Town of Sudbury

Historic Districts Commission

Flynn Building
278 Old Sudbury Road
Sudbury, MA 01776
978-639-3387
Fax: 978-639-3314

HistoricDistricts@sudbury.ma.us
www.sudbury.ma.us/historicdistricts

DRAFT-MINUTES
October 27, 2026 AT 12:00 PM

Members Present: Ahnu Shah, Taryn Trexler, Chris Hagger, Shervin Hawley and Griff Noble

Staff Present: Adam Burney, Director of Planning and Community Development, Beth Perry, Planning and Zoning Coordinator

Others Present: Peter Benton, Heritage Strategies

Mr. Shah called the meeting to order at 12:05pm

The Commission focused on reorganizing the historic guidelines to make them more applicant-friendly. Members agreed the current materials are too dense and should be separated into a clearer, easier-to-use format with graphics, checklists, flow charts, and short topic-based summaries. The group also discussed missing content, areas to revise, and how to handle non-historic homes, ADUs, solar, windows, and demolition documentation.
Main discussion points

1) Overall approach

- Strong support for a shorter, clearer version for applicants.
- Full technical/background material should remain available as appendices or linked reference documents.
- The group agreed the most productive next step is to focus first on the main guideline chapters and overall organization.

2) Format and usability

- Suggested improvements included:
  - flow charts for review process
  - bullets and tables
  - diagrams and photos
  - one-page/topic-specific summaries
- Peter noted graphics will be added after the text is finalized.
- Several members suggested a “quick start” style guide so applicants can quickly find the relevant section.

3) Chapter organization

- The group clarified that Chapters 5, 6, and 7 are the key guideline chapters:

    - materials
    - historic features
    - additions/new construction
- There was concern that Chapter 5 reads more like background material and may belong later or in an appendix.
- Members preferred moving from broad concepts to specific details.

4) Chapter 5 comments

- Helpful, but some felt it was confusing ahead of the features and new construction chapters.
- Members said it should likely function more as reference/background than as a main guideline chapter.
- One concern raised was mention of three-tab shingles, which the HDC generally discourages.

5) Chapter 6 comments / missing topics

Members identified several topics that should be added or expanded:

- garages and garage doors
- driveways
- barns and outbuildings
- freestanding signs
- flagpoles
- mailboxes
- septic mounds
- storefronts and commercial signs
- grading and site work
- landscaping/native plants
- pools and pool fencing
- ADUs
- non-historic homes in historic districts

6) Solar, windows, and mechanical equipment

- Solar and windows were described as the most common review topics.
- Members asked for clearer guidance, examples, and visual aids for both good and bad installations.
- Ductless mini-split systems and exterior piping were noted as increasingly common and may need guidance.
- Energy-efficiency improvements for historic homes were also raised as a possible section.

7) Non-historic homes in historic districts

- Members emphasized that the district, not just the individual home, is what matters.

- Newer or non-historic homes still need review because they affect the overall district character.
- The guidelines should explain this clearly and simply.

8) Demolition-related language

- Concern was raised that demolition delay language creates confusion because HDC does not administer demolition delay.
- The group discussed removing or clarifying that content.
- Members also supported requiring documentation/photos before demolition so lost features are recorded.

9) Application completeness

- Members said applications are often incomplete.
- They want clearer checklists and better instructions on what applicants should submit.
- The goal is to reduce continuances and make reviews smoother.

10) Public/stakeholder review

- Adam suggested it would be fine to circulate drafts before final adoption.
- Possible reviewers include:
    - Planning Commission
    - Permanent Building Committee
    - Facilities staff
    - selected contractors/restoration professionals
- The Commission may also want a public comment period.

Decisions / next steps

- Focus next on organization and Chapter 6.
- Peter will reorganize the documents to match the table of contents and mark areas for graphics/diagrams.
- Commissioners will send comments and missing items to Beth to send to Peter.
- Next meeting set for **December 15, 2026 at 12:00 p.m.**

Chris Hagger left the meeting at 12:20pm

Griff Noble left the meeting at 12:45pm

Because there was no longer a quorum, Mr. Shah made a motion to end the meeting at 1:05pm