

MSLD Study Committee Notes #7

December 3, 2025, 6:30 pm

Zoom <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1613185522>

Study Committee Attendees:

Ameeth Deenanath (Alternate)
Jeffrey Gonyeau
Julie Hall
Kirsten Hoffman
Nancy Johnsen (Chair)
Lindsey Mac-Jones
Linda Neshamkin

Absent:

Intiya Ambrogi Isaza
Ian Urquhart
Fadi Samaha
Senam Kumahia

Staff:

Gabriela Amore
Elizabeth Sherva
Jennifer Gaugler

Members of the Public:

Scott C. Haldane
Shannon Fabiano
Christopher Hennessy
Richard McCarthy
Amanda Zettel
Christine Corr
Erin Woods
Bee
Maureen Hennessy
Johanna Hynes

Action/follow-up items for staff are highlighted in yellow.

I. REVIEW AND VOTE ON MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 19, 2025 PUBLIC MEETING

- A. **Kirsten** motions to approve meeting minutes, **Linda** seconds the motion. Meeting minutes approved unanimously.

II. PUBLIC FEEDBACK SINCE LAST MEETING

- A. Feedback received by staff:
 - 1. **Gabby** reports none.
- B. Feedback received by study committee members:
 - 1. None.

III. PREVIOUSLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- A. Can the planned Office of Historic Preservation newsletter article regarding MSLD/Study Committee process be shared in the Patriot-Bridge?
 - 1. **Gabby**: Was sent out today by the cabinet's Communications Team.
- B. Can we ensure MSLD updates are sent in the Charlestown ONS newsletter?
 - 1. **Gabby**: Yes.

IV. STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

- A. Brief summary by BLC staff:
 - 1. **Jen**: We are looking at a Google Doc file which is currently shared with staff and the MSLD Study Committee. Study Committee members are welcome to open and review the document at any time (during or in between meetings). You can find it in the shared Google Drive for the study committee. You may need to be signed into your Gmail account to access the file (let us know if you have any trouble!).

- a) At the end of each meeting, the Study Committee can suggest which sections will be discussed next time. We encourage Study Committee members to take some time before the next meeting to read those sections and make suggested edits or leave comments and questions using **Suggesting Mode** and the **Comment tool**.
 - b) Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings to see and hear the work in progress. However, the draft study report file will not be released to the public until the Study Committee has determined that they are ready to post it. This prevents the circulation of in-progress drafts which can cause confusion and misinformation. When the Study Committee determines that it is ready, the entire draft study report will be posted for public review and feedback for a minimum of 60 days, followed by a public hearing for public testimony.
2. Staff has provided some boilerplate language which the Study Committee can edit, remove, or add to.
3. Reviewing the sub-sections of Section 7.0, Standards and Criteria:
 - a) 7.1 Introduction
 - (1) This section provides some basic information about the legal requirements for designation and application review. It explains that applicants may file for a Certificate of Exemption based on financial hardship. It also invites residents and property owners to reach out to the Commission for guidance on the regulatory process, historical research, or technical assistance.
 - (2) Origin: Boilerplate language common to most contemporary study reports issued by the BLC.
 - (3) The Study Committee should review this section, but staff does not anticipate that any substantial revisions will be needed.
 - b) 7.2 Levels of Review
 - (1) This section categorizes which activities are:
 - (a) Not subject to review;
 - (b) Subject to review but likely to be either exempt or administrative (staff) review;
 - (c) Subject to Commission review;
 - (2) Origin: Boilerplate language common to most contemporary study reports issued by the BLC, plus some specific definitions (full demolition, partial demolition, architectural alterations, major landscape alteration, and new construction) which were developed by the Highland Park study committee and staff thought useful.
 - (3) The Study Committee should review the categorization and refine as needed.
 - c) 7.3 Character-Defining Features
 - (1) This section describes the physical features that define the character of the proposed district. The items listed in this section should be considered important aspects of the district and changes to them should be approved by the Commission only after careful consideration. Origin: Consultant who drafted initial sections of the report.
 - (2) Staff strongly encourages the Study Committee to review and refine this section.
 - d) 7.4 Standards and Criteria (Landmark District)

- (1) This section outlines the regulations that will apply to all exterior building alterations in the Landmark District, if designated.
 - (2) Origin: Based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Rehabilitation).
 - (3) Staff strongly encourages the Study Committee to review and refine this section.
 - e) 7.5 Standards and Criteria (Protection Area)
 - (1) This section outlines the regulations that will apply to the Protection Area, if designated.
 - (2) Origin: Largely inspired by the South End Protection Area.
 - (3) Staff needs to consult with City legal counsel how much this can be edited. The enabling legislation (Chapter 772) limits what a Protection Area can regulate.
- B. Study committee discussion:
1. Study committee starts with Standards and Criteria Section 7.2.
 - a) **Jeff G**: Does staff ever have issues with people disputing the definition of "in-kind"? Is there a specific definition?
 - (1) Staff will add a clear definition. Study committee suggests a glossary. Staff agrees this is a great idea.
 - b) **Nancy**: How do you know when someone is making a change that should be reviewed under the District regulations, but it does not require a building permit?
 - (1) **Staff**: This does come up in other districts, for example with tree removal on private property which does not require a permit. It's a combination of good faith, public education, and community watch (via violation reports). BLC staff periodically sends mailers to remind people that they are in the district.
 - c) **Nancy**: What if you want to replace something back to what it would have been historically, i.e. sidewalks?
 - (1) **Staff**: Yes, that could be a standard established by the study committee - i.e. something like "major sidewalk repairs or replacement should use materials that are historically appropriate to the streetscape, i.e. brick on X Streets."
 - d) **Linda**: Can you describe some examples of Administrative Review?
 - (1) **Staff**: Yes, for example an alteration such as repointing mortar that involves no change in appearance.
 - e) Discussion of architectural alterations: **Linda** suggests that it is good to leave the square footage/cubic volume undefined by a certain area or percentage so that any proposed changes of such a nature are reviewed.
 - (1) **Linda**: Should we define that additions could include roof decks or other non-enclosed spaces? Staff suggests adding "whether enclosed or open-air" to encompass all options.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. **Christopher Hennessy**, owner, 34A Monument Square: The more specific definitions and the more details the better. Would like to have mahogany door redone in the future - will probably need chemical/abrasive cleaning. Can I put out a flag?
2. **Scott C. Haldane**: With all the masonry around the square, you want to have guidelines on brick repointing. Usually involves scaffolding.
3. **Shannon Fabiano**, 33 School Street: My concern is that I didn't know about this meeting nor did my elderly in-laws living next door. People are

concerned about cost of regulatory requirements. I am also generally against placing these regulations on property.

- a) **Gabby:** Thank you for your feedback. We posted official public notices, advertised in the Patriot-Bridge, and shared on social media. Did not flyer door to door for the study committee meetings as it is not standard practice for this process.
 - b) **Jen:** There is tentatively a public engagement event in late January and the study committee will likely flyer for that.
 - c) **Nancy:** Your comments are welcome and we hope you will help get the word out to neighbors as well so they are aware. Right now you are watching the process of this report being made but we will have opportunities for more public engagement as we get further into the process.
4. **Johanna Hynes:** Air-conditioners should not be regulated. Public access and notification should be improved. Neighborhood groups like the CNC are not doing anything to notify the community.
- a) **Nancy:** Private organizations are not obligated to assist with City government processes.
 - b) **Staff:** Currently not proposing to regulate air-conditioners.
5. Christopher Hennessy: Do we have to alter our deeds?
- a) **Jen:** No, that is all handled by staff and the Registry of Deeds. Staff provides them with a list of addresses and a map and they append the notice to the deed record.

V. PLANNING CONTEXT

- A. Tabled for a future meeting.

VI. PROJECTED ADJOURNMENT: 8:00 PM

- A. **Jeff** motions to adjourn, **Ameeth** seconds. Unanimous vote to adjourn.