

Nantucket Historical Commission

February 20, 2026 Meeting

10AM

131 Pleasant Street, Nantucket MA and via Zoom

Attendees:

Betsy Tyler (Commissioner)
Barbara Halsted (Commissioner)
George Butterworth (Commissioner)
Rita Carr (Commissioner)
Holly Backus (staff – Preservation Planner)
Angus MacLeod (Commissioner) – online
Sarah McLane (Commissioner) - online
Mike Burns (staff – Transportation Manager) – online

Absent:

Abby De Molina (Commissioner)

Agenda

- Roll call at 10 AM *Commissioners Rita, George, Barbara, and Betsy are in person. Commissioners Angus is online. Staff Holly is also in person.*
- Public comment *None*
- Staff update: Holly Backus reported on a meeting she attended along with commissioners Carr and De Molina and MassDOT and other Town staff with engineering consultants Fuss & O'Neill reviewing the 25% design plans for changes to Milestone Rotary
 - Angus asked if those 25% design plans could be shared with the full commission
 - Mike Burns responded that the plans reviewed were conceptual; the next version with more input from staff will be ready to be shared.
- Pleasant Street Improvement Alternatives review and discussion with Mike Burns, Transportation Planner
 - Mike presented options for improving pedestrian access along Pleasant Street between Five Corners and Main St, weighing historic character, accessibility best practices, and traffic concerns
 - 3 Focus areas: Silver St to South Mill St, South Mill St to Mill St, and the 60" diameter tree near High Street
 - There is a public outreach survey to respond with concerns about the Pleasant St corridor and how they use it, and their priorities for project goals
 - Mike will return to present to the NHC after the survey period to seek a recommendation on the design
 - Holly mentioned this has been a Town priority for many years
 - Barbara mentioned the issue of parking at the corner of Mill and Pleasant with work trucks
 - Angus supported retaining trees as much as possible to preserve the streetscape, with the exception of Focus Area 3

- George brought up the conflict between trees and sidewalks and supported retaining the trees while having a wide sidewalk on the east side, where there are fewer trees
- Sarah also supported the idea of having accessible sidewalks on one side with crosswalks to preserve trees on one side, the trees are important. Asked about encroachments; Mike clarified it is the property owner's responsibility to remove encroachments when notified by the Town.
- Betsy agreed with widening the sidewalks on the east side and leaving the trees
- Rita asked about the health of the tree near High Street; Mike was not sure. Any removal of Town trees would require a hearing.
- George asked about the area of Pleasant Street where there is no sidewalk, near Williams Lane, Mike responded that a sidewalk is being pursued and waiting on an engineering proposal
- Request for Historically Appropriate Safety Measures at 53 Main Street
 - Rita reviewed the request for a horse tie up to prevent cars jumping the curb; businessowner Sean Dew had previously requested this to be considered for along Main Street, now is asking for just in front of his business and provided a historic photo showing bollards in front of the business.
 - Barbara likes the design of the simpler bollard in the historic photo compared to a horse tie up
 - George is worried about the precedent, doesn't want to see these all over Main Street, suggests a heavy bench instead
 - Angus is also worried about setting a precedent.
 - Holly referenced a previous PIN project that mapped street materials; suggests this could be a PIN or WPI project to look at where these sorts of bollards or benches to protect businesses could be placed
 - Sarah wonders if this bollard will even prevent a car from doing damage; is it protective enough to solve this issue?
 - Rita asked Mike about pedestrian protection best practices; Mike suggested a bike rack bollard could be a solution here.
 - Consensus from the commission was in favor of a bike bollard
- Historic resource surveys update
 - PaleoWest, LLC/ Chronical Heritage survey of Town-owned historic resources
 - Consultants were unable to travel to the island for their site visit due to January's winter storms; will reschedule.
- Massachusetts Historical Commission FY23 funding Request for Qualifications response from Easton Architects
 - Rita, Abby, and Holly met to review the one submission received and felt comfortable moving forward with Easton Architects. The contract was approved by the Select Board on February 18; Holly will set up a kickoff meeting, it is a tight timeline for completion due to previous failed RFQ.
- 2026 Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey & Planning Grant Application for Preservation Plan
 - Grant application was submitted and notification will be in March
- Civil war monument damage repair
 - Rita confirmed that the Nantucket Historical Association has offered references and "intellectual firepower" not monetary funding

- Holly has not reached out to the Town Manager; Rita and Holly will put together an email to reach out.
- Upcoming training opportunities Rita will virtually attend the Association of Preservation Technology Northeast chapter's annual conference.
- Commission Goals Rita reviewed goals; discussed potentially scheduling a Certified Local Government meeting before Annual Town Meeting.
- Approval of Minutes: October 17, 2025 and January 26, 2026 meetings *Motion to approve the minutes by Angus, second by Barbara. Angus – aye, Sarah – aye, George – aye, Barbara – aye, Betsy – aye, Rita – aye.*
- Other business *None*

Motion to adjourn by Betsy at 10:58 AM, seconded by Barbara. Unanimous approval., Betsy – aye, Barbara – aye, George – aye, Angus – aye, Sarah – aye, Rita – aye.