



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

7 APRIL 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 6:49pm and adjourned at 7:57pm.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – ALTERATIONS TO LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) PROPERTIES
HP25-000116 – 197 Morrison Ave

The applicant team explained that the proposal is to strip the roof of the existing asphalt shingles, and to install a slate-profile aluminum shingle. This work has already been completed as it was unclear that the property was within a Local Historic District (LHD).

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

The Commission noted the importance of the approval process, while also speaking to the roof replacement material and that it seems to be appropriate and an improvement over the previous material. This project can only be seen meaningfully from one angle of the public way.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the switch to the aluminum slate-profile shingles, as proposed.

RESULT:

APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS - DETERMINATIONS OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE
(STEP 1 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)
HP26-000007 – 17 Clyde Street

The applicant team explained that there have been significant alterations to this property over the years, which have obscured the original home in many ways. The structure contains all new doors and windows on all elevations. There have also been many changes to the porch over the years. It also appears that no one of historical significance has ever lived on the property.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony.

Rajiv Raman (14 Clyde Street) – noted that he is pleased with the new housing that has been installed at 13 Clyde Street, but he was not happy that 13 Clyde Street was split into two lots. This seemed to be a detour around the Affordable Housing Ordinance. There are seven units currently being built on 13 Clyde Street which should have triggered the Affordable Housing Ordinance; however, it did not because a developer split the lot in two, detouring around the ordinance. He would like it noted that 17 Clyde Street is one property and should not be split in this way.

Andrew Singleton (25 Clyde Street) – echoed the previous comments regarding keeping this as one lot. In terms of the historic significance of the building itself, it is a concrete box and represents a change in materials from the brick construction of earlier periods.

Seeing no additional comments, Chair Parkes closed public testimony.

The Commission asked about the garage buildings at the rear of the site. The applicant team explained that these buildings were administratively deemed non-historical.

The Commission noted that this is a neighborhood of workers' cottages which tell their own unique story. This property has had a number of alterations over the years but retains much of its original form and massing and is still recognizable as a craftsman bungalow, one-story worker housing, which there are very few of in Somerville. This building represents a shifting moment in the City's economic, social, and residential structure. This is captured in its juxtaposition against 25 Clyde Street. While the structure does not age back to the classic era of worker houses, it has the exact form of what would have been around it during that time period.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to find the property Historically Significant.

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

- The building retains its original form and massing
- The building is a good reflection of the original streetscape of the worker house form
- The building is a unique craftsman-style bungalow, of which there are very few in the City
- The building has a connection to the social history of the City in terms of its residential development and residents

RESULT:

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT

**PUBLIC HEARINGS - DETERMINATIONS OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED
(STEP 2 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)
HHP25-000114 – 30 Vinal Avenue**

The applicant team explained that they previously conceded the Historical Significance of the structure. Per the Staff Memo, it appears the structure was constructed around 1900. It features a largely symmetrical front elevation with a dominant central mass and hip roof, front-facing gable with secondary cross gable, projecting two-story bay window, a central shed dormer, and an enclosed front porch/sunroom and side porches. There was one notable previous resident, Timothy Crimmings, who was involved in the construction of Prospect Hill Park and many of the City's earliest sewers. The applicant team expressed willingness to discuss any conditions the Commission may see fit for the property, if deemed Not Preferably Preserved.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony.

Sarah Murphy (26 Vinal Avenue) – asked that the Commission recognize the importance of this building and retaining the neighborhood streetscape. This is slated to be a large development, if approved. The 18-month demo delay seems to only be a roadblock and not an intention to retain any of the property’s historic significance.

Benjamin Weber (26 Vinal Avenue) – expressed concern regarding the streetscape. The developer is currently trying to demolish two lots next to one another and there is concern regarding this fitting the existing neighborhood.

Rebecca Emigh (23 Vinal Avenue) – stated that the City is doing itself a disservice by allowing developers to demolish buildings and construct housing, none of which is affordable. The City is losing history that it can never get back. Within a year, there have been three houses slated for demolition on Vinal Avenue, which is significant.

Ward 3 City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen (16 Aldersey Street) – emphasized that this is the third demolition within a block along this historic street. The property in question captures something historic about houses in this area.

Ryan Magee (23 Vinal Avenue) – stated that the house is a beautiful historic home, which he believes is older than 1900. This neighborhood is currently being ransacked for profit. He asked that the Commission temporarily protect the neighborhood. He also asked the developer, who has purchased the two properties next to one another, to recognize the carelessness of these actions. When someone does not live in a neighborhood and has a first action of knocking down houses in said neighborhood, this is not neighborly.

Seeing no additional comments, Chair Parkes closed public testimony.

The Commission discussed that the house retains a tremendous amount of its original massing and details. The house fits very nicely with the eclectic architectural styles that Vinal Avenue has. The house is in the appropriate scale for the street. This is one of the more unusual and interesting houses on that stretch of Vinal Avenue. An early map from 1900 shows the front porch as existing, though likely not originally enclosed. The house contributes to the rhythm of the streetscape and the sense of place that Vinal Avenue has. One of the reasons for the Preferably Preserved status is to protect the neighborhood character. There seems to be unquestionable support from the neighbors to do so. It seems appropriate for the 18-month demo delay to try to support the community. Also, Mr. Timothy Crimmings, former resident of the property, was one of the men who shaped the City. The Commission also noted that this house is a better example of one that belongs on the streetscape than the one adjacent to it, which was previously deemed Preferably Preserved. The building is stately and maintains a pattern on the street.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to find the property Preferably Preserved.

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

- The building retains its original form and massing
- The building is important in its relation to the streetscape and pattern of the neighborhood character
- The building has important historic persons associated with it

RESULT:	PREFERABLY PRESERVED
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OTHER BUSINESS: CPC Update

The CPC is considering changing its schedule and process to allow the City Council time to deliberate and vote on which applications will be funded. The CPC continues to hear from its historic preservation consultant regarding restrictions which may be placed on projects within that category.

OTHER BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the 3 March 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.](#)