

# MSLD Study Committee Meeting #3 Minutes

July 16, 2025

## ATTENDEES

### STUDY COMMITTEE

(online)

- Fadi Samaha
- Jeff Gonyeau

(in-person)

- Nancy Johnsen
- Kirsten Hoffman
- Ameeth Deenanath
- Crystal Galvin
- Linda Neshamkin
- Julie Hall
- Ian Urquhart
- Intiya Ambrogi Isaza

### BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION STAFF

- Gabriela Amore, Project Lead
- Elizabeth Sherva, Executive Director
- Jennifer Gaugler
- Nicholas Armata

### GUESTS

- Carmela Fazzino-Farah (online)
- Johanna Hynes (online)
- Kelli Forbes
- Erin Woods

## MINUTES

(1) Review tonight's goals (SEE SLIDE)

(2) Meeting minutes from the last meeting:

- a. Any corrections?
- b. Vote to ratify (or postpone to the next meeting if study committee would like more time to review?)
  - Motion to approve from **Julie**
  - Second from **Crystal**
  - Vote - unanimous approval except **Intiya** and **Nancy** abstained

(3) Public feedback

- a. **BLC Staff:** We received a request for more publicity for study committee meetings.
  - Some actions taken since the last meeting:
    1. An announcement went out in the Office of Neighborhood Service's Charlestown newsletter.
    2. Flyers were put up in the neighborhood.
    3. Sent an announcement to our listserv - we now have 15 people.
- b. Study committee feedback: Have you heard any new feedback?

- **Nancy:** left posters at library, coffee shops
- **Crystal:** let's put something in the Patriot
- **Linda:** Charlestown Neighborhood Facebook Group

(4) Expansion of boundaries of proposed district

a. Discuss map

- **Nick (BLC staff)** presents suggested alternative boundaries - one based on a possible NR district expansion nomination for Breed's Hill, the other based on study of building history (particularly planned development of a certain era) and visual analysis by staff.
  1. We were not able to justify crossing over into the Town Hill area based on staff research.
- **Linda:** I printed out Atlascope maps. Can we overlay the 1912 map or others?
  1. **STAFF ACTION:** Good idea! Let's do this at Study Committee Meeting #4.
- **Intiya:** Maybe we can map buildings by age to help study the boundary.
- **Elizabeth (BLC staff):** Consider future possibilities when thinking about the boundary. Maybe if a building has been altered and lost architectural integrity but it's within the boundary, the district could help guide it to be restored appropriately.
  1. **STAFF ACTION:** Print maps for neighborhood walk so people can mark up as we go.

b. Planning a neighborhood walk?

- Yes, the committee wants to do this
- **STAFF ACTION:** Gabby will send a Doodle poll to solicit dates.
  1. **Intiya:** Can you plan at least two walks to accommodate vacations? Yes.
  2. **Nancy:** Best-attended walks for Plan Charlestown were on weekend mornings around 10 am. More than 48-hours notice needed. Also schedule a rain/heat date.
  3. **Intiya:** Share a schedule with timestamps for locations along the walk so people can join late.

(5) Standards & Criteria

- a. What can the District regulate? What have other districts regulated?
  - **Gabby** presents the slides on jurisdiction, typical exemptions, and areas of purview.
- b. **COMMITTEE HOMEWORK:** Review Standards and Guidelines for Highland Park, Aberdeen, Beacon Hill
- c. Question from **Julie Hall:** If we pushed our boundaries up toward the rail fence and the housing project, would that mean there could be no demolition? **BLC Staff:** Yes, district commissions can generally stop demolition.
- d. **Intiya:** Charlestown is more like South End, Beacon Hill, Bay Village. Highland Park is so large and diverse, it has little in common with what we're doing here.
  - **Linda:** It represents a different approach toward urbanism.
  - **Elizabeth:** Highland Park wanted flexibility but is learning that the standards might sometimes be too flexible.
  - **Kirsten:** Aberdeen is in the middle. Question: If we expand the area, can we have different sections that have different levels of restrictions? **BLC Staff:** Yes - you could recommend a Protection Area, for example. Or Fort Point wrote in that certain buildings *could* be demolished. The MS committee could deem certain buildings non-contributing.
    1. **Intiya:** From a developer perspective, that would be helpful.
    2. **Julie:** Maybe we put a protection area around the core district?
      - a. **BLC Staff:** You can consider it but remember that the jurisdiction of a protection area is very limited and cannot protect

architectural details, design of new construction, the public realm (sidewalks, street furniture, EV chargers, etc.).

3. **Intiya:** Will we start brainstorming about the standards and criteria next meeting? **BLC Staff:** Yes.
  - a. **Linda:** Let's have the walk before we talk about the standards and criteria.
  - b. **Elizabeth:** The walk will be very helpful to think about what to regulate. For example, do you want to regulate private ways?
4. **Crystal:** Let's make sure we are incorporating public comment and public engagement, especially with this proposed expansion of the boundary.
5. **Julie:** Maybe let's do a committee-focused walk first before a really big public walk. Open to the public but public comments will be held to the end? (**BLC Staff:** Yes.)
6. **Intiya:** Conflicts with accessibility requirements - how does that work? Can we preserve existing stairways for example?
  - a. **Nick:** In Beacon Hill we do everything that we can to accommodate people with accessibility issues, but also we make solutions removable to preserve historic integrity as much as possible.

(6) **PUBLIC FEEDBACK: Ask attendees if they have any feedback for the study committee**

a. **Johanna Hynes:**

- Audio issues were really bad and it was hard to hear most attendees.
- Happy to hear that Monument Street might be included. Why not go all the way to Medford Street?
- Is Revolutionary War the theme of the district?

1. **Elizabeth:** No, it is about planned development around the Monument.

b. **Kelli Forbes:**

- It is extremely important that people who might be affected are aware of what is going on. You should do a mailing to the property owners within the proposed boundary. Also use the Patriot Bridge.
- If enhancements to the public realm would be supported by taxpayer money, it would be unfair if they were very expensive.

c. **Erin Woods:**

- What if a group wants to cancel the petition or not be included?
  1. **BLC Staff:**
    - a. Before designation, you can write and speak to the Study Committee, the Landmarks Commission, the Mayor, or City Council. Note that a private way can be excluded if they wish.
    - b. After designation, you can petition to rescind a designation.

(7) Next steps

- a. Nominations of Chair and Vice-Chair
  - **Nancy Johnsen** self-nominated as Chair (vote at next meeting)
- b. Fourth Committee Meeting
  - Election of Chair and Vice Chair
  - Discuss public feedback
  - Standards & Criteria
- c. Plan a public engagement event after discussion of boundaries and standards & criteria

(8) Next meeting

- a. Leaning toward 8/20/2025 with a walk beforehand.