



HIGHLAND PARK ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Held virtually via Zoom

APPROVED BY COMMISSION
October 23, 2025

OCTOBER 16, 2025

Commissioners Present: Celina Barrios-Millner, Angela Cook, Ernest Coston, Andrew Shelburne and Angela Ward Hyatt

Commissioners Absent: Suleman Gajere and Fadi Samaha

Staff Present: Kathy Kottaridis, Director of the Office of Historic Preservation; and Joseph Cornish, Director of Design Review

Meeting minutes are meant to provide a broad overview of the hearing and not meant to serve as a transcript of discussions that are found in the hearing recording. A full recording of the hearing is available at:

<https://www.boston.gov/historic-district/highland-park-architectural-conservation-district>

6:00 PM: Acting Chair A. Shelburne called the public meeting to order. He explained that, pursuant to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, that the public meeting was being conducted virtually via the online meeting platform Zoom.

Following this brief introduction he called the first agenda item:

I. HIGHLAND PARK ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION BYLAWS DISCUSSION

Documents Presented: The Commissioners reviewed a working draft of the proposed bylaws that was revised following discussion at the 7-17-2025 public meeting, along with comments submitted by community members: Joan Seamster, Holly Shepherd, Kate Phelps and Rodney Singleton.

Discussion Topics: The Commissioners discussed the following:

- the nominating organizations that staff shall solicit nominations from for resident members and alternates, noting that the John Eliot Square Neighborhood Association is no longer in existence;
- clarification in determining how alternates are selected to vote at hearings;
- disclosures of conflicts of interest by prospective and appointed Commissioners;



- duties of the Secretary to receive and respond to comments and inquiries made by residents of the districts and forwarding those communications to Commissioners;
- clarifying that staff recommendations are based on the Commission's adopted standards and criteria;
- quorums required for the review of design review applications and the composition of the Commission required by the Boston Landmarks Commission's enabling legislation;
- continuing the discussion of having a quorum of five Commissioners for the review of design review applications verses a quorum of 3 Commissioners provided that at least two are resident members or alternates;
- amending the Boston Landmarks Commission's enabling legislation to change the composition of the membership of the Highland Park ACDC;
- details of how and when a Commissioner recuses themselves from the review of an agenda item;
- identifying the names of individuals making public comments in meeting minutes; and
- time limitations on presentations, public comment and the length of meetings.

Commissioners were in agreement that another specially scheduled public meeting needs to take place to continue review of the draft bylaws before scheduling a vote to adopt.

Public Comment: Joan Seamster commented on the importance of neighborhood equity in the design review process of projects and having resident members making decisions. She commented that the names of the members of the public commenting at public hearings should not be included in public hearing minutes and stated that other commissions do not include that information in their minutes. She also commented that members of the public should have an opportunity to respond to the Commission after they have made their comments. She expressed concern about the length of time applicants use to make presentations to the Commission.

Kate Phelps commented on the importance of having community input on the review of design review applications and suggested requiring a quorum of five Commissioners for the review of design review applications. She also suggested a compromise of having a quorum of 3 Commissioners provided that at least 2 are district residents.

Holly Shepherd questioned the length of time that applicants are allowed to use to present, and commented that the content of presentations be limited to what is in the purview of the Commission.



Nicholas Laudani spoke in support of requiring a quorum of five Commissioners for the review of design review applications. He commented that the bylaws should require that decisions made by the Commission be in writing and grounded in the district's standards and criteria; that staff must follow-up on administrative discretionary changes; and that there is a clear explanation to the public of what an approval with provisos means. He also submitted written comments that were distributed to Commissioners after the hearing.

II. ADJOURNMENT: 7:20 PM

**COMMISSIONER A. WARD HYATT MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE HEARING.
COMMISSIONER A. COOK SECONDED THE MOTION. THE VOTE WAS 5-0 (Y: CBM, AC,
EC, AS, AWH) (N: NONE) (ABS: NONE).**