



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

18 NOVEMBER 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>Absent</i>	
Denis (DJ) Chagnon	Alt. Member	<i>Present</i>	
Denise Price	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Dan Coughlin	Member	<i>Absent</i>	

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:59pm and adjourned at 9:03pm.

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

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Chagnon, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to accept the applicant's request to withdraw.

RESULT:

WITHDRAWN

PUBLIC HEARINGS – ALTERATIONS TO LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) PROPERTIES
HP25-000076 – 76 Highland Avenue
(continued from 7 October 2025)

The Commission discussed both items from this applicant team concurrently.

Chair Parkes recused himself from these items. Vice Chair Kelly sat as Acting Chair.

The applicant team explained that they spoke with Staff regarding replacing the windows with Anderson wood windows. The Commission explained that during the 7 October 2025 meeting, a request was made for the applicant team to have the windows evaluated by someone familiar with historic window restoration. A written report regarding the condition of the windows is needed prior to moving forward. The Commission stated that the process cannot move forward without this information.

Staff explained that, as the 29 windows being discussed are original materials to the home, they cannot be removed and replaced without permission of the Commission. The Commission previously stated that a window expert is needed to provide an evaluation of the windows in writing.

The applicant team stated that they feel that this was unreasonable and not what was heard from Staff. Staff stated that the applicant asked after the last meeting if a letter was needed and the Planner assigned to the case must have misunderstood the question and instead responded that this was not needed if the applicant was

proposing a wood-for-wood replacement. This is incorrect. The Commission's order for a written letter is what stands.

There was agreement of the Commission that a written evaluation, detailing each window, from an expert is needed at this time. The Commission suggested continuing the hearings at this time, in order to obtain that information.

Vice Chair Kelly opened public testimony. Seeing no comments, Vice Chair Kelly closed public testimony.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to continue both hearings for this applicant until 16 December 2025.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

PUBLIC HEARINGS – ALTERATIONS TO LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) PROPERTIES HP25-000066 – 76 Highland Avenue

The Commission heard this and the previous agenda item simultaneously.

The applicant team stated that the gutters have been leaking. The applicant team stated that an expert did not recommend wood gutters due to high maintenance and the way they direct water. The request is to replace the gutters with aluminum or fiberglass gutters in the same profile as the existing gutters.

Vice Chair Kelly opened public testimony. Seeing no comments, Vice Chair Kelly closed public testimony.

The Commission noted that the downspouts appear to be copper, but it is unclear what the material of the existing gutters is. The applicant team stated that this has not been determined. The request is to replace all of the gutters. The Commission suggested a Duragutter material, Boston profile, in the same color as the house. Staff stated that they would need to review an example of the material, once approved by the Commission, prior to the applicant beginning work. The applicant team stated that Duragutter is too expensive.

The Commission discussed that the gutters are incorporated into the building trim. It is important that the profile of the existing gutters be maintained, as this is a significant component of the building's architecture. The k-gutter, as proposed by the applicant team, painted in white, would not be acceptable to match what is existing. The copper downspouts are a nice feature of the house and should likely be preserved. The downspouts should be sized appropriately for the new gutters. The Commission agreed that it would approve new gutters, in a matching profile to the existing gutters, and in a color that matches the trim of the building, and copper downspouts to match the existing shape and sized appropriately.

Staff noted that Duragutter is an aluminum material. This, in a Boston profile, may be a good match. It is important to make sure the new gutter has the same profile as the existing gutters.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions: that the gutters be aluminum, fiberglass, or wood, subject to Staff review, with a profile that is a suitable match to the existing profile, and a color coordinated with the existing trim of the house or portion of the house that it is resting against; and that the downspouts be of a material that is subject to Staff review and of a shape similar to the existing front downspouts, but sized appropriately and not oversized.

RESULT:

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

**PUBLIC HEARINGS – DETERMINATIONS OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE
(STEP 1 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)
HP25-000078 – 58 Main Street**

Member Price recused herself from this item.

The applicant team explained that there were approved plans which included the amount of demolition proposed for the building. The goal was to stay within that threshold and maintain the integrity of the existing house. During the demolition of the mansard roof, it was noted that there was a lot of rot. The structural engineering team deemed it not structurally sound. The mansard roof will be maintained, but the materials will need to be replaced in order to make the building structurally sound. Staff noted that portions of the building have already been demolished. The Commission will need to determine if the building, prior to the construction, was historically significant.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony.

Heather Heimarck (Fremont Street) – stated that the scale of the new building has been a shock to the neighborhood. It is nice to see that the mansard roof is being rebuilt. The building has already been heavily altered.

Seeing no additional comments, Chair Parkes closed the public testimony period.

The Commission stated that the original structure maintained much of its original character, in terms of its form and massing. The building is in harmony with a number of other houses of the same vintage in the immediate vicinity. While the streetscape is mixed in terms of mansard roofs and gable roofs, the building speaks to the time in which it was built. The original structure, prior to construction, was Historically Significant.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to find the property at 58 Main Street Historically Significant.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following findings:

- The building is part of a small cluster of similar buildings along the street.
- The building is a good representation of its style.
- The building retains its original massing.

RESULT:

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT

**PUBLIC HEARINGS – DETERMINATIONS OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE
(STEP 1 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)
HP25-000080 – 21 Avon Street (House)**

The Commission discussed both items from this applicant team concurrently.

The applicant team explained that the past ownership history is interesting, though there does not seem to be anything significant or notable about historical context of the property. The structure is a 2 ½ story front gable Italianate home, which is somewhat common in other areas of Somerville. This particular structure is in rough condition and there may be some structural issues. There are some interesting details about the property, most of which pertain to the one-story front porch, such as the cornice molding and spindles. The property has undergone

quite a few alterations of the years. The applicant team stated that rear of the house is a mess. Doors and windows throughout the structure have been replaced. Porch balusters appear to have been removed, covered, or replaced. The shingles have also been replaced. The barn, other than appearing to be on its original site, with a similar gable roof, seems to have been otherwise altered. The entryway for a carriage or car has been replaced and is in bad shape. The applicant team stated that that there is almost zero historical significance worth salvaging from the barn.

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

The Commission stated that the front porch maintains much of its original character and detailing and fits in nicely with the streetscape. Some Commissioners noted that the barn could likely be restored, as it is original to the property, while others did not find the structure distinct enough to be significant. The barn retains its original massing, but its original envelope and fenestration have been altered.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to find the property at 21 Avon Street (House) Historically Significant.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the following findings:

- The structure's relationship and context to the streetscape and neighboring buildings is significant.
- The structure retains much of the original porch detailing.

RESULT:

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT

**PUBLIC HEARINGS – DETERMINATIONS OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE
(STEP 1 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)
HP25-000080 – 21 Avon Street (Barn)**

The Commission heard this and the previous agenda item simultaneously.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted (3-2), with Member Chagnon and Vice Chair Kelly against, to find the property at 21 Avon Street (Barn) Historically Significant.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Falvey, the Commission voted (3-1-1), with Member Chagnon abstaining and Vice Chair Kelly against, to approve the following findings:

- The barn retains its original form and massing.
- The barn reflects a building type that is no longer common in the City.

RESULT:

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT

OTHER BUSINESS: CPC Update

The CPC is in the middle of reviewing applications for this funding round. The CPC will meet tomorrow, 19 November 2025.

OTHER BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0), to approve the 7 October 2025 meeting minutes, as amended.

The Commission tabled review of the 21 October 2025 meeting minutes to a future meeting.

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.