



City of Somerville
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

5 AUGUST 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>Present</i>	
Ryan Falvey	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Dick Bauer	Member	<i>Present</i>	<i>Exited at 7:28pm</i>
Denis (DJ) Chagnon	Alt. Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Denise Price	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Dan Coughlin	Member	<i>Absent</i>	

City staff present: Madison Anthony (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:56pm and adjourned at 7:54pm.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – ALTERATIONS TO LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) PROPERTIES
HP25-000057 – 53 Columbus Avenue

Vice Chair Kelly recused herself from this item.

The applicant team explained the front door is wooden and deteriorating. They have tried to repair it, but it currently does not lock and there are concerns for safety issues and heat loss. In looking into replacement doors, a wooden door would be four times the price as a similar fiberglass door.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony. Seeing no comments, Chair Parkes closed public testimony.

The Commission stated that the Design Guidelines require that any replacement items match the materials to be replaced. Neighboring properties of this time period would have had double doors and replacement with a double door would be historically appropriate. The existing door likely predates any survey work of this area. The house next door to this currently has a single door which has been enclosed. The property in question likely originally had a double door.

There was discussion regarding if the prioritization should be having a historically appropriate double door or having a wooden material door. The applicant expressed concern with the cost of installing a double door. The door is not a standard size, which may lead to extra costs. The Commission suggested additional information regarding the quote be obtained for repair or replacement of the wooden door. Other, more appropriate, options such as a wooden repair/replacement or a fiberglass double door replacement, could be considered. Staff noted that applicants can reapply with different proposals if the application is denied at this time. The applicant team decided to request a continuance in order to seek additional options for the door.

Following a motion by Member Bauer, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) continue this hearing to 16 September 2025.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

Member Bauer exited the meeting at 7:28pm and Vice Chair Kelly retook her seat.

OTHER BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Member Falvey, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the 15 July 2025 meeting minutes.

OTHER BUSINESS: CPC Update

The CPC is seeking a consultant to help navigate the nuances of historic preservation items. The CPC is also seeking new members.

The Commission discussed that applicants have been coming forward and noting the cost of historically appropriate repairs as a consideration. The guidelines should be made clear to applicants regarding what the Commission can consider, and this does not include cost, unless there is a proven hardship. A definition of hardship in the context of Somerville historic preservation would also be helpful. Setting expectations and having clear information for applicants in terms of the guidelines is important. Staff stated that they would discuss this further.

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.