



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

20 JANUARY 2026 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>	

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:11pm and adjourned at 7:31pm. It was noted that the meeting was being held in both English and Spanish through interpretive services.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS – ALTERATIONS TO LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) PROPERTIES
 HP25-000076 – 76 Highland Avenue**

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to continue the hearing to 17 February 2026.

RESULT:	CONTINUED
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**PUBLIC HEARINGS – ALTERATIONS TO LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) PROPERTIES
 HP25-000052 – 76 Columbus Avenue**

Vice Chair Kelly recused herself from this item.

The applicant team explained that the proposed job was to convert a house to electric heat pumps. The process generally involves pulling permits, and it appears this step was missed for the project. The project was completed without knowledge that the home was within a Local Historic District (LHD).

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

The Commission asked where the compressors are located. The applicant team explained that they are located under the side porch and not visible from the street. The Commission stated that the heat pump seems to be thoughtfully placed in an unobtrusive area.

Following a motion by Member Falvey, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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**DETERMINATIONS OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE
(STEP 1 IN THE DEMO REVIEW PROCESS)
HP25-000102 – 184 Broadway**

Vice Chair Kelly recused herself from this item.

The applicant team explained that the structure at 184 Broadway is owned by the Somerville Community Corporation (SCC). The SCC will be purchasing 182 and 176 Broadway. It plans to demolish all of the buildings in order to build an all-affordable housing development on the property. The structure at 176 was found not Historically Significant in 2013 and the building at 182 is not 75 years old. The current proposal is for approximately 52 affordable residential units with a ground floor commercial space. The applicant team stated that the existing structure at 184 Broadway is not significant; it is a bland, narrow, and nondescript building that has little left in the way of architectural detailing and materials. The applicant team noted that per the Staff Memo, the building retains the integrity of its form and massing but lacks original architectural details and materials. While the massing remains intact, the building does not possess a high degree of integrity of original or later architectural elements. The building contains modern windows and vinyl siding. The applicant team believes that it does not add anything to the vibrant streetscape along Broadway, nor does it match or relate in any way to its abutting buildings. It sits on a very small, 1,552 s.f. lot. The applicant team also stated that there were no significant historical persons associated with the property and there were no significant historical events there, nor is it importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the City or the state. It is not the product of a reputed architect or builder. It is not part of a group of buildings or structures. The applicant team believes that it is not in the public interest to preserve it. In light of the proposed affordable housing project, it may actually be in the public interest to allow it to be demolished. A delay would have significant impact on the cost of building affordable housing,

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

The Commission stated that this was likely never a particularly noteworthy building in terms of its styling. There is very little left of it architecturally, and it is strikingly unmemorable. The front image of the building is interesting but has been mostly stripped away.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (0-4) to find the property at 184 Broadway Historically Significant.

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

- The structure lacks an association with an important person, event, or time period.
- The structure does not contribute to the streetscape.
- The structure is not an example of a distinct style or time period.
- The structure has been stripped of most of its presumed historic detailing.

RESULT:

NOT HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT

Vice Chair Kelly retook her seat.

**DETERMINATIONS OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED
(STEP 2 IN THE DEMO REVIEW PROCESS)
HP25-000078 – 58 Main Street**

The applicant team explained that the house contains a mansard roof with dormers and double-hung windows, as well as a side wing element with two stories on the left side and a rear addition. The proposal is to enlarge the building, to provide more living area, and convert it to three dwelling units. The proposal includes a front addition and a rear addition. The existing double-sloped mansard roof had rotted framing and has partially come down at this point. The intention is to keep the character of the building, with the front addition having a mansard roof and a similar profile to the existing structure, including dormers and double-hung windows in the front. The windows are proposed to be a 2 over 1 style to give it more character there. A covered front porch is also proposed. The applicant team noted that, less than 50% demolition of the structure was permitted by-right. An additional two areas need to be demolished, including the left side wing and the left side mansard which was structurally unsound and rotted. The current request is 72% demolition. The intention is to add character with new siding, removal of the faux masonry facade, addition of new 2 over 1 windows, with brackets and different trim work. The rear façade will also have additional windows to allow for more light and character to the building. The rear will also contain larger porches with decorative posts.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony.

Gina DePasquale – asked how it was possible for this project to get this far without the applicant knowing the rules prior to demolition.

Seeing no additional comments, Chair Parkes closed public testimony.

The Commission explained that, as originally proposed, the applicant team was not demolishing enough of the structure to require it to come before the Commission. Once it was known that the project was going to exceed 50%, the applicant continued on with the project without coming before the Commission. The applicant team stated that they reached out to the Building Inspector once it was realized that the 50% would be exceeded. The project was halted at that point. New sheeting was put up on one portion of the roof in order to make the building structurally sound.

The applicant team reviewed the additional items that are being proposed at this time which will increase the demolition percentage. There is a flat roof on the left side of the structure over the two-story wing. The request is to fully replace the that structure. Secondly, the very top slope of the roof, after the mansard walls, is proposed to be removed. Finally, on the left side of the building , the mansard portion is proposed to be rebuilt.

The Commission stated that this appears to follow the letter of the ordinance, but absolutely not the spirit. This is very disingenuous. The Commission previously voted that this structure was Historically Significant and is now determining whether the building, as it previously existed, should be Preferably Preserved. If the Commission votes in favor of this, it can make the applicant team restore the structure. The applicant team would then work with Staff to determine an appropriate design.

Member Price recused herself from this item.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Falvey, the Commission voted (3-0-1), with Member Chagnon abstaining, to find the property Preferably Preserved.

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

- The structure is a good reflection of a classic mansard building.
- The structure belongs to the streetscape in that there are several nearby buildings that are similarly styled.
- A previous occupant of the structure may have been a person of affiliation.

RESULT:

PREFERABLY PRESERVED

Member Price retook her seat.

**DETERMINATIONS OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED
(STEP 2 IN THE DEMO REVIEW PROCESS)
HP25-000080 – 21 Avon Street (House)**

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to continue both items for this applicant to 3 March 2025.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

**DETERMINATIONS OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED (STEP 2 IN THE DEMO REVIEW PROCESS)
HP25-000081 – 21 Avon Street (Barn)**

This item was continued to 3 March 2025.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

OTHER BUSINESS: CPC Update

The CPC has been voting on which project applications to fund and will continue to do so.

OTHER BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Member Falvey, seconded by Member Chagnon, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0), to approve the 16 December 2025 meeting minutes, as presented.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0), to approve the 6 January 2026 meeting minutes, as presented.

NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. A recording of these proceedings can be found online here: [Agendas, Minutes, & More](#).