 - 2. Monument Avenue, Cordis Street, Bartlett Street
 - 3. High Street, Chestnut Street
 - 4. “Back street behind school” Presumably Harvard-Kent School?
 - 5. Entirely of Charlestown
 - ii. Other proposed districts
 - 1. [Charlestown Industrial Architectural Conservation District](#) (#289.23)
 - 2. [Town Hill Landmark District](#) (#100)
 - 3. [Baldwin Street Architectural Conservation District](#) (#193)
 - iii. Feedback from **study committee** on proposed boundary:
 - 1. More inclusion of Town Hill?
 - 2. Not sure it should go up to the USS Constitution area
 - 3. Phipps Burying Ground should maybe be included
 - b. **Does the study committee want to expand the boundaries?**
 - i. Yes, the committee wants to look at expanding the boundaries
 - 1. **Ameeth:** We don't want to bite off more than we can chew – how much work will it take to study a much larger district?
 - 2. **Elizabeth (BLC staff):** One of the main challenges is settling the boundary, followed by the levels of protection (standards and criteria).
 - a. Maybe the next meeting we just go for a walk!
 - b. **Crystal:** We need to balance the intersection of class and race and people's opportunity to feel included in a district vs. us determining regulations on people's property
 - ii. **Crystal:** why did previous petitions fail?
 - 1. **Jennifer (BLC staff):** They stalled typically at the study committee stage or because of vocal opposition.
 - c. **PUBLIC FEEDBACK: Ask attendees if they have any feedback for the study committee**

- i. **Amanda Zettel:** Where does the NR district lie and what was the expansion? We should look into what has already been studied. Also Ed Gordon study in the 1970s.
 - 1. Liz: MHC has paper records. We can look into them.
- ii. **Johanna Hynes:**
 - 1. Bunker Hill Burial Ground is really important as the site of the rail fence and of unmarked graves of warriors. MHC has said that it should be listed as a landmark site due to its Revolutionary War significance.
 - a. **Julie Hall** agrees.
 - 2. What are the elements that unify this area of the “proposed boundary”? The expanded district screams discrimination by income.
 - a. **BLC staff:** It came from community feedback at the Mayor’s Coffee Hour.

(3) Planning public outreach and community engagement events

- a. Attendance at community meetings, other neighborhood events
 - i. Wednesday nights music outdoors
 - ii. Wednesday farmers market
- b. Study committee could host informal drop-in “coffee hours”
- c. Area walks in the neighborhood
- d. Open House events
 - i. **Jennifer (BLC staff):** Can be both in-person and virtual
 - ii. ONH Center
 - iii. BCYF
- e. How does the study committee recommend that we publicize?
 - i. Local papers ex. Charlestown Patriot-Bridge
 - ii. Other ideas?
 - 1. **Johanna:** Flyers (**Nancy:** We can leave them at the library, give them to stores on Main St., Nancy will give us the Charlestown Coalition contact; **Linda:** Maybe we put them on the fence of the Bunker Hill Monument!)
- f. **PUBLIC FEEDBACK: Ask attendees if they have any feedback for the study committee**

(4) Next steps

- a. Third Committee Meeting
 - i. Discuss public feedback
 - ii. Standards & Criteria
 - iii. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair of study committee
- b. ACTION ITEMS FOR STAFF:
 - i. Share National Register information with the study committee.
 - ii. Create a map with layers of different boundaries superimposed.
 - iii. Share other district petitions in Charlestown.

(5) Next meeting

- a. Tentatively 7/9/2025 at 6:30