

NORTHBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 15 2016 (6:00PM-8PM)

Local Historic District Initiative –Public Forum (Town Hall)

The following members of the Planning Board attended the Public Forum with members of the Local Historic District Study Committee: Brian Massey (Chairman), Mark Key (Vice Chairman), Pamela Ferrara (Clerk), Harry Berkowitz, James Berkowitz, and Cindy Key (Associate Member). R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner was also present. The following member of the public attended: Ken Warchol, Chairman Historical Commission; Dan O’Neil; Bill Mello; Debora Sullivan; Crystal Grondin; Edward Wild; Karen Talley; Harrison McCaughey; Megan DiPrete, Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc.; Jeff Lance; & Kevin Klyberg, National Park Service.

I. Welcome & Introductions

Mr. Bechtholdt and Mr. Warchol welcomed attendees and offered opening remarks. Attendees introduced themselves.

II. National Park Designation –Whitinsville

Park Ranger Kevin Klyberg reviewed designation of National Park and the six park nodes: Blackstone River State Park; Old Slater Mill National Historic Landmark District; Slatersville Historic District; Ashton Historic District; Whitinsville Historic District; Hopedale Village Historic District; Blackstone River and tributaries; and the Blackstone Canal (see slides attached). Megan DiPrete provided a brief overview of the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. mission and the opportunities for partnerships in celebrating Whitinsville’s inclusion as a National Historical Park.

III. Village of Whitinsville –Historical Narrative

Kenneth Warchol, Chairman of the Northbridge Historical Commission provided an overview of the history of Northbridge, Whitinsville and the Whitin family via a slideshow presentation (attached).

IV. Establishing a Local Historic District

R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner distributed “There’s a Difference!” brochure prepared by the Massachusetts Historical Commission describing the differences between a Local Historic District and a National Register District. Mr. Bechtholdt then reviewed a flowchart detailing the steps Northbridge needs to follow to create a local historic district for Whitinsville (see chart attached).

V. Inventory of Parcels & Potential Boundaries

Mr. Warchol reviewed with attendees series of slides (attached) delineating a preliminary draft of the boundary and potential properties to be included in a Whitinsville Historic District: Fletcher House; Whitin Mill & Forge; Granite Cotton Mill; Whitin Machine Works; Whitin Community Center; Whitin Park (John

Whitin Estate); Memorial Town Hall; Worker housing (Fletcher Street & Linwood Avenue); Aldrich School; Whitin Lasell Manor; Town Common/Memorial Square; Whitinsville Social Library; Parsonage Building; Whitinsville Bank Building; Village Congregational Church; and Episcopal Church.

VI. Round-Table Discussion

Mr. Warchol briefly reviewed other neighborhoods within Whitinsville that were not initially included in the draft boundary: Chestnut Street; Maple Street; Linden Street; High Street; and Forest Street.

Mr. Bechtholdt and Mr. Warchol sought comments on the draft local historic district boundary and properties. Mr. Warchol briefed attendees on the Local Historic District Study Committee's efforts to date and noted a draft regulations and possible exemptions such as paint-color and exterior treatments not visible from the public way.

Brian Massey felt the John Whitin Crane House at 10 Chestnut Street (Circa 1840), now the Whitinsville Retirement Home should be considered for inclusion in the local historic district. Similarly, Mr. Massey thought the Pine Grove Cemetery and the Middle School located on Linwood Avenue should also be added.

VII. Wrap-up & Next Steps

Mr. Bechtholdt thanked everyone for attending and suggested those with questions may contact the Planning office and/or Ken Warchol. Mr. Bechtholdt deferred to Mr. Warchol and other members of the Local Historic District Study Committee on next steps, such as property owner surveys, educational material, future meetings, and the preparation of the preliminary study report. Mr. Warchol noted that the Study Committee has begun preparing a draft bylaw with regulations; will provide a copy to the Planning Board and others.

Mr. Warchol will look to coordinate a meeting with the Board of Selectmen in the upcoming months. The Local Historic District Study Committee will continue to meet with property owners during this review process.

No other action of the Planning Board was considered or discussed at this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by the Planning Board –

R. Gary Bechtholdt II
Northbridge Town Planner

Cc: Town Clerk

A New National Park

- Legislation passed Dec. 19, 2014
- Authorized and Established – need to determine boundary
- The six park nodes included in the park's legislation:
 - Blackstone River State Park
 - Old Slater Mill National Historic Landmark District
 - Slatersville Historic District
 - Ashton Historic District
 - Whitinsville Historic District
 - Hopedale Village Historic District
 - The Blackstone River and tributaries
 - The Blackstone Canal

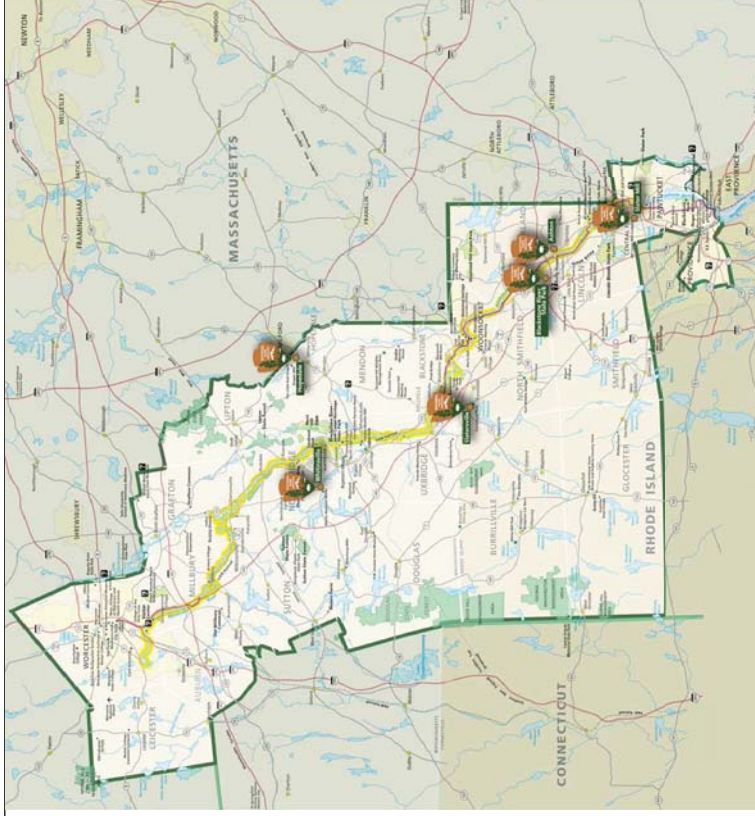
Why Whitinsville?

From the Park's Special Resource Study, 2011

The mill villages described [in the Special Resource Study] were highlighted...because of their particularly high level of physical integrity and completeness and the outstanding visitor experience potential that they offer in terms of opportunities for education, interpretation, and further study.

Why Whitinsville?

- This is where the machining story is best told; not just the buildings associated with the industry that are still intact here but the place where the machinery was developed that drove the industry
- Whitinsville allows us to talk about technology and innovation, relevant to today's high tech world
- The historic fabric in Whitinsville helps us to understand the complex relationship between the skilled machine workers and the unskilled cotton mill workers
- Whitinsville illustrates the ultimate example and evolution of the RI system of manufacturing and mill villages



Why Whitinsville?

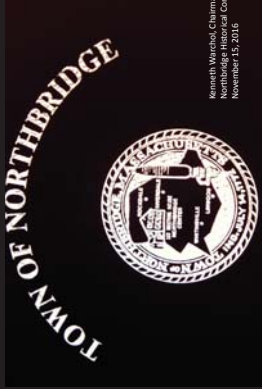
- The inclusion of mill worker, middle management and mill owner housing in the Local Historic District enables us to interpret the many layers of the fabric of the community—ethnic, economic, and architectural
- The universal story that we can tell here is about this community's people; how and where they lived and worked; where and how they spent their free time
- 200 years later, Whitinsville is home to a viable, active community that shows the same spirit of innovation

You've done your part in preserving and maintaining this community's historic fabric.

The NPS is excited to work with you to ensure its continued care and celebration.



Grandmother Betsy Fletcher Whitin
(Mrs. Paul Whitin)









Massachusetts Avenue Historic District, Worcester, both a Local and National Register Historic District

Can a property be designated both as part of a National Register District and as a part of a Local Historic District?

Yes, in this case property owners receive all the benefits from the federal listing and the assurance that the local bylaw or ordinance will protect the historic area from inappropriate alteration.

If my property is within a National Register District, will it eventually be designated a Local Historic District as well?

Not necessarily. An M.G.L. Chapter 40C Local Historic District is established only by a two-thirds majority vote of your city council or town meeting. It is a completely separate local process.

State Register of Historic Places

Properties within Local Historic Districts and National Register Districts are automatically included in the State Register of Historic Places.

Listing in the State Register:

- provides limited protection from adverse effects by state-involved projects.
- when available, provides owners of municipal or private non-profit properties opportunity to apply for 50% matching state grants through the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund.

If you would like more information on historic district designation, contact either your local historical commission or the Massachusetts Historical Commission, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125 (617) 727-8470, www.state.ma.us/mhc

There's a Difference!



Local Historic District

Granby Local Historic District

National Register District

Sumner Hill Historic District, Jamaica Plain:
a National Register Historic District



MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL COMMISSION

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

There is a difference...

There are substantial differences between a Local Historic District and a National Register District. This brochure has been prepared by the Massachusetts Historical Commission to help clarify these differences.

National Register Districts

A National Register District is part of the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the list of individual buildings, sites, structures, objects, **and** districts, deemed important in American history, culture, architecture, or archaeology. It is a federal designation and is administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Massachusetts Historical Commission as the State Historic Preservation Office.

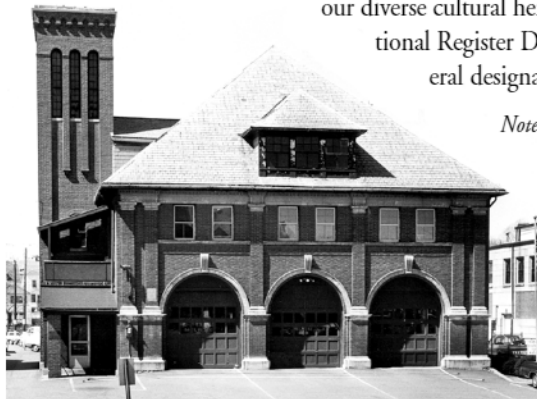
Listing in the National Register:

- recognizes that the area is important to the history of the community, state, or nation.
- allows the owners of income-producing properties certain federal tax incentives for rehabilitation.
- provides limited protection from adverse effects by federal or state involved projects.

If there is no state or federal involvement in a project (such as federal licenses, permits, or funding) and no pertinent local or regional regulations (such as a local historic district), then listing in the National Register of Historic Places does not in any way limit an owner's handling of the property.

There are over 900 National Register Districts in Massachusetts.

The National Register of Historic Places, begun in 1966, promotes an appreciation of our diverse cultural heritage. Communities with National Register Districts take great pride in this federal designation.



Fire Station, Melrose Town Center Historic District, both a Local and National Register Historic District

Note: A National Register District cannot be listed if a majority of the property owners submit notarized objections. Every owner of record of private property has the opportunity to comment and/or object to the nomination, and has one vote regardless of whether they own a single property, multiple properties, or a portion of a property.

Local Historic Districts

In general, local historic districts are far more effective at preventing inappropriate changes than a National Register District. In a local historic district, a locally appointed Historic District Commission reviews proposed changes to exterior architectural features visible from a public way. For instance, if a building addition is proposed in a local historic district, the property owner must submit an application to the Historic District Commission. The Historic District Commission holds a public hearing and makes a determination on whether the new addition is appropriate. If the addition is deemed appropriate, the Historic District Commission issues a Certificate, allowing the work to progress. Many Historic District Commissions have prepared *Historic District Design Guidelines* that clarify how proposed projects should respect the existing historic character.

Local Historic Districts in Massachusetts were first established on Beacon Hill and Nantucket in 1955. There are now over 200 local historic districts in Massachusetts. Local Historic Districts have been very effective at saving historic structures, neighborhoods, and villages from inappropriate alteration and demolition.

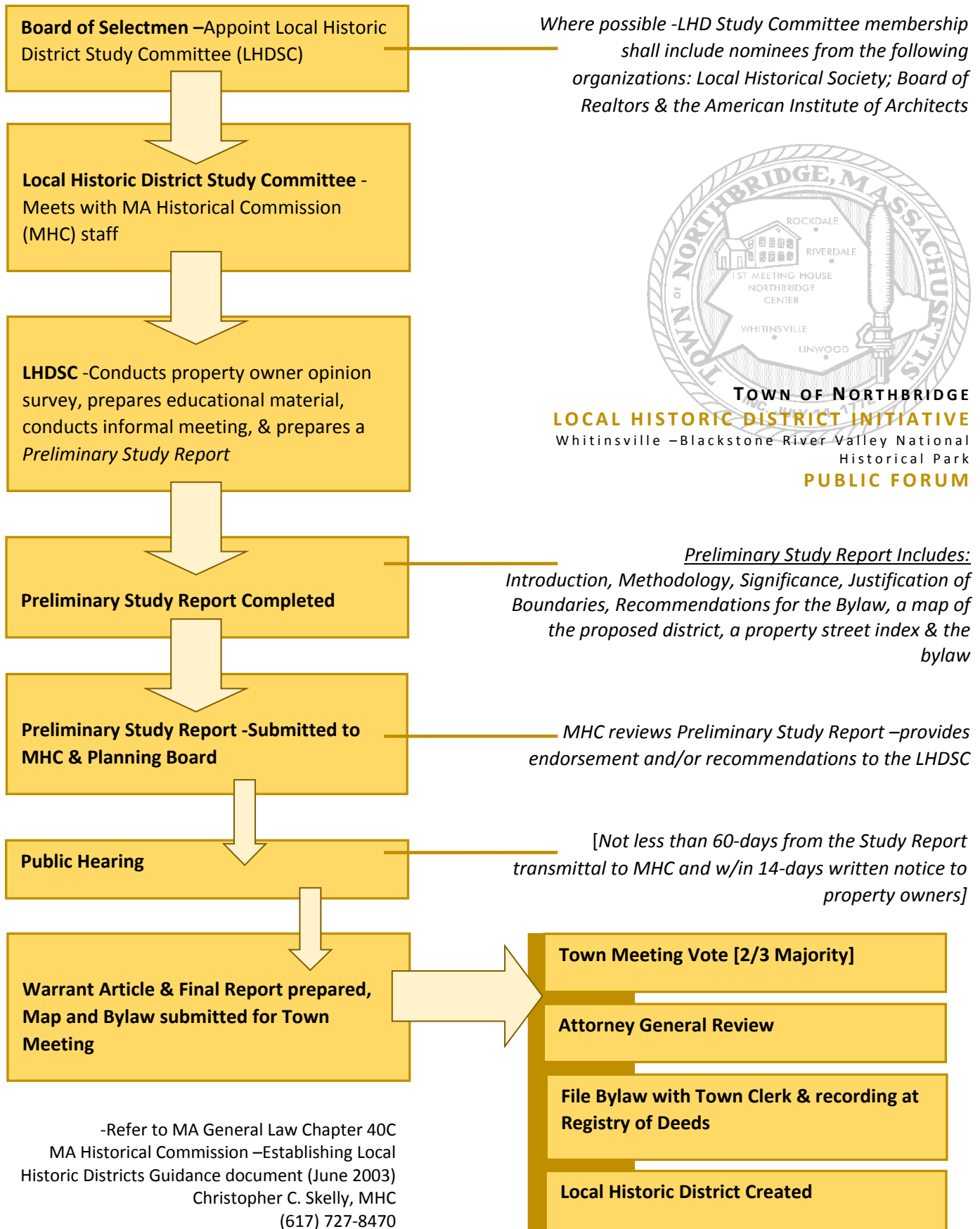
Following the steps outlined in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40C, Local Historic Districts are established by a two-thirds majority city council or town meeting vote.

By establishing a local historic district, a community recognizes the importance of its architectural heritage and how vulnerable it is to inappropriate alterations without this local regulation.

Many proposed changes are exempt from review. In a local historic district, there is no review of interior features. In addition, a variety of exterior features are often exempt such as air conditioning units, storm doors, storm windows, paint color, and temporary structures. The decision on which features are exempt from review depends on how the local bylaw or ordinance is written and passed by your city council or town meeting vote.

This brochure has been financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior. This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. The U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender, or disability in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

ESTABLISHING A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT -FLOWCHART





Whitinsville

LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WHITINSVILLE
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY OF WHITINSVILLE HISTORIANS
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