

MSLD Study Committee Notes #11

March 25, 2026, 6:30 pm

Zoom <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1611223467>

Study Committee Attendees:

Ameeth Deenanath (Alternate)
Crystal Galvin
Jeffrey Gonyeau (7:03 pm)
Julie Hall (6:51 pm)
Kirsten Hoffman
Intiya Ambrogi Isaza
Nancy Johnsen (Chair)
Lindsey Mac-Jones
Linda Neshamkin
Ian Urquhart

Staff:

Gabriela Amore
Elizabeth Sherva
Jennifer Gaugler

Members of the Public:

Chris Hennessy
Maureen Hennessy
Elaine Hennessy
Janet Sullivan
Paula A Kirk
Bee
Molly Donahue
Moe Gillen
Joanne Ryu
Shannon Fabiano

Absent:

Senam Kumahia
Fadi Samaha

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

I. REVIEW AND VOTE ON MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 14, 2026 AND FEBRUARY 18, 2026 PUBLIC MEETING

- A. January 14, 2026: **Linda** motions to approve meeting minutes, **Kirsten** seconds the motion. Meeting minutes approved unanimously.
- B. February 18, 2026: **Kirsten** motions to approve meeting minutes, **Linda** seconds the motion. Meeting minutes approved unanimously. (**Intiya** abstains from the vote due to absence from that meeting.)

II. PUBLIC FEEDBACK SINCE LAST MEETING

- A. Feedback received by staff:
 1. **Jennifer** reports two comments received:
 - a) **Craig Nelson** of Charlestown wrote to voice his opposition to creating a historical district around Monument Square, or, if it's to move forward, to make it as small as possible and minimize restrictions as much as possible. His reasoning was that cities benefit when they are dynamic and should not be preserved in amber.
 - b) **Johanna Hynes** wrote to request that we allow people to turn on their cameras and chat function during the study committee meetings. BLC staff explained that it is departmental policy not to do so due to Zoom bombings. She also requested that the study committee allot at least 15 minutes for public comment and allow members of the community to speak for at least 3 minutes each.
- B. Feedback received by study committee members:
 1. None.

III. PREVIOUSLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- A. None.

IV. STANDARDS & CRITERIA

- A. On deck to review tonight:
 - 1. Cladding, facade elements, roofs, roof decks.
 - 2. Gas lamps and street furniture
- B. **Staff** comments that last session was very productive. We suggest that the study committee should take a first pass at everything and then return back to sections to take a final look at a later date.
- C. **Intiya:** Question on process (based on the architectural metals section): From the perspective of a homeowner, would they need to make an application to clean their metal fence?
 - 1. **Staff:** No, not necessarily. Routine maintenance and cleaning does not require an application. Also, Section 7.4.5 applies to decorative architectural metals on facades.
 - 2. **Staff:** Review standards 5 and 6 of the architectural metals section – are they too restrictive? Maybe change “cleaning” to “stripping” and/or add some language like “Except in the case of routine maintenance.” Or remove entirely.
 - 3. **Nancy:** The potential district’s standards are not just restrictions – they are also guidelines that could help homeowners know the best practices to take care of their property.
 - 4. **Intiya:**
 - a) How would you know something is happening if a permit isn’t pulled?
 - (1) **Gabby:** Community education is important to make sure that everyone knows the standards for the district. In some situations we would only be aware if it is part of a larger permit application. But an application to us would still be required.
 - b) Can you provide a table of suggested treatments/products?
 - (1) **Liz:** We wouldn’t want to lock people into something in this document. The Secretary of the Interior Standards could be referenced.
- D. **Julie:** [Going back to Nancy’s last point] There is a house on the corner of Monument and Concord, recently gutted, they have a beautiful historic wrought iron fence. One of the finials fell off. Maybe the district could help them know how to fix it properly. Could give them the advice and resources they need. The district should be framed as much more than regulating – it is about protecting the heritage of the neighborhood.
 - 1. **Crystal:** We don’t have to regulate everything. This should be an opportunity for an educational sort of interaction.
 - 2. **Liz:** Staff can make a step-by-step guide to the application process for a homeowner in the potential future district.
- E. **Intiya:** Observation from looking at the matrix: we don’t really have any stone walls, like Aberdeen, so that is something we probably don’t need to address?
 - 1. **Linda:** Stone walls should stay in because we do have some important stone elements such as low stone walls near the sidewalk, stoops, etc.
- F. Cladding discussion - what is character-defining?
 - 1. **Linda:** Limestone, terra cotta, brick.
 - 2. **Jennifer:** Decorative inset panels that look like tile.
 - a) **Jeff:** They are probably 1860s English Minton tiles.

3. **Jennifer:** Decorative brickwork (ex. different patterns).
 - a) **Ian:** How would that be regulated in the standards?
 - (1) See 7.4.3 #2 - it would be covered there, but we could also add more specific language.
4. **Intiya:** Layering of brick.
 - a) **Jennifer:** Quoining? This is seen in both brick and stone throughout the neighborhood.
 - (1) **Intiya:** Yes, and the stringcourse and corbeling at the top of the building along the cornice line.
5. **Gabby:** Copper oriels.
 - a) **Intiya:** Copper is prominent around the square. Likes new copper - it reminds people that materials were new once and can be new again.
 - b) **Nancy:** Yes, and it ages naturally over time. Forced patina is not good.
6. **Jennifer:** This is an example of non-matching masonry and mortar that doesn't look right.
 - a) **Crystal:** We should be careful not to offend homeowners.
 - (1) **Jennifer:** Agreed, and I apologize - intention was not to insult the homeowner. It is not their fault that the contractor did not do matching work, but hopefully the potential district could help provide guidelines for the contractor's work to be more consistent with the existing.
7. **Intiya:** If someone has cedar shingles but they are very expensive to maintain, I would not require them to maintain that if they are not characteristic of the neighborhood.
 - a) **Linda:** Probably would have been clapboard.
 - (1) **Staff can look into this.**
 - (2) **Intiya:** Would we allow replacement with vinyl siding?
 - (3) **Liz:** We wouldn't recommend vinyl. There are other substitute materials on the market that would have more appropriate exposure. Standards and criteria can allow for flexibility and case-by-case decisions.
8. **Nancy:** Final thoughts? Other important character-defining features?
 - a) **Julie:** Leans toward less restriction and more education and resources. Encouraging people to adhere to guidelines that are suggested, not mandated.
 - (1) **Gabby:** We will look at using "should" more than "shall" when we edit the cladding sections.
 - b) **Linda:** We don't want to be too heavy-handed with the restrictions. The use of "shall" should be reserved for when it's important.
 - (1) Also thinking about that wonderful metal landscape arch over a side street (second photo) - there should be every effort to repair or match something like this.
 - c) **Jeff:** We see a lot of well-intentioned changes here in the neighborhood, and helping people make even better choices should be a goal of the district.
 - d) **Crystal:** Important to communicate to the community re: education and resources.
 - (1) To avoid confusion, we should limit photos at the community engagement event to what is within the original boundary.
 - e) **Lindsey:** Re: "should" vs. "shall," the "shoulds" are things that can easily be reversed and "shall" are meant to prevent things from being changed or lost that can never be brought back.
 - (1) **Intiya** agrees - "shall" applies to things that can't be fixed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A. **Chris Hennessy:** Being consistent is important. Some houses shouldn't be allowed to upgrade to 20th century materials while others have to use historic materials.

VI. STAFF UPDATES:

- A. **Gabby:** Community engagement event will be April 15, 2026 at the Bunker Hill Museum. Staff is preparing a flyer and a letter for homeowners. We have 2 volunteers for flyering (Nancy and Lindsey). Can others assist between now and the weekend?
 - 1. **Intiya** can help on Friday.
 - 2. **Linda** volunteers.
 - 3. **Crystal** volunteers.
- B. **Jennifer** reports on Boston Landmarks Commission designation vote for Memorial Hall on April 14, 2026 – will circulate information to committee members.
- C. **Nancy:** Gabby can you circulate upcoming meeting date(s) to committee?
 - 1. **Gabby:** Yes!

VII. PROJECTED ADJOURNMENT: 8:00 PM

- A. At 8:18 pm, **Ian** motions to adjourn, **Jeffrey** seconds. Unanimous vote to adjourn.