

MSLD Study Committee Notes #6

November 19, 2025, 6:30 pm

Zoom <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1619300716>

Study Committee Attendees:

Ameeth Deenanath
Crystal Galvin
Jeffrey Gonyeau
Kirsten Hoffman
Nancy Johnsen (Chair)
Linda Neshamkin

Staff:

Gabriela Amore
Elizabeth Sherva
Jennifer Gaugler

Members of the Public:

Maria Bisono Turull
Tyler Mizenko
“cannt” (Zoom name)

Action/follow-up items for staff are highlighted in yellow.

I. REVIEW AND VOTE ON MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 29, 2025 PUBLIC MEETING

- A. **Linda** motions to approve meeting minutes, **Kirsten** seconds the motion. Meeting minutes approved unanimously.

II. PUBLIC FEEDBACK SINCE LAST MEETING

- A. Feedback received by staff:
 - 1. **Gabby** reports that we have not received any new feedback since the last committee meeting.
- B. Feedback received by study committee members:
 - 1. None reported.

III. PREVIOUSLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- A. How is “land coverage” defined?
 - 1. By setbacks and building footprints
- B. Would the Training Field grounds be included in the designation?
 - 1. The study committee will discuss relevant elements during the standards and criteria discussion. Could include things like landscaping, street furniture, ground disturbances, placards, etc.
 - 2. **Linda**: Could it include comments about maintenance schedules?
 - a) **Gabby**: That would typically be more of a recommendation. The Parks Department is in the same Cabinet and they would be doing the maintenance.
 - b) **Jen**: Regular day-to-day maintenance typically would not be reviewed by Landmarks, but special projects (like restoration of historic plaques) could be.
 - 3. **Nancy**: Looking at other examples like Beacon Hill, it seems like we might want to look specifically at the language where they talk about preserving historic character. Aberdeen standards also talk about preserving the overall look and character of the green space.

IV. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENT

- A. What needs to be completed by the committee before the event? What materials should be created? How will event be communicated?
1. **Nancy:** Proposed boundaries of Landmark District and Protection Area should be drafted.
 2. **Crystal:** Two separate conversations are merited (i.e. boundaries and standards and criteria) to stay focused.
 3. **Linda:** The first meeting could introduce the concept of the district and protection area and second meeting could go more into detail about the regulations.
 4. **Gabby:** One thing we would definitely want to have is a simple, straightforward one-page handout.
 5. **Jeff:** It's exciting to take this opportunity to expand the potential boundary, so public engagement should work to get people on board.
 6. **Nancy:**
 - a) First event: Let's bring large maps that people can put sticky notes on and handouts that people can draw on and turn in. Beginning of the meeting should have some educational component on Landmark District, Protection Area, standards and criteria, etc.
 - b) Second event: More focused on standards and criteria.
 7. **Liz:** Maybe first event is more like an "open house," people can come in, learn, pick up materials, and be encouraged to come to study committee meetings. Maybe second event is more finalized in terms of boundary and proposed standards and criteria. Feedback with post-it notes and maps.
 - a) **Jeff:** Maybe open house is from 6 - 8 but you know that at a specific time there is going to be a brief presentation. Having something blown up large scale and easy to read is helpful to get people thinking about things.
 8. **Nancy:** We need a location big enough for people to walk around and look at different things.
 - a) Also, it will be important to translate the information into simple language so people can understand.
 9. **Linda:** Open houses can be contentious if there is misinformation. It is important to have a brief presentation to get everyone on the same page.
 10. **Nancy:** How do we get the timeline out there beyond just at the event?
 - a) **Gabby:** Working on a newsletter article about the study report process for Monument Square.
 - (1) **Nancy:** Can we give it to the Patriot Bridge as a press release?
 - (2) **Gabby will look into this with our Communications team.**
 - b) **Linda:** Facebook group - Charlestown Neighbors - a lot of people look at it. Also get information into the ONS newsletter for Charlestown.
 - (1) **Gabby will follow up with Sean Breen.**
- B. When and where of public engagement event
1. When?
 - a) **Crystal:** December is very busy. Let's plan for the new year.
 - b) **Jeff:** Second week of the new year might be a good time.
 - c) **Gabby:** Maybe after the MLK holiday? January meeting is scheduled for 1/14. That will give one last time to touch base before the event.
 - (1) **Nancy:** Maybe let's look at the evening of January 21st. Or we could consider a weekend afternoon.
 - (a) **Crystal:** Maybe one event is on a weeknight and one event is on a weekend.
 2. Where?
 - a) Knights of Columbus

- b) Bunker Hill Museum community room
- c) Police station community room may be too small
- d) Library space might be an option but is only available on Thursday evenings
- e) BLC staff will check with Knights, Museum, and library for availability.

V. STANDARDS & CRITERIA

- A. **Gabby** presents overview of different areas of purview of standards and criteria for other districts and of what standards and criteria typically can and cannot regulate.
- B. Areas of purview: Staff recommend this as a good entry point into the conversation because this is a hill and what is visible from a public way might be more extensive here as a result.
 - 1. **Nancy:** I think having some regulation of the roof decks is a good idea. One thing we saw on the boundary walks is that the type of fencing makes a difference. In another district's standards and criteria it said no opaque railing - this might be a good idea for the Monument Square area. Could also require railings to be set back. It might be unrealistic to say no roof decks at all because there are already many that are visible, but maybe we say that the deck can't go right to the edge of the roof and have an opaque fence.
 - a) Maybe for purview it's "whatever faces the street," not necessarily what's visible from a public way?
 - b) Beacon Hill standards and criteria also includes looking into the landmark district from the protection area, which is something we may want to consider.
 - c) **Linda:** For context: the zoning code right now defines that if you are building a roof deck in Charlestown it has to be set back from public way and it has to be licensed through the Zoning Board of Appeals.
 - (1) **Gabby:** You always have to go to the ZBA before Landmarks, so it allows Landmarks to have final approval.
 - (2) **Linda:** Does Landmark District/Protection Area take precedence over BPDA Design Review?
 - (a) **Gabby:** Yes typically it does.
 - d) **Jeff:** Outright prohibiting new roofdecks is probably not going to garner support with the public, but creating sensible design regulations makes sense.
 - (1) **Crystal:** Yes, agrees with Jeff. We want to balance historic preservation with people's freedom over their own property.
 - (2) **Nancy:** Also agrees. We will also not be telling people to take existing roof decks down. But when the time comes to replace an existing roof deck, the standards and criteria could help guide the design and style. Not imposing additional cost, but making it fit better with the existing building and neighborhood.
 - 2. Another aspect of this is to get rid of some of the inconsistency created by ZBA variances. Thoughtful design criteria for roofdecks could help prevent the ZBA from granting relief from the zoning code for something that is less reasonable.
 - 3. **Gabby:** Other roof-related topics the committee will discuss include mechanicals and additions.
 - 4. **Jeff:** We have a sense of what is controversial and non-controversial in the other districts, and what works well and what doesn't work well. What lessons can we take from other recently established districts?

- a) **Gabby and Jen** discussed Highland Park – they wanted to make their standards and criteria very light, but some people were disappointed when this allowed for the removal of character-defining architectural features.
- b) **Liz** explained that other districts are looking at revising their standards in regard to evolving views on sustainability, technology, etc.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

- 1. None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: 7:56 PM

- A. Next meeting date: December 3, 2025.
 - 1. **Nancy** request: Can we add in the general topic areas for the standards and criteria into the slides, with a few bullet points each? Ex. landscaping, roofs, etc.
 - a) Yes, BLC staff can provide this for next meeting.
- B. **Jeff** motions to adjourn, **Linda** seconds. Unanimous vote to adjourn.