

Meeting Minutes
Local Historic District Study Committee

APPROVED

Wednesday, May 31, 2023
12 Kent Way, 2nd Floor Hearing Room

Members Present: Chair Robin Etheridge, Vice Chair Joy Michaud, Secretary Elizabeth Paliga, Lon Hachmeister, Madison Vlass

Members Absent: N/A

Committee Chair, Robin Etheridge, opened the meeting at 5:38 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Vice Chair Joy Michaud asked for clarification on who would draft the letter to the owners of the Evergreen Cemetery which was discussed in previous meeting. It was determined she would draft such a letter in line with the other institutional letters she had previously drafted.

Motion: A motion was made to approve the minutes from the April 12th meeting, which was passed by all present.

Review Draft Neighbor Questionnaire:

The committee discussed the proposed neighbor questionnaire. Lon Hachmeister asked about regulations regarding solar panels and other sustainable technologies. The committee suggested a second questionnaire, to be sent out at a later date, could help specify exactly what the Lower Green Local Historic District would protect. This way the community could have direct input on what should and should not be regulated.

Secretary Elizabeth Paliga asked when Town Meetings were held, and that it would be a good idea to include on the webpage to which Town Meeting the committee was aiming to bring this Local Historic District creation for a vote so neighbors could have an idea of the process and time table. It was confirmed Town Meetings happened once a year, in April, and therefore this committee would probably be aiming for the Town Meeting in 2025 given the prolonged nature of Open Meeting Laws and the Study Committee Process.

The committee then discussed how the questionnaire should be disseminated and decided mail, newspaper, website and in person at Newbury events would be preferable so as to get as many responses as possible. Joy Michaud read the committee's address and email:

LHDSCommittee@townofnewbury.org and 12 Kent Way, Suite 200, Byfield, MA 01922.

It was decided that the committee's contact information should be added to the questionnaire. The committee then recognized Leslie Matthews, Select Board Member, who suggested the questionnaire be renamed "Newbury Citizen Survey" which the committee agreed and adopted. Ms. Matthews also suggested that the committee might hang bags on doors in lieu of mailing surveys as she had success with that in her campaign. Ms. Matthews offered to donate some such bags to the committee, which was gratefully accepted.

As for other methods of dissemination, Elizabeth Paliga confirmed she would publish the survey on the committee's webpage while Joy Michaud would write an article for the local newspaper. Elizabeth Paliga will create a QR code for the newspaper and in-person events as well and will contact the town to see if a post could be made on Newbury's Facebook page. Lon Hachmeister offered to go before the

Select and Planning Boards to briefly outline the goals of the Study Committee and will draft talking points for review prior to attending these meetings.

The committee debated how long the survey should be active. It was decided that it would be advantageous to have the survey live for Newbury Day on August 26, 2023, and that after that the response window would close.

Motion: A motion was then made to approve the Newbury Citizen Survey with amendments, which was passed by all present.

Schedule Informational Discussion at the Lower Green Schoolhouse:

The committee decided on July 08, 2023, from 3:00-5:00 p.m. for a drop-in, information session at the Lower Green Schoolhouse. The committee then discussed whether it would be beneficial to also appear at Newburyport or Byfield events for more visibility. This was tabled for further discussion depending on the success of this first information session.

Additional Business – Energy Efficiency FAQ:

Based on some of the expected questions from residents regarding solar panels, windows and other energy efficiency measures, Elizabeth Paliga and Madison Vlass volunteered to draft an energy efficiency FAQ sheet to accompany the more general FAQ sheet already approved. This will provide a good opportunity to allay residents' fears regarding the perceived incompatibility of historic preservation and sustainability.

Additional Business - Various:

The committee realized the Mission Statement and Purpose & Goals had not been read at the start of this meeting. Joy Michaud read them aloud and asked that this item be added to the beginning of each future agenda.

Chair Robin Etheridge suggested we make sure to clarify "Lower Green Local Historic District" in all correspondence as some neighbors have gotten confused with the National Register Historic District nomination that was proposed some time ago for Newbury's Upper Green.

Joy Michaud updated the committee on the relative placement of the Cottage Road monument being proposed for inclusion into the Lower Green Local Historic District. She stated it as 15' from Cottage Road, 12' from the nearest driveway and 9" from the back of the monument to a decorative border. She then added that while she believes the Town of Newbury maintains the monument, she would confirm this with Newbury's Department of Public Works.

Lon Hachmeister asked that an agenda item be added to all future meetings for 'Public Comment'. Joy Michaud then read into the record a letter she had received from the owners of 2 Cottage Road stating they were opposed to the formation of a Local Historic District that included their property. At this point the committee recognized the owner of 277 High Road, who was present. The owner asked for clarification as to whether their property was to be included in the proposed Local Historic District, of which they were also opposed. Robin Etheridge stated the study committee did not have absolute power to choose Local Historic District boundaries but would make a recommendation to Massachusetts Historical Commission who must endorse the study committee's Study Report. The town would then vote on those proposed boundaries.

Adjournment:

The next meeting of the Local Historic District Study Committee was set for **Monday, July 10th at 5:30 p.m.**

The committee adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Paliga". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Elizabeth Paliga
Secretary, Local Historic District Study Committee