

MSLD Study Committee Notes #22

September 23, 2026, 6:30 pm

Zoom <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1653535142>

Study Committee Attendees:

Ameeth Deenanath
Crystal Galvin
Jeffrey Gonyeau
Julie Hall
Kirsten Hoffman
Nancy Johnsen (Chair)
Lindsey Mac-Jones
Linda Neshamkin
Ian Urquhart

Staff:

Gabriela Amore
Elizabeth Sherva
Jennifer Gaugler

Members of the Public:

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

I. REVIEW AND VOTE ON MEETING MINUTES

- A. **Linda** motions to approve meeting minutes from August 12, 2026 and September 16, 2026. **Kirsten** seconds the motion. Meeting minutes approved unanimously.

II. PUBLIC FEEDBACK SINCE LAST MEETING

- A. Feedback received by staff:
 - 1. **Jennifer** reports that additional signatures on the previously received letter of opposition were sent in by Diane Valle.
- B. Feedback received by study committee members:
 - 1. None.

III. REVIEW WORKING STUDY REPORT

- A. Discussion of working study report:
 - 1. Landmark District standards and criteria:
 - a) Additions: If new additions shall not obscure views of the Bunker Hill Monument from a street or way that is open to public travel, does that mean obscure completely or partially?
 - (1) **Ian** says that the standards should not prevent property owners from making adjustments to their roofline, which is pretty common in the neighborhood.
 - (2) **Nancy** clarifies that this only applies to the proposed Landmark District, i.e. the houses around Monument Square, along Monument Ave., and the Training Field. It's nearly impossible to obscure existing views of the monument from a way that is open to public travel in those locations. Therefore, the standard is not going to be applicable and may only serve to create confusion.
 - (3) Study Committee agrees to delete this standard.
 - b) Site and Landscape:
 - (1) Study Committee discusses and agrees on moving some language for clarity.
 - c) Street Furnishings and Objects:

- (1) The phrase “utilities and equipment” is relocated for better clarity.
 - (2) **Crystal** asks about EV chargers and how they should be included in the standards.
 - (a) **Jennifer** says that staff can talk to the Environment Department to come up with specific language.
 - (b) **Elizabeth** suggests adding EV charging stations to the list of elements that would be under Commission review. Study Committee agrees.
 - d) **Nancy** reminds the Study Committee that this draft is going to be put out for community feedback, so it’s helpful to clean it up as much as possible, but there will be further opportunities to update the report following public feedback.
 - e) New Construction:
 - (1) **Nancy** recommended changing “New construction....should be designed to harmonize with the predominant characteristics of the district...” to “New construction....shall be designed to harmonize with the predominant characteristics of the district...”
 - (a) **Linda** and **Jeff** express their agreement.
 - f) Signage:
 - (1) **Gabby** points out that there is only one commercial building in the proposed Landmark District right now.
 - (2) Study Committee does not request any changes.
2. Protection Area standards and criteria:
- a) Demolition:
 - (1) The Study Committee discusses the standards for demolition in the Protection Area. **Nancy, Linda, Jeff, and Lindsey** express concern that the threshold for determining that a building is unsafe must be clear and convincing. **Elizabeth** explains that the City’s Inspectional Services Department issues something called a “raze or make safe” order. **Jeff** comments that requiring a “raze or make safe” order for the demolition of a contributing building would put the onus on a building department determination rather than a paid consultant determination.
 - (2) **Nancy** asks how a partial demolition could be addressed?
 - (a) **Linda** agrees that partial demolition should be addressed so that a contributing building does not become a non-contributing building through partial demolition.
 - (b) **Jennifer** suggests looking at some language from the Back Bay standards. The following language is added to the report:
 - (i) “Partial demolition of non-character-defining additions or features is subject to review on a case-by-case basis. Partial demolition may be considered acceptable where it involves an inappropriate alteration or addition to a building. Removal of architecturally significant or character-defining features shall not be allowed.”

- (ii) The Study Committee agrees to proceed with this language in the draft.

3. Archaeology:

- a) **Nancy** mentions that she thought the archaeology recommendations were deleted from the Landmark District standards and criteria.
 - (1) **Jennifer** explains that per the request of the Study Committee they were changed to recommendations rather than requirements in the last meeting but were left in the document to provide guidance.
 - (2) **Jeff** comments that this is a good idea because there is a lot of community interest in battlefield history.
 - (3) **Elizabeth** agrees that it would be helpful for anyone interested in the battlefield or other archaeological history to know that they can call and use the City archaeologists as a resource.

4. Boundary Map:

- a) Staff proposes to the Study Committee that the boundary map shown in the Working Study Report can show dashed lines around Options A, B, and C and the Study Committee can collect public feedback on whether or not they should be included in the Protection Area.
 - (1) Option A: a portion of the Bunker Hill Mall parcel at the southwest corner (up to the 1200-foot maximum distance from the Landmark District);
 - (2) Option B: the blocks encompassed by Mystic Street, Medford Street, Polk Street, and Bunker Hill Street at the northwest corner;
 - (3) Option C: the blocks encompassed by Polk St, Medford Street, Corey Street, Samuel Morse Way, Decatur Street, and Bunker Hill Street on the north side.
- b) **Nancy** suggests that it might be beneficial to include Option B because City Council could theoretically vote to end the protection of a municipally-owned cemetery, and the Bunker Hill Burying Ground is located within Option B.
- c) **Elizabeth** says that we can create a map activity at the community engagement event and also add questions to the online Google Form (collecting feedback on the study report) to collect public feedback on these options.
 - (1) **Nancy** expresses concern that at the community event it will be important to properly staff and explain the map station so that people understand what the Protection Area is and what it can and cannot do. It is also important to explain the concepts in plain English and not use field-specific jargon.
 - (2) **Crystal** observes that there's been a lot of effort to explain things properly and develop the FAQs. She agrees that it will be important to have people at the map station engaging with constituents one-on-one in conversation.
- d) **Jennifer** recommends taking a Zoom poll in order to get a general sense of how committee members would like staff to show the boundary in the working study report.
 - (1) The Zoom poll does not work (committee members cannot see it).
 - (2) **Jennifer** requests that the Study Committee members individually email staff by tomorrow morning at 10 am and let

us know whether each option should be shown as within the default boundary or as an option with a dashed line.

- B. Study committee vote to release working study report for public feedback.
 - 1. **Julie** makes a motion to approve the release of the working study report for public feedback, subject to the changes that were discussed at this meeting and the results of the email poll.
 - a) **Crystal** seconds the motion.
 - b) Voting yes: all members present. Voting no: none.

IV. REVIEW PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLANS

- A. **Jennifer** discusses public outreach tasks for the community engagement event on October 21, 2026, including an announcement in the ONS Charlestown newsletter, mailing a notice to all property owners in the proposed Landmark District, and flyering in the neighborhood.
 - 1. **Jennifer** will go to Charlestown to flyer on October 2 and invites the Study Committee to meet to pick up flyers, or they can be dropped off at a predetermined location.
 - a) **Crystal, Julie, and Lindsey** volunteer to help **Jennifer** and **Nancy** with flyering.
 - b) 400 flyers were circulated for the last community event. **Nancy** suggests 600 flyers this time and staff agrees.
 - 2. **Nancy** will circulate the flyer by email to local organizations as well.
- B. **Jennifer** presents proposed activities for the October 21st event:
 - 1. Big-picture comment/question station.
 - 2. Boundary map station.
- C. Staff will also make a presentation and facilitate a Q&A.
- D. Staff will also provide illustrated Standards and Criteria for display and discussion.
- E. **Nancy** also suggests some flowchart examples of the application process.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A. None.

VI. STAFF UPDATES

- A. Community event will be on October 21 and next working meetings will be on October 28 and November 4.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: 8:30 PM

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