

MSLD Study Committee Notes #10

February 18, 2026, 6:30 pm

Zoom <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1616315039>

Study Committee Attendees:

Crystal Galvin
Julie Hall
Kirsten Hoffman
Nancy Johnsen (Chair)
Linda Neshamkin
Ian Urquhart

Staff:

Gabriela Amore
Elizabeth Sherva
Jennifer Gaugler

Members of the Public:

cannt
Mary Kay
Moe Gillen
nancy
Nancy Liberman
Bee
Maureen Hennessy
Christopher Hennessy
Erin Woods
Kelli Forbes

Absent:

Ameeth Deenanath (Alternate)
Jeffrey Gonyeau
Intiya Ambrogi Isaza
Senam Kumahia
Lindsey Mac-Jones
Fadi Samaha

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

~~I. REVIEW AND VOTE ON MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 14, 2026 PUBLIC MEETING~~

- A. Tabled until next meeting.

II. PUBLIC FEEDBACK SINCE LAST MEETING

- A. Feedback received by staff:
 1. **Gabby** reports that staff received one piece of public feedback since the January 14th meeting. The statement was in opposition to the Landmark District, asserting that the most important landmark in Charlestown is the Bunker Hill Monument so Charlestown should be recognized as a nationally important battleground rather than a local district.
- B. Feedback received by study committee members:
 1. None.

III. STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

- A. Recap of last discussion:
 1. The Study Committee continued reviewing section 7.2 “Levels of Review”:
 - a) Discussed and edited 7.2.C.4 “Major Landscape Alterations.”
 - b) No changes to “New Construction.”
 - c) No changes to 7.2.D and 7.2.E.
- B. Doors:
 1. **Gabby** presented a series of photographs taken today around Monument Square, Monument Avenue, and the Training Field.

2. Elements identified by study committee:
 - a) Character-defining features:
 - (1) Doorways:
 - (a) Depth/recess
 - (b) Articulated paneling on sides and ceiling of recessed doorway
 - (c) Shape/form that is original to building entryway, such as brick archways, granite lintels
 - (d) Details around lintels and carvings
 - (2) Historical markers (ex. date of construction)
 - (3) Kickplates
 - (4) Boot scrapers
 - (5) Doors:
 - (a) Carved wooden doors
 - (b) Monument Ave: single wider doors with sidelights common (and often nicely done); original narrow double doors less common.
 - (c) Neighborhood does not have too many examples of second exterior door added. In at least one case, photo shows probably an original door that was moved outward to the face of the building, with a replacement inner door.
 - (d) Historic hardware (door handles and locks instead of modern keypads)
 - (6) Glazing:
 - (a) Transom above the door - often bigger around Monument Square (more monumental)
 - (b) Some examples of leaded glass or glass with scrim/pattern
 - (7) Dropped pendant lights
 - (8) Brickwork and brick patterning, including mortar appearance
 - (9) Steps - materials
 - (10) Numbering of houses
 - b) Other things to consider regulating:
 - (1) Visible cameras
 - (2) Fire safety and fire alarm placement
 - (3) Mail boxes/mail slots - some appear more original while others are more modern (ex. for packages)
 - (4) Many houses have been converted from single to multi-family and sometimes back again - how should the standards reflect this?
 - c) **Elizabeth:** We can work within building code but preserve historic appearance. Ex. mounting of fire safety equipment, mailboxes, egress, etc.
3. **Crystal:** Standards don't need to be overly restrictive. These buildings have largely been well maintained.
 - a) Nancy: That is true, but in the case of significant renovations, would we want to guide property owners to bring things back to what they were historically? For example, there were two twin buildings around the square but one has had its detail erased. Would we want the next renovation of that property to try to bring back some of those details? No one is going to impose changes on property owners, but certain triggering events could lead to these conversations.

- b) **Gabby** shows the example of 23 and 24 Monument Square. Two sister buildings but one doorway appears to be a more modern interpretation. How would the committee want to address something like this?
 - c) **Crystal**: Not interested in a cookie-cutter neighborhood. This kind of variation would be fine with me. More interested in the new construction standards and criteria.
4. **Nancy**: There is definitely a range of what has been done in the neighborhood and how historically appropriate it is. Interested in the flexibility of how Commissioners will make decisions. How flexible will it be?
- a) **Gabby**: During design review, the Commission will usually base their decision on the standards and criteria. If they want to deviate, they have to explain their decision on the record at the public hearing.
 - b) **Jen**: Explains the difference between “shall” (must) and “should” (recommended).
 - c) **Elizabeth**: We can write the standards so that certain things are not allowed (i.e. large glass plate storefront entrances) but there is still flexibility and variations in entrance design are allowed.
 - d) **Gabby**: Design review comes after zoning approval and other agency approvals, so applicants don’t come to design review with something that is not feasible.
 - e) **Elizabeth**: Looking at the Place & Gather building - the door on the left is clearly a replacement door that is not a historically appropriate style for the building. Design review could help owners choose a different style.
 - (1) **Nancy**: Maybe we have some language that when possible, doors should be compatible with the time period of the building. How would you have worked with the owner of the store?
 - (a) **Gabby**: They would submit an application. Staff would review guidelines. If the guidelines said the door should be of a period-appropriate style, staff would have a conversation with the applicant to explore alternative options. Staff can try to provide a historic photo or examples. If the applicant comes back with a more appropriate choice, staff can recommend acceptance under administrative review. If the applicant wants to stick with their original design, the staff will bring the application to the Commission for design review and vote.
 - (b) **Elizabeth**: The door would not necessarily have to be wood. Could be painted.
 - (2) **Nancy**: Does the Commission see every application?
 - (a) **Gabby**: Yes, either as administrative review or as design review.
5. **Nancy**: Sees a continuum of time where some things have already been changed away from the historic context and should the standards guide it back?
- a) **Linda**: I typically address this on a case-by-case basis in my work. Almost all of my work has been in the existing NDOD so I try to inform myself of what might have been there historically.
6. **Elizabeth**: Recommends going to the matrix to see how other districts have regulated doors.

- a) **Linda:** Likes Aberdeen standard #27 - good to allow compatible materials.
 - (1) **Jennifer:** We can also note sustainability as a reason to allow compatible materials.
- b) **Julie:** Question about wood houses - would the standards allow for specifying cladding materials there?
 - (1) **Staff:** Yes, we will discuss that when we get to the cladding section.
- c) **Linda:** Ornamental iron grilles might be important to address. like in the Back Bay (residential) standards. Notes that certain neighborhoods are addressing color quite forcefully.
 - (1) **Elizabeth:** Nobody wants color to be regulated until someone paints a building purple! There is a lot of masonry in the neighborhood so maybe restrict paint on masonry and say "should use period-appropriate colors."
 - (2) **Gabby:** South End does not regulate paint on wood.
- d) **Nancy:** Likes the first sentence of St. Botolph referencing eliminations and exterior alterations.
- e) **Gabby:** Suggests that modern style alterations and installation of new outer vestibule doors are subject to review (as in Mission Hill Triangle).
- f) **Nancy:** How to address changes to door configuration and design based on need/circumstance?
 - (1) **Jennifer** suggests language on allowing changes to entrance configuration if necessary for accessibility or use - will look at examples in other study reports.
- g) **Nancy:** Can staff please send around the matrix, the notes from tonight, and the draft door section language before the next meeting?
 - (1) **Staff:** Yes, will do!

C. Windows:

- 1. Tabled for next meeting.

IV. DISCUSSION OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT

- A. **Gabby:** We have had trouble securing the Knights of Columbus space. We are looking into alternative options.
 - 1. **Julie:** Can put Gabby in touch with JD at Christ Church (next to Memorial Hall). The Museum space is also an option.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

- A. **Chris Hennessy:**
 - 1. Follow-up to Crystal's question about the community engagement event - a Saturday event might be easier for the public to attend.
 - 2. As a homeowner, what is the benefit for me?
 - a) **Gabby** offers to have a phone call with Chris.
 - b) **Nancy:** Let's address this in more depth at the next meeting.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: 8:01 PM

- A. **Nancy** requests meeting minutes at least a week before the next meeting.
- B. **Linda** motions to adjourn, **Crystal** seconds. Unanimous vote to adjourn.