



SPRINGFIELD HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2025

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Judith Crowell (absent)
Walter Kroll, Acting Chair (in-person)
Alfonso Nardi (remote)
Vana Nespor (in-person)
Vincent Walsh (in-person)
Marisa Zorzi (in-person)

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Andrew Strniste, Director of Community Planning (in-person)

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:

Zaitoun MHD Munir (102 Thompson Street | in-person)
Exandieu Arelus (152 Sumner Avenue | in-person)
Jeremy Arelus (152 Sumner Avenue | in-person)
Trinity Solar Representative (152 Sumner Avenue | in-person)
Jennifer Rinehart-Wegner (26-32 Mattoon Street | in person)
Frances Harrell (127-129 Pinewoods Avenue | in-person)
James Gruber (Byers Street Local Historic District | remote)
Vandana Sareen (Byers Street Local Historic District | remote)

I. OPENING REMARKS

- Acting Chair W. Kroll opened the meeting at 5:30 PM and informed the public of the Commission's meeting procedures for reviewing applications.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

- Commissioner V. Walsh made a motion to accept the Commissioner's meeting minutes of September 18, 2025. The motion was seconded by Commissioner V. Nespor. With no discussion on the motion, the motion was approved unanimously.

III. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING – 102 THOMPSON STREET

- Zaitoun MHD Munir was before the Commission to present the application relating to the replacement of the front porch floor boards and railings – following up to a received Stop Work Order. K. al Janabi was on the phone to assist with translation.
- K. al Janabi informed the Commission that Z. Munir was not prepared to present a proposed remediation plan, and that Z. Munir was hoping the Commission would grant an extension and continue the hearing to a later date.
- After some discussion, Commissioner V. Walsh made a motion to extend the application and continue the hearing to the Commission's November 20 meeting

date. The motion was second by Commissioner M. Zorzi. Commissioner V. Walsh informed the Petitioner that the application could be presented on the November 6 agenda as well.

- Z. Munir inquired about the proposed work. Staff Member A. Strniste made a recommendation of meeting on site to allow the Commissioners to answer questions, which may assist in understanding what is expected of the Petitioner. The Commission agreed.
- With no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

IV. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING – 152 SUMNER AVENUE

- A representative from Trinity Solar, Exandieu Arelus, and Jeremy Arelus were before the Commission to present the application relating to the installation of the solar powered project.
- Staff Member A. Strniste provided an overview of why the hearing was continued – that there was some confusion as to where the conduit was going to be placed. Staff Member A. Strniste had been informed that the conduit was going to be placed on the back of the building, while the Petitioner, who was unrepresented at the previous meeting, was under the impression that the conduit would be installed on the side of the building.
- Trinity Solar confirmed that the conduit would be installed towards the rear of the building, on the inside of the horseshoe area. Trinity Solar then advised that the conduit could be painted if requested and then provided an overview of where the trenching would be placed.
- Commissioner V. Walsh asked for clarification about what would be seen from the public right-of-way; Trinity Solar confirmed that only the panels would be seen.
- No one from the attending public offered any comment on the application.
- Commissioner V. Nespor made a motion to accept the application as presented relating to 152 Sumner Avenue. The motion was seconded by Commissioner V. Walsh. With no discussion on the motion, it was approved unanimously.

V. NEW PUBLIC HEARING – 26-32 MATTOON STREET

- Jennifer Rinehart-Wegner, from 30 Mattoon Street, was before the Commission to present the application. She showed a picture of a similar railing at a nearby church that they were looking to install.
- A discussion ensued about a middle post being installed versus a railing that only had a post at the top and bottom of the railing. J. Rinehart-Wegner confirmed that the railing would contain a third post in the middle of the railing. Acting Chair W. Kroll sought clarification about the proposal.
- J. Rinehart-Wegner then informed the Commission that the contractor provided a quote advising that a 40-pipe railing painted gloss black to match the side railings will be installed.
- Commissioner A. Nardi asked if the posts would be installed in the middle of the steps, as he was concerned about spalling – the step crumbling due to the placement of the rail post too close to the edge of the step. J. Rinehart—Wegner confirmed that the post would be installed in the middle of the step.
- No one from the attending public offered any comment on the application.

- Commissioner M. Zorzi made a motion to approve the installation of the black pipe rail with a top & bottom post, and with a center post that is installed in the middle of the stair. No discussion on the motion occurred and it was approved unanimously.

VI. NEW PUBLIC HEARING – 127-129 PINEYWOODS AVENUE

- Frances Harrell, from 129 Pineywoods Avenue, was before the Commission to present the application relating to the installation of an ADA ramp connecting to the front porch.
- F. Harrell informed the Commission that the ramp would be “L” shaped, made of wood, and affixed to the side of the porch and connecting with the sidewalk.
- Commissioner V. Walsh asked if the ramp was intended to be permanent; F. Harrell responded yes for a residing member of the house. Acting Chair W. Kroll advised that usually ramps are temporary in nature for someone in need in the house, and that approval is typically tied to when it is no longer needed. At that point the ramp would be deconstructed.
- F. Harrell advised that the ramp would be made of pressure-treated wood, which can be painted once it cures.
- Commissioner V. Walsh advised that the Commission does not typically see wooden ramps installed. F. Harrell responded by saying that the front porch is being redone, and therefore, installing the ramp at the same time made sense.
- Commissioner V. Nespor asked about the front porch renovation and why that was not part of the application; F. Harrell advised that that work was all in-kind and only needed approval via a Certificate of Non-Applicability. Commissioner V. Nespor then asked why the ramp was connecting to the side of the front porch and whether it could be located on the side porch; F. Harrell informed the Commission that the side porch entrance was not feasible due to the size of the entry doors. The wheel chair van will likely be parked on the street (Pineywoods Avenue) and allow a straight shot into the front of the building. Commissioner V. Walsh confirmed that generally the Commission sees proposed ramps that accesses the front door due to having more room to maneuver.
- Commissioner A. Nardi asked F. Harrell about the additional step at the front entry door (from the porch), and recommended that the ramp could potentially extend onto the porch to assist with ascending the last step. F. Harrell informed the Commission about the difficulty of ascending the last step, and advised that a temporary, portable ramp is likely the best way to proceed due to the maneuverability constraints.
- Commissioner M. Zorzi confirmed with F. Harrell that the ramp itself would contain a platform/level at the corner of the ramp – the “L.”
- Commissioner V. Nespor made a motion to approve the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner V. Walsh. With no other discussion on the motion, it was approved unanimously.

VII. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING – STANDARD GUIDELINES FOR THOSE DISTRICTS WITH NO GUIDELINES

- Staff Member A. Strniste informed the Commission that this item had been continued multiple times due to meeting time constraints.
- Commissioner V. Walsh asked Staff Member A. Strniste if the guidelines had been properly noticed and if the public had the opportunity to provide comments and attend the hearings. Staff Member A. Strniste responded in the affirmative.
- Commissioner V. Walsh proposed that the word “should” be changed to “shall” as it related to the provision pertaining to fencing. The Commission agreed.

- Commissioner A. Nardi proposed that the heading “Garages” be changes to “Garages and Accessory Buildings.” The Commission agreed.
- Commissioner V. Nespor asked for clarification as to what districts the proposed guidelines would apply to; Staff Member A. Strniste responded that there were about 15 or so districts that were established without guidelines; these proposed guidelines are meant to apply to those districts.
- Acting Chair W. Kroll inquired about the section discussing penalties and whether the penalties were too light or were cumulative in nature. Staff Member A. Strniste advised that the language was from State statute and that he would need to inquire with the Law Department regarding the cumulative effect. Commissioner V. Walsh opined that the Commission could always amend the guidelines upon learning new information in the future.
- Commissioner V. Walsh made a motion to accept the proposed district guidelines, as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner V. Nespor. With no discussion on the motion it was approved unanimously.

VIII. *OTHER BUSINESS – BYERS STREET LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT*

- Staff Member A. Strniste informed the Commission that this item had been introduced in May, which related to the expansion of the Bernie-Taylor-Lay Block. While the City did receive approval from the Massachusetts Historical Commission for the Bernie-Taylor-Lay Block, they recommended that the District be larger. As a result, Staff Member A. Strniste asked Shannon Walsh from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) to assist with what a District may look like. S. Walsh was able to produce draft districts – one that would incorporate the Quadrangle-Mattoon Local Historic District, are the other that would wrap around the Quadrangle-Mattoon Local Historic District. Back in May, the Commission favored the proposal that wrapped around the Quadrangle-Mattoon Local Historic District.
- Commissioner V. Walsh made a motion to move forward with the expanded Byers Street District. Commissioner M. Zorzi seconded the motion. Jamie Gruber, from Wayfinders informed the Commission that the Bernie-Taylor-Lay Block would be part of the larger district, and that Wayfinders had received CPA funding to renovate the buildings contained in the Bernie-Taylor-Lay block – that a project needs to be located in a local historic district to receive funding. Vandana Sareen, also from Wayfinders, agreed with the comments made by J. Gruber.
- Commissioner V. Walsh noted for the record that the Commission will have two hearings in the future – when the proposed District is going through the approval process.
- Acting Chair W. Kroll informed the Commission and the public that he had a property on Byers Street and would be recusing himself from the vote in order to avoid any conflict of interest or any perception of any conflict of interest.
- The Commission approved the motion four (4) to zero (0), with Commissioners A. Nardi, V. Nespor, V. Walsh, and M. Zorzi voting in favor of the application and Acting Chair W. Kroll recusing himself from the vote.

IX. *OTHER BUSINESS – APPOINTMENTS OF COMMISSION OFFICERS*

- Commissioner W. Kroll nominated Commissioner A. Nardi to be Chair of the Commission. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner V. Walsh.
- Commissioner V. Walsh nominated Commissioner W. Kroll to be Vice Chair of the Commission. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner M. Zorzi.

- Commissioner V. Walsh nominated Staff Member A. Strniste to be the Staff liaison to the Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner V. Nespor.
- The slate of nominations was approved unanimously.

X. *OTHER BUSINESS – APPOINTMENTS OF COMMISSION OFFICERS*

- Staff Member A. Strniste informed the Commission of the following Certificates of Non-Applicability that were approved since the Commission’s last meeting on September 18, 2025:
 - 240 Washington Boulevard – rear window wall and rear door replacement, not visible from the public right-of-way.
 - 230 Washington Boulevard – asphalt roof to asphalt roof.
 - 42 Marengo Park – tar and gravel flat roof replacement with asphalt based flat 2-layer roofing system, not visible from the public right-of-way.
 - 33 Colony Road – below grade basement window replacement, not visible from the public right-of-way.
- Staff Member A. Strniste informed the Commission that he was likely attending a conference on November 6, the Commission’s first Thursday meeting in November. The Commission agreed to meet on that date without Staff if need be.
- Staff Member A. Strniste advised that he would be returning from New York City on October 16 and was anticipating arriving in time before the meeting; however, he will be in attendance should he be running late.

XI. *OTHER BUSINESS – OCTOBER 16, 2025 QUORUM CALL*

- Commissioner V. Nespor will be unavailable on October 16, 2025.
- Commissioner V. Walsh can be available if a quorum is needed.
- Commissioners A. Nardi, W. Kroll and M. Zorzi will be in attendance.

XII. *OTHER BUSINESS – PUBLIC SPEAK-OUT SESSION*

- No public was in attendance to provide comment.
- Commissioner V. Walsh made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner M. Zorzi seconded the motion. With no other discussion, the motion was approved unanimously. The Commission adjourned at 6:27 PM.