

MSLD Study Committee Notes #16

June 3, 2026, 6:30 pm

Zoom <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1604536544>

Study Committee Attendees:

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

Staff:

Jennifer Gaugler
Sarah Lawton
Kathryn Walker

Members of the Public:

Johanna Hynes
Scott Haldane

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

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. **Jeffrey** motioned to enter the Executive Session. **Linda** seconded the motion. All present voted in favor of moving to executive session.
- B. Executive session to discuss the Open Meeting Law Complaint from Johanna Hynes received by the Monument Square Landmark District Study Committee on May 28, 2026.

II. REVIEW AND VOTE ON MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

- A. **Kirsten** motions to approve meeting minutes from May 20, 2026. **Ameeth** seconds the motion. Meeting minutes approved unanimously.

III. PUBLIC FEEDBACK SINCE LAST MEETING

- A. Feedback received by staff:
 - 1. **Jennifer** reports none.
- B. Feedback received by study committee members:
 - 1. None reported.

IV. REVIEW PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLANS

- A. **Nancy**: Mailing an announcement to property owners of record before the next community engagement event is very important. Nancy suggests the committee writes a letter to the director of Landmarks to request that funding is allocated for the mailing. **Jeff** moves to approve and **Crystal** seconds. Unanimously approved.

V. REVIEW STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

- A. Accessibility:
 - 1. **Jennifer** explains that the accessibility standards are basically boilerplate language stating that in any kind of alteration to existing buildings, the level of physical access to historic properties that is required under law must be provided. The standards also state that the goal is to provide the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact consistent with the preservation of each property's significant historical and character-defining features. Also, to make alterations reversible when possible. The Commission will review proposals on a case-by-case basis.
 - 2. **Jeff** says this language is good. Accessibility improvements benefit everybody.

3. **Linda** concurs. Looking at it on a case-by-case basis makes sense in Charlestown.
 4. **Nancy** points out that this language applies to alterations to existing buildings, but new construction would also be required by law to abide by building code.
- B. Renewable Energy Sources:
1. **Jennifer** explains that this section is also standard language saying that renewable energy sources are encouraged for the district. Proposals shall be reviewed by the Commission on a case-by-case basis for potential physical and visual impacts on the district, but the standards signal to Commissioners that renewable energy sources should be supported.
 2. **Jeff** says it's good to have this positive language in the standards encouraging renewable energy. It can also help to protect property owners. There are some companies out there that try to sell and install solar panels improperly, which can cause ice dams and other problems. It would be beneficial for property owners to have Commissioners take a second look, so they can be protected from potential damage to their property.
- C. New Construction:
1. **Jennifer** notes that the discussion of new construction (and the other topics tonight) applies only to the proposed Landmark District; standards for the proposed Protection Area will be discussed separately at a future meeting.
 2. The committee viewed some examples of new construction in Charlestown (see slides) during this section of the meeting.
 3. **Crystal**: We want to have some guidelines, but how to also be flexible? Don't want to encourage uniformity.
 - a) **Jeff**: By regulating massing, context, setback, maybe materials, but not dictating design. Jeff notes that we want to encourage good modern design, to "leave our stamp on our era." We don't want to just imitate the past.
 4. **Jennifer**: Encourages committee to particularly think about the relationship of new buildings to the street, as that has a significant impact on the pedestrian experience of the neighborhood.
 5. **Nancy**: When would there be new construction? There aren't many open lots in the proposed Landmark District.
 - a) Staff gives the following possibilities:
 - (1) Current empty lots.*
 - (2) Tear-down (for unsafe structural conditions) or building fire.
 - (3) Developer-driven demolition.
 - b) *Staff thought there was one empty lot in the proposed Landmark District, but **Linda** shows that there are actually two open spaces, although one may not be a separate parcel. **Staff will review.**
 6. **Crystal** likes the example language on the first two slides, which show the standards from the Mission Hill Triangle Architectural Conservation District, the St. Botolph Area Architectural Conservation District, and the Back Bay Architectural District (Residential).
 - a) **Linda** agrees and likes Back Bay the most.
 - b) **Staff will base the New Construction section of the working standards and criteria for Monument Square on the Back Bay example.**
 7. **Nancy** expresses the concern that it should not be attractive to developers to tear down buildings in the district. Proposes that demolition by neglect should be addressed in the standards.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A. **Scott Haldane**: The Back Bay (Residential) example standards make the most sense.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: 8:00 PM

- A. **Linda** motions to adjourn, **Crystal** seconds. Unanimous vote to adjourn.