

**Belmont Historic District Commission
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, October 10, 2023
Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

Staff Present: Gabriel Distler

Commission Members Present

x Carl Solander, Co-Chair
x Carol Moyles, Co-Chair
x Komal Mahajan
x Jacqueline Appel
x Drew Nealon
x Michael Chesson
x Matt Schonewald
Meg Reilly, absent

Community Member Present: Jeffrey S. North

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: December 13, 2023
TIME: 11:45 AM

1. Meeting was Called to Order at 7:04 PM

Carl Solander presiding; Michael Chesson, Minutes

2. Approval of the September 12 Meeting Minutes

In future, votes to be recorded if not unanimous. Carol Moyles moved to approve the minutes as amended. Jacqueline Appel second. The motion passed unanimously.

3. No public hearings

4. Continued Discussions

a. MBTA Communities Zoning Districts and Historic Preservation

Gabe Distler gave a brief introduction, explained various maps, and said the focus should be on district boundaries as related to historic preservation. A lengthy, detailed, and wide-ranging discussion followed about Waverley Square, Cushing Square, Belmont Center, a small area of Pleasant Street north of the Brighton Street intersection, and other possible locations. Much brainstorming, and a lot of questions about zoning, tax benefits and density bonuses for preservation of significant historical buildings, compliance requirements, and MBTA deadlines. The HDC reviewed historically significant buildings that may be located within or near higher density districts and discussed the possible impact of the new zoning on the preservation of these buildings. Carl volunteered to summarize the HDC's concerns in a letter that would be transmitted to the MBTA Zoning committee. Jacqueline Appel asked what other communities have done? Gabe Distler said that Lexington was the first to submit a compliant plan. Drew Nealon, the HDC member of Belmont's MBTA Communities Advisory Committee, invited us to the next meeting, October 19, at 5:30 PM, in the Homer Building Art Gallery.

b. Design Guidelines Subcommittee

Carl Solander, Carol Moyles, Komal Mahajan, and Meg Reilly were appointed. The group was not limited to four and could be amended. Carl Solander moved to approve, Drew Nealon, second. Unanimously approved.

c. Massachusetts Historical Commission FY 2024 Survey and Planning Grants

Carl Solander presented. General agreement that Belmont could not afford the 50% matching amount for an application.

d. HDC Membership Discussion

The current membership is eight, with two vacancies for alternate members. The HDC will continue to perform site visits as suggested by Carl Solander with an architect, and another member.

e. HDC Webpage Updates

Drew Nealon had a discussion with former member Stefan Ahlblad. They agreed that updating the design guidelines, including for the Richardson Farm and the Thaddeus Frost house, was more important.

f. Landmark Designation Discussion

Drew Nealon made some brief comments.

g. Work Plan

Carol Moyles said that it had all been covered but emphasized the importance of the design guidelines, which needed work.

5. General Housekeeping

Gabe Distler reported that Jeffrey North from the Belmont Citizens Forum has asked about the HDC providing articles on various subjects. Gabe said that he will be taking some time off in November. Carol Moyles suggested adding the workplan to the regular agenda.

The next HDC meeting is November 14, because of Election Day on the first Tuesday, and Komal Mahajan will take the minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Michael Chesson