MSLD Study Committee Notes #23

October 28, 2026, 6:30 pm
Zoom https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1658531487

Study Committee Attendees:	Staff:	Members of the Public:
Ameeth Deenanath	Gabriela Amore	Erin Woods
Crystal Galvin	Elizabeth Sherva	Johanna Hynes
Jeffrey Gonyeau	Jennifer Gaugler	Moe Gillen
Julie Hall	Kathryn Walker	Kelli Forbes
Nancy Johnsen (Chair)	Joseph Bagley	Scott C. Haldane
Lindsey Mac-Jones	Nadia Kline	
Linda Neshamkin		
Ian Urquhart		

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

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Executive session to discuss the Open Meeting Law Complaint from Johanna Hynes received by the Monument Square Landmark District Study Committee on October 23, 2026.
   1. **Julie** moved to move the Study Committee into executive session to discuss the Open Meeting Law Complaint. **Crystal** seconded. Roll call vote:
      a) **Ameeth Deenanath**: Yes.
      b) **Crystal Galvin**: Yes.
      c) **Jeffrey Gonyeau**: Yes.
      d) **Julie Hall**: Yes.
      e) **Lindsey Mac-Jones**: Yes.
      f) **Linda Neshamkin**: Yes.
      g) **Ian Urquhart**: Yes.
      h) **Nancy Johnsen (Chair)**: Yes.
   2. [Executive Session.]
   3. [Regular session resumes and committee moves on to II. REVIEW AND VOTE ON MEETING MINUTES].

II. REVIEW AND VOTE ON MEETING MINUTES

A. **Jeff** motions to approve the meeting minutes from September 23, 2026 and October 14, 2026. **Crystal** seconds the motion. Roll call vote:
   1. **Ameeth Deenanath**: Yes.
   2. **Crystal Galvin**: Yes.
   3. **Jeffrey Gonyeau**: Yes.
   4. **Julie Hall**: Yes.
   5. **Lindsey Mac-Jones**: Yes.
   6. **Linda Neshamkin**: Yes.
   7. **Ian Urquhart**: Yes.
   8. **Nancy Johnsen (Chair)**: Yes.

III. REVIEW PUBLIC FEEDBACK

A. **Jennifer** reports on written feedback received since the working study report was posted on September 24, 2026 (see slide deck for screenshots and visuals).

B. Study Committee reports on feedback from the community event on Oct. 21, 2026:

1. **Crystal:** Earlier in this process, I had a visceral reaction to the red boundary cutting off the neighborhood above Bunker Hill Street and leaving those neighbors out of the Protection Area. I wanted to explore what the protective boundaries would mean, but the intention was never to stop planned projects that have already been approved. At the event on October 21, everyone was very respectful and the conversations at the event were very productive. This led me to change my mind and I no longer believe that Area C makes sense to include in the Protection Area, and would be comfortable taking it out. We need to make sure that messaging about the intent of the Protection Area is very clear.
2. **Nancy**: Also had a good conversation with the Bunker Hill Housing residents who had the misunderstanding that being in the Protection Area had the same standards as the Landmark District. There has been a failure to communicate to City departments what the Protection Area can and cannot do, and that the concern would be about contributing buildings, not all buildings. The submitted comments seem to indicate that people do not understand. We should be sure that public outreach clearly indicates what the Protection Area can and cannot do.
3. **Elizabeth:** Staff has spoken with other City departments to explain the Protection Area, and that the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) has other properties within historic districts so they are familiar with what the Landmarks Commission does. Kenzie Bok's letter on behalf of the BHA indicated a clear concern that they do not want Area C to be in the Protection Area. All of the feedback we've received so far about Area C indicates that there is a strong feeling to not include it in the Protection Area.
4. **Crystal**: This is a clear place where there is alignment in the public feedback and an overwhelming consensus. There is a clear signal from the community feedback.
    a) **Jeff**: Originally thought it was a good idea to show Areas A, B, and C as options, but is ambivalent at this point. The real goal of what we are doing is getting the (expanded) Landmark District approved. If there is the potential for loss of community support, I'm not in favor of designating those additional areas. My preference based on this community feedback would be to not include A, B, or C.
    b) **Ian**: Generally agrees with Jeff.
    c) **Linda**: Jeff had a good description of the potential issues. We are looking at a clear response from people, particularly in terms of Option C.
    d) **Nancy**: In the written comments people are talking about the previous redevelopment history of A and C, but the Protection Area is not just about contributing buildings. It's also about protection of the scale around Monument Square.

IV. EDIT WORKING STUDY REPORT

A. **Nancy**: Does the Landmarks staff have thoughts on Option B?

1. **Elizabeth** presents a staff recommendation: Instead of including Option B in the Monument Square Protection Area, burying grounds can be petitioned to

be designated as individual Landmarks. Can also have their own Protection Area. Would provide a higher level of protection for the burying grounds than the Monument Square Protection Area can provide.

2. **Jeff** was thinking the same thing. The protection would be stronger. A single Commissioner can submit a petition and I would consider doing it, or 10 registered voters can do it. This is a nice solution to this particular issue.
3. **Linda**: This would be great because the Landmark's Protection Area could protect the buildings around the burying ground.
4. **Jeff**: Ideally, it would be great if 10 neighborhood residents could do it, but if timing were of the essence I could also consider doing it.
5. **Nancy**: Sounds like a great solution.
6. **Julie**: Do other burying grounds in the city have Protection Areas?
    a) **Elizabeth**: Dorchester North does not. Over in Roxbury, Eustis Street has a Protection Area around it.
        (1) **Jeff** confirms that the Commission has actively reviewed projects in the Eustis Street Protection Area.
7. **Julie**: A ground-penetrating radar study was conducted recently and it revealed that there's a lot under the ground at the Bunker Hill Burying Ground. Dr. Timothy Reardon, cemetery archaeologist, could provide some information as well.
    a) **Elizabeth**: This would help inform the study report for the potential Landmark designation.
    b) **Joe Bagley**: With the ground-penetrating radar, Bob was only surveying the interior of the cemetery. City Archaeology is collaborating and doing some work to fill in the gaps. There is potential evidence of a mass burial. Note: As a general rule, we won't dig a cemetery unless there was an active threat. The plan for the Bunker Hill Burying Ground would be to get an idea of what is under the ground without disturbing the ground.
8. **Crystal**: This is a great outcome of this process of trying to do right by the neighborhood and honor its history.
9. **Nancy**: It would be great to landmark the Phipps Street Burying Ground as well. Would be a great service to the history of Charlestown and provide permanent protection.
10. **Elizabeth** explains the Landmarking process and invites anyone interested in petitioning to contact staff for more information.
11. **Julie** says the St. Francis de Sales Cemetery should also be considered. The Historical Society would be interested and Eddie Callahan could help with a write-up.

B. Archaeology discussion:
    1. **Joe Bagley** presents some information on archaeology (see slide deck).
    2. **Elizabeth** presents a proposed update to the Landmark District standards:
        a) Proposed update to the Landmark District standards:
            (1) Ground disturbance in the Landmark District should be reviewed by the City Archaeologist and Archaeology staff (concurrently with Landmarks Commission review).
                (a) This allows the City Archaeology program to be aware of planned work and propose collaboration with the property owner if there may be significant archaeological resources on the property.
            (2) The City Archaeologist/staff can recommend but not require further review and mitigation.

(3) No costs would be required to be borne by the property owner.

3. **Nancy** asks to clarify that this keeps most of the current language in the working study report but removes the need for the property owner to make the request for review?
    a) **Joe Bagley** clarifies that yes, this ensures that Archaeology can have the opportunity to review a planned project (at no cost to the owner), rather than putting the onus fully on the property owner to reach out.
    b) **Elizabeth**: This gives Archaeology the opportunity to stay aware of work in the neighborhood.
    c) **Nancy**: This seems like an elegant solution that would provide the opportunity for education and outreach.
    d) **Julie** wants the record to state that we are so thankful for all the work Joe, Nadia, and Lauren do in Charlestown.
    e) **Linda**: This is nice participatory language. Brings people's attention to what they may not be aware of, but is not adversarial.
        (1) **Jeff**: Totally agrees with Linda.

C. Protection Area boundary:
1. **Elizabeth** suggests that the Study Committee take a roll call vote to decide on the inclusion or exclusion of areas A, B, and C.
2. **Nancy** would prefer to do this next time in order to allow time for public comment at this meeting.
    a) Staff agrees.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. **Johanna Hynes**: Thanks Joe Bagley for his presentation. Suggests that there should be an automatic agreement that any City property can be reviewed by the Archaeology Department at their discretion. This is the history of the nation going back to the 1600s, and this is like a Pompeii in the United States that we live in. Expresses disappointment that Section 106 reviews for the Bunker Hill Housing redevelopment were insufficient.
1. Staff response: That is outside the scope of the topics under discussion this evening.

VI. STAFF UPDATES

A. Next meeting: November 4, 2026.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: 8:35 PM

A. **Jeff** motions to adjourn the meeting. **Julie** seconds. Roll call vote:
1. **Ameeth Deenanath**: Abstain.
2. **Crystal Galvin**: Yes.
3. **Jeffrey Gonyeau**: Yes.
4. **Julie Hall**: Yes.
5. **Lindsey Mac-Jones**: Yes.
6. **Linda Neshamkin**: Yes.
7. **Ian Urquhart**: Yes.
8. **Nancy Johnsen (Chair)**: Yes.