

2020 Annual Report

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION:

Co-Chair: Lauren Meier Jan-June 2020; Tracy Marquis June-Dec 2020

Co-Chair: Lisa Harrington

Secretary: Rotates each meeting amongst commission members

Committee Members:

NAME	EXPERTISE	REPRESENTATION	TERM EXPIRATION
Michael Chesson	Historian	Belmont Historical Society	2021
Carol Moyles	Landscape Architect	BSLA	2023
Lisa Harrington	Architectural Conservator		2022
Tracy Marquis	Architect	BSA	2021
Terry McCarthy	Realtor	Board of Realtors	2022
Lauren Meier	Landscape Architect	BSLA	2023
Elizabeth (Sue) Pew		Resident, Pleasant St Historic District	2021

Alternate Committee Members:

NAME	EXPERTISE	REPRESENTATION	TERM EXPIRATION
Michael Smith	Architect		2023
Carl Solander	Architect	BSA	2022
Nushin Yazdi	Architect	Resident, Pleasant St Historic District	2022

Purpose and Duties:

The Historic District Commission (HDC), appointed by the Select Board (SB), is charged with reviewing modifications to properties located within the Town's four local historic districts as well as those properties on which the Town holds preservation restrictions. The HDC offers advice to those property owners considering alterations to their historic properties. The HDC holds public hearings to review proposed projects on protected properties to determine the appropriateness of such alterations and issues Certificates of Appropriateness or Non-Applicability to those projects that meet the HDC's Guidelines. The HDC also holds public hearings related to demolition applications for buildings subject to the Demolition Delay Bylaw and addresses Town-wide historic preservation issues. As part of the Town's 1999 Memorandum of Agreement with McLean Hospital regarding the rezoning of the McLean Hospital campus, the HDC acts as the historic preservation authority regarding changes proposed for the exterior of historic buildings, historic landscapes, and historic landscape elements of the hospital campus and its adjacent McLean zones 1A, 1B, 2, 3 and 4 as well as land and historic resources that were transferred to the Town (McLean Barn and Lone Tree Hill open space). The HDC serves as the principal local contact for the Massachusetts Historical Commission and responds to Section 106 notifications. The HDC also serves as the Town's Historical Commission, advising the town on matters related to historic resources in Belmont, including buildings, structures and landscapes. The HDC appoints members to two other Town committees: Community Preservation Committee and Land Management Committee for Lone Tree Hill.

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Summary of Activities and Accomplishments:

In 2020, administrative support was provided by Christine Zale in the Office of Community Development. Kathleen Fahey resigned from the HDC in 2020, Carol Moyles joined the Commission, and Lauren Meier stepped down as chair. Tracy Marquis joined Lisa Harrington as a new co-chair.

Participated in the rehabilitation and expansion of the Belmont Police Station

HDC provides support on the historic Police Station project through representation on the Department of Public Works/Belmont Police Department Building Committee.

McLean District, Zone 3 Overlay Language

The HDC developed language and made recommendations to the Planning Board for the McLean Zone 3 Overlay District.

Responded to Section 106 notifications

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that federal undertakings consider potential effects on cultural resources. The HDC responds to these notifications by providing information on nearby historic properties and the potential effect the proposed project may have, and conveys those findings to the Town and the Massachusetts Historical Commission. In 2020, HDC continued work on the 30 Leonard Street telecommunications proposal, which was brought to the Commission in 2019. This ultimately resulted in the approval of a new light pole design with attached antennae and communications infrastructure.

Reviewed thirteen (13) applications for projects within the Pleasant Street Historic District

One of the HDC's most critical functions is technical assistance to property owners and project review and approval in the four local historic districts (Pleasant Street, Common Street, Richardson Farm and Thaddeus Frost Local Historic Districts). In 2020, HDC conducted thirteen public hearings for applications for Certificate of Appropriateness in the Pleasant Street Historic District. The Commission also reviewed and approved one project related to the Town's Historic Accessory Building Preservation Bylaw.

Supported the Community Preservation Act initiatives in historic preservation

In collaboration with the Town, the HDC prepared an application to the CPC to fund a condition assessment for the Municipal Light Building. The HDC also supported the CPA application by the Belmont Women's Club to fund window restoration on their National Register of Historic Places building. The HDC also submitted a letter of support for the CPA application for the repair of the chimneys at Town Hall as well as a letter of support for funding the repair of the Police Station front steps.

Goals for 2021:

- Continue timely review, advice, and action on applications and requests for technical assistance from property owners in the four historic districts;
- Provide review, advice and action as needed related to other properties in Belmont with preservation restrictions and/or agreements;
- Provide timely response to Section 106 notifications as they are received;
- Continue participation on the Community Preservation Committee, providing historic preservation input on projects and applications;

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- Continue collaboration with the Land Management Committee on preservation of the McLean Barn and stewardship of the historic open space;
- Provide input to the Planning Board and other committees related to proposed zoning changes and other matters affecting historic resources in Belmont;
- Participate and provide input into major Town capital projects (Police Station, High School, Community Path, etc.);
- Conduct a review of and develop potential amendments as necessary for the General Bylaws;
- Update the HDC's Design Guidelines;
- Maintain and enhance HDC website; and
- Continue to integrate files and coordinate administrative responsibilities with OCD.

Respectfully

Submitted,

Lisa

Harrington,

Co-Chair

Historic District Commission