

MSLD Study Committee Notes #14

May 13, 2026, 6:30 pm

Zoom <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1603200083>

Study Committee Attendees:

Crystal Galvin
Jeffrey Gonyeau
Julie Hall
Nancy Johnsen (Chair)
Lindsey Mac-Jones
Linda Neshamkin
Ian Urquhart

Staff:

Gabriela Amore
Jennifer Gaugler

Members of the Public:

Beth Fowkes
Chris Hennessey
John Dannemiller
Johanna Hynes
Scott C. Haldane

Absent:

Ameeth Deenanath
Kirsten Hoffman
Intiya Ambrogi Isaza
Senam Kumahia
Fadi Samaha

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

I. REVIEW AND VOTE ON MINUTES FROM THE LAST PUBLIC MEETING

- A. **Linda** motions to approve meeting minutes from April 29, 2026. **Jeff** seconds the motion. Meeting minutes approved unanimously.

II. PUBLIC FEEDBACK SINCE LAST MEETING

- A. Feedback received by staff:
 1. **Jennifer** reports on one comment in support of the designation of the district received from Nancy Kueny and three comments in opposition to the designation received from Chris Hennessey, Diane Valle, and Zachary Cutler.
- B. Feedback received by study committee members:
 1. The Study Committee did not report on any feedback received.

III. REVIEW PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLANS

- A. **Jennifer** shares tentative plan:
 1. Study Committee to continue meeting through July
 2. **Release “working” study report for public comment in August**
 3. Community engagement event in September
 4. Study Committee to meet after community event and revise study report as needed
 5. **Release “draft” study report for public comment in October**
 6. Following 60-day public comment period, Study Committee to meet and revise study report as needed
 7. **Release “amended” study report for public comment in January**
- B. Memorial Hall has agreed to host the September community engagement event.

1. **Julie** recommended using the upper level of Memorial Hall to ensure there is enough capacity.
2. **Nancy** recommends mailing owners of record within the proposed district about the working study report and September engagement event if budget allows.
3. Suggestions for event materials:
 - a) **Linda:** To present the standards and criteria, we should have illustrative photos and drawings.
 - b) **Lindsey:** Also show some examples of different application scenarios and how they would play out.
 - c) **Nancy:** A big list of the things that are NOT regulated.
 - d) **Jeff:** Capture how the community input received to date has been used.
 - e) **Linda:** Presentation must include clarity on the boundaries and an explanation of how they evolved.
 - (1) **Jennifer:** We will also have a data table of properties prepared by September.

IV. REVIEW STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

A. Windows:

1. **Linda:** it would be most important for the replacement of all windows on a building to trigger review (rather than piecemeal single window replacement); in other words, replacing one window should not require property owner to update all other windows.
 - a) Color might be addressed.
 - b) Hoods, sills, and shutters are character-defining features.
 - c) There can be some flexibility with window materials. New windows of alternative materials can look appropriate if the right selection is made.
 - d) An applied exterior muntin with internal spacer bar is preferable to internal spacer bars only.
 - e) It is important to consider appropriate window replacement size with respect to window opening. Putting stock-size windows into existing window openings can result in overly thick window frame. Replacement windows can be mass-produced but should fit within the existing masonry window opening (perhaps to within a certain tolerance?).
 - (1) **Nancy:** It is important to keep cost in mind; how can we avoid creating too much cost burden for homeowners.
2. **Jeff:** Education of property owners can help to show the cost-benefit of replacing windows vs. keeping historic windows. Many historic windows are repairable and don't need to be replaced. Existing buildings often have to get custom size windows anyway because of the existing masonry openings.
 - a) **Linda:** And replacement windows may not last.
3. **Jeff:** Muntin patterns are important. The study report could provide a guide to the window muntin patterns that match certain styles/eras of architecture.
4. **Nancy:** Question about substitute materials - are they ever OK?
 - a) **Jennifer:** Yes. Example BLC language from other study reports: "Deteriorated historic features should be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature should match the old in design,

color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. If the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Replacement of missing features should be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.”

- b) **Jeff:** Durability is an important factor. Always better to save original materials when you can because they are probably of higher quality, but if they cannot be saved, acceptable substitute materials should be durable.
 - 5. **Nancy:** It would be helpful to provide information for property owners on where to go to find contractors and specialists who work with historic properties.
 - a) **Jennifer:** It’s great to think about this as a guide and resource, not just a regulatory document.
 - 6. **Jennifer:** Does the study committee have any thoughts on window coatings? The BLC is currently trying to adapt standards to address energy efficiency and climate change, which can mean introducing more flexibility.
 - a) **Linda:** Low-e glass without tint would be preferable to tinted, but maybe this could be a “should” not “shall.”
 - b) **Jeff:** You can also get storm windows with or without coatings.
 - 7. **Nancy:** Any further comments regarding shutters, lintels, sills, etc.?
 - a) **Linda:** Shutters should be wide enough to represent true coverage of the window.
- B. Porches and stoops:
- 1. Will be postponed to next meeting on May 20, 2026.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A. **Johanna Hynes:** On 30 Monument Square there is a very important historical feature right below a window that talks about the site of 30 Monument Square being part of the battlefield. Are you planning to exclude this historical architectural feature from the district?
 - 1. **Nancy:** Please feel free to write in your concerns and your questions about the battlefield and what’s covered and what’s not covered. We’re trying to keep comments focused on the committee’s work tonight on specific aspects of the standards and criteria.
- B. **Beth Fowkes:** The act of muting Johanna makes us feel a little distaste for your committee and she has a valid question we would like to hear.
 - 1. **Nancy:** If there are specific things on buildings that you want to see preserved, or you would like some regulation requiring that a plaque remain on a building, then please write those comments in. But tonight, we are trying to focus and get this committee through the work it needs to do, which is deciding the standards and criteria for a working draft that the public can then start to review. It’s not meant with disrespect, it’s meant to respect the time of the volunteers on this committee who are working towards a particular goal, and we’re trying to keep our comments focused each night.
- C. **John Dannemiller:** A lot of houses don’t currently have shutters. Would there be a requirement to add shutters?
 - 1. **Jennifer:** No, the proposed district would not require a property owner to add something that wasn’t historically there, nor would it require owners to make any changes to their property. The only thing that would trigger review is if the property owner is proposing to do work.

VI. STAFF UPDATES

- A. Updates on historic preservation in Charlestown:
 - 1. Memorial Hall (14 Green Street) is now officially a designated Landmark.
 - 2. Swallow Mansion (33 Cordis Street) - the Boston Landmarks Commission voted to approve the Landmark designation last night. The proposed designation will now go to the Mayor and City Council..

VII. ADJOURNMENT: 8:01 PM

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