

Nantucket Historical Commission

April 17, 2026 Meeting

10AM

131 Pleasant Street, Nantucket MA and via Zoom

Attendees:

Betsy Tyler (Commissioner)
Barbara Halsted (Commissioner, online)
George Butterworth (Commissioner)
Rita Carr (Commissioner)
Angus MacLeod (Commissioner)
Sarah McLane (Commissioner)
Abby De Molina (Commissioner, online)
Holly Backus (staff – Preservation Planner, online)

Agenda

- Roll call at 10:03 AM *Commissioners Rita, George, Barbara, Angus, Sarah and Betsy are in person. Barbara and Abby are on Zoom, as is Holly Backus.*
- Public Comment
 - None
- Staff update
 - Nothing additional beyond the agenda
- Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Review – 17 North Water Street
 - Erin Doherty, Epsilon Associates, Cailen Casey, owner, and Dmitri Kapalis, project architect, presented the project. 17 N Water St was constructed c. 1812 and has served as a guest house since the late 19th century; project will retain this historic use, retaining guestrooms in largely the same configuration, with a rear addition and two additional attic rooms. Intend to use both federal and state tax credits.
 - Holly stated how glad she is that the historic use is being retained
 - Angus and Rita expressed concern over the loss of the rear winder stair; removal allows creation of a code-compliant egress stair for all three levels. Putting a code-compliant stair in the addition would require the addition be taller, desire was to keep the new addition secondary to the existing building
 - Sprinkler system is planned, though not required, which the commission appreciates. The sprinklers mostly do not require changing ceiling heights, with limited exceptions
 - Angus asked about the increased bedroom count; two new rooms are being created on the third floor and two in the addition
 - Sarah, Betsy, George, and Barbara are in favor of the application
 - Rita asked about a specific door being removed; Cailan replied the door replacement is to allow for an ADA compliant guest room
 - Motion to write a letter of support for the project made by Angus, seconded by Sarah
 - Angus – Aye, Sarah – Aye, Betsy, Aye, George – Aye, Abby – Aye, Barbara – Aye, Rita – Aye

- Pleasant Street accessibility improvements – review of survey responses with
- Transportation Program Manager
 - Mike Burns presented on results of survey following his presentation from the February NHC meeting
 - 112 responses to survey, mostly year round residents.
 - Respondents disliked cars blocking the road and liked the historic character, preserving historic character was top priority, and preserving shade trees
 - Focus Area 1 – Silver St to South Mill St
 - Design Alternative 3, removing eight parking to reroute sidewalk around trees, is recommended
 - Focus Area 2 – South Mill St to Mill St
 - Design Alternative 2, removing parking to ease traffic is recommended. This alternative keeps 3 spaces as a traffic calming measure and retain some parking.
 - Focus Area 3 – Tree near High St
 - Design Alternative 1, retaining the tree with no modifications, is recommended
 - Drew Patnote, DPW director, noted that Pleasant St is the fire department's primary route downtown, and eliminating parking will allow for quicker emergency service access
 - Mary Bergman, private citizen, expressed appreciation for the plans that favor safety over parking
 - Angus asked about utility poles being moved for sidewalk with
 - Rita asked about a crosswalk being added at High Street to allow for pedestrians to safely cross and avoid the large tree
 - Motion to recommend these proposed design alternatives to the Select Board made by Angus, seconded by Abby
 - Angus – aye, Sarah – Aye, Betsy – aye, George – abstain, Barbara – Aye, Abby – aye, Rita – aye
 - The NHC appreciates the outreach on this project
- Historic resource surveys update
 - PaleoWest, LLC / Chronical Heritage survey of Town-owned historic resources
 - Late April site visit, dates to be confirmed
 - Massachusetts Historical Commission FY23 Brant Point and Cliffside surveys
 - Discussion of site visit; Holly met with Easton Architects on Tuesday
- Certified Local Government: debrief of April 10 meeting
 - Additional Discussion of Annual Town Meeting Articles of Preservation Concern
 - Article 72, sponsored by Hollis Webb, would increase the quantum of vote required by the HDC to allow for the demolition of a structure 50 years or older via amendment to a general bylaw. Article 72 was not discussed at the Certified Local Government meeting; HDC will discuss it next week
 - Angus supports Article 72
 - Abby thinks the change should be proposed by changing the HDC Special Act; Holly agrees
 - George supports Article 72 as written and hopes for stronger penalties for illegal demolitions

- Sarah supports Holly's assertion that this should be pursued through amendments to the Special Act
 - Rita asks Holly what the Town Council opinion specifically says, Holly does not remember the specifics
 - The NHC supports the intent of Article 72, concern is over how the change is made, would amending the general bylaw be effective
 - Mary Bergman, Nantucket Preservation Trust, worries that if this is not supported by the NHC or not discussed at Town Meeting, it will fall of the radar and encourages the NHC to support the article
 - Angus asks Holly if the HDC can set this policy themselves
 - Sarah suggests exploring an amendment that could ask for a home rule petition change the special act if necessary, if the Town Moderated deems that to be within the scope of the article
 - Motion by Angus to express the NHC is in favor of the intent of Article 72, seconded by George.
 - Angus – Aye, Sarah – Aye, Betsy – Aye, George, - Aye, Abby – Aye, Barbara – Aye, Rita, Aye
 - Rita will reach out to Hollis to discuss further.
- Upcoming training opportunities
 - Next National Alliance of Preservation Commission training is May 14
 - Commission Goals
 - Approval of Minutes: March 20, 2026 meeting
 - No vote taken, minutes not yet ready
 - Other Business
 - Discussion of on street parking/new curb cut policy emerged at the Select Board meeting

Motion to adjourn made by Sarah, Seconded by Abby

Angus – Aye, Sarah – Aye, Betsy – Aye, George – Aye, Abby – Aye, Barbara – Aye, Rita - Aye