



City of Somerville  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

**4 MARCH 2025 MEETING MINUTES**

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on Zoom.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Eric Parkes	Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Robin Kelly	Vice Chair	<i>Absent</i>	
Ryan Falvey	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Dick Bauer	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Denis (DJ) Chagnon	Alt. Member	<i>Present</i>	
Denise Price	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Dan Coughlin	Member	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Madison Anthony (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning); Lexie Payne (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning); Sarah White (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning); Kit Luster (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:49pm and adjourned at 8:19pm.

**ALTERATIONS TO LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) PROPERTIES**  
**HP24-000055 – 170 Central Street**

This item was previously continued to the 18 March 2025 meeting.

**RESULT:**

**CONTINUED**

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA)**  
**HP24-000073 – 101 Highland Avenue**

The applicant team explained that the demolition delay has been imposed on the project and a third MOA proposal has been submitted. The building was established in 1904 and has served the community well but cannot support the proposed activities of the YMCA. Regarding the proposed historic preservation of the property, the existing lions head fountain will be utilized somewhere within the new building. For the existing stone entablature on the south elevation of the building, the proposal is to create a smaller scale reproduction of this item within the new building. The cornerstone, which shows the original 1904 construction date for the building, will be attempted to be excavated and displayed within the building. All extractions will be done as carefully as possible. The existing lampposts at the front entry will be removed, refurbished, and reinstalled somewhere within the new building. The main stone entry portal and transom window are proposed to be removed, stored, and reinstalled within the new building as well. The memorial plaques that exist within the building will be reinstalled and a new commemorative plaque will also be created and installed, likely in the main lobby area.

The applicant team asked for language within the MOA to give some relief regarding any damage that may occur to items during the demolition or removal process, through no fault of the applicant. Also, language should be included regarding the stone entablature, that the Young Men's Christian Association item will not be included due to current branding.

The Commission asked if there will be photographs and drawings of the existing building for archive purposes. Staff agreed that these items are also codified in the MOA.

The Commission stated that the applicant team has gone to great lengths to preserve much of what has been recommended.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to accept the draft Memorandum of Agreement as the final, with the amendments that there be language allowing for some relief regarding any damage that may occur to items during the demolition or removal process, through no fault of the applicant, and for the stone entablature, that the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) sign will not be included due to current branding.

**RESULT:**

**APPROVED**

**ADVISORY REVIEW  
187 Central Street**

Staff explained that the role of the Commission is to provide any recommendations that it might have relative to the splitting of the lot itself, due to the lot being located within a Local Historic District (LHD). Once the lot is split, the new lot will also be located within the LHD. The only additional structure that could potentially be placed on the existing 187 Central Street lot, if the lot were not split, would be a backyard cottage. If the lot is split, it would be viewed from a zoning perspective in the same way as any other lot in the Neighborhood Resident zoning district and those setbacks would apply. A newly built building could not be considered on this lot without a split. The applicant team explained that the end goal is to utilize the width of the existing lot, maintain the existing structure on that lot, and be able to refurbish the existing structure at 187 Central Street.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Coughlin, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) that the Commission takes no exception to the proposal for the lot split for 187 Central Street.

**RESULT:**

**APPROVED**

**PUBLIC HEARING: ALTERATIONS TO LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) PROPERTIES  
HP25-000001 – 148 Morrison Avenue**

Staff noted that this case needs to be readvertised for 1 April 2025, due to an error.

**RESULT:**

**READVERTISED**

**PUBLIC HEARING: DETERMINATIONS OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE  
(STEP 1 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)  
HP24-000111 – 15 Chester Place**

The applicant team explained that the existing structure is a 2.5-story structure, approximately 3,700 s.f. It was constructed around 1900. The main massing starts behind a two-story enclosed porch and extends towards the rear of the site. There is also an existing garage which is proposed to be demolished at the rear right side of the site.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony.

Veronika Brozek – stated that she and her father are against the proposed demolition, as it seems a shame to destroy a historic building. Also, 11 Chester Place was previously deemed Historically Significant, and she believes 15 Chester Place should be as well. The structure is important for the historical significance of the neighborhood.

Chair Parkes closed public testimony.

The applicant team stated that the existing building is beautiful, and the intention is to demolish the primary structure to renovate the house and the garage to create an ADU unit, while working to preserve the building as it should be. Staff noted that the garage will come under administrative review which will be considered under a separate application.

The Commission noted that there is little to elevate this structure from that at 11 Chester Place, which was previously found to be Historically Significant. These are part of a group of five structures that define the feel of Chester Place. The structure was not built in 1900, but as early as 1874. The streetscape in this area should be maintained and the structure should be restored.

Following a motion by Member Coughlin, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to find 15 Chester Place as Historically Significant.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to adopt the following findings:

- The structure retains most of its original form and massing.
- The structure contributes significantly to the streetscape.
- The structure is strongly associated with the pattern of development in the neighborhood.

**RESULT:**

**HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT**

**PUBLIC HEARING: DETERMINATIONS OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE  
(STEP 1 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)  
HP24-000119 – 60 Franklin Street**

The applicant team explained that this is a detached house built in 1890. It is a single unit home, at 1,828 s.f. and 1 ¾ stories. This is a deep lot that historically contained other buildings at the back. The intention is to demolish the structure to allow for a stacked 2-family structure with a backyard cottage.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony. Seeing none, Chair Parkes closed public testimony.

The Commission noted that there are historic persons of interest associated with the property. The house maintains a significant amount of its original form, massing, and integrity. There were five woman-owned properties in this neighborhood historically, when that was not common at that time. These types of historical worker houses have historic significance.

Following a motion by Member Falvey, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to find 60 Franklin Street as Historically Significant.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to adopt the following findings:

- The prior owners of the property were historically distinct within the City.
- The structure has a role in the consistent pattern of houses on its side of the street.

**RESULT:**

**HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT**

### **OTHER BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes**

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the 17 December 2024 meeting minutes, as presented.

Following a motion by Member Falvey, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the 4 February 2025 meeting minutes, as amended.

### **OTHER BUSINESS: CPC Update**

The Commission discussed that the CPC is in the process of reviewing a few projects from the last round. There will be a public hearing next month regarding which projects should be prioritized.

There was also discussion regarding naming an Acting Vice Chair for a period of time. It was noted that this falls to the role of Secretary, held by Member Chagnon.

*NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division at [historic@somervillema.gov](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov).*