

TOWN OF HINGHAM

Historic Districts Commission



MEETING MINUTES

DATE: February 19, 2026

PLACE: Remote Meeting via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair, Daniel Clark, Justin Aborn, Catherine Daley, Eric Smoczynski

ALTERNATE MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary Anne Donaldson

ALSO PRESENT: Heidi Gaul, Historic Preservation Administrator

MEMBERS ABSENT, Joshua Blevins, Steven Sadler, Carol Pyles

Call to Order: Chair Dan Clark called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM and stated the following:

This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 and all other applicable laws temporarily amending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording.

REVIEWS AND HEARINGS

Chair Clark announced that the voting members would be Commissioners Aborn, Donaldson, Smoczynski, Daley and himself for all items except 269 Main Street from which Commissioner Donaldson recused herself.

Chair Clark also announced that the members would discuss a request for recommendations regarding a proposed streetlamp replacement project in the Station Street parking lot in between agenda items depending on when Ms. Ashley Broyer from Hingham DPW could join.

1. Gail Nathanson - 269 Main Street

Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove an existing single garage door and a previously filled-in garage door and to replace with a new garage door, to install a garage side door, and to add lighting fixtures at 269 Main Street in the Pear Tree Hill Historic District

Ms. Gail Nathanson introduced the project and then turned it over to Mr. Wes Fawcett, one of the builders on the project. He displayed a sketch of the proposed garage door. He explained that the plan is to replace two small, outdated garage doors (one already filled in) with a single, larger, centered wood garage door to better fit modern vehicles. The new design includes a 9'x7' cedar garage door positioned under an existing window and converting a nearby window into a 9-light wood entry door leading to a new

mudroom. The updates aim to improve functionality and to visually balance the exterior. Administrator Gaul added that the homeowner will work with her regarding the paint color for the door, which will be either black or white.

Chair Clark asked if there were questions or comments. There were none.

MOTION by Commissioner Aborn to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove an existing single garage door, and a previously filled-in garage door, and replace it with a new single garage door, to install a garage door, and to add lighting fixtures at 269 Main Street in the Pear Tree Hill Historic District. The certificate is conditioned upon the following: that the work be completed in a manner consistent with the application and specifications received on January 21, 2026. The final color selection for the door will be coordinated with the Historic District's Commission Administrator.

SECOND by Commissioner Smoczynski

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Daley - Aye
Smoczynski - Aye
Aborn – Aye
Clark – Aye
Donaldson - Abstain

2. Ted and Katie Schwartz - 380 Main Street

Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove and replace the existing front door at 380 Main Street in the Hingham Center (Phase II) Historic District

Mr. Steve Aronson of AMP Builders presented the project. He explained that the homeowner would like to replace the existing fiberglass front door with a Craftsman-style door. They submitted both fiberglass and wood options. Chair Clark explained that while the Commission members generally prefer wood due to its historical appropriateness, the homeowner has the right to maintain a fiberglass door. The applicant indicated a slight preference for fiberglass for maintenance reasons but was open to either option. Mr. Aronson explained that both versions would appear the same once finished. Commissioner Daley asked if there would be a storm door. Mr. Aronson said they were not planning to add one. The Commission members agreed to leave the decision of wood or fiberglass up to the applicant.

There was no further discussion.

MOTION by Commissioner Smoczynski to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove and replace the existing front door at 380 Main Street in the Hingham Center Phase 2 Historic District, with the work to be completed in accordance with the application submitted on January 20, 2026, and allowing the applicant to choose between the two proposed door options.

SECOND by Commissioner Aborn

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Smoczynski - Aye

Aborn – Aye
Donaldson - Aye
Daley - Aye
Clark – Aye

3. Tyler Beath - 188 South Street

Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to add two dormers to the roof and to extend the deck at 188 South Street located in the Lincoln Historic District Extension (Phase II)

Chair Clark shared his screen and Mr. Tyler Beath explained that the rear property is being converted into two condos (188 and 190). This project for the 188 South Street part includes adding dormers to increase upstairs living space from about 430 to 500 square feet and slightly adjusting the roof pitch for more headroom. Exterior changes include connecting the upper decks to provide a second means of egress, adding two new doors, relocating a window, and replacing windows with wood 6-over-6 (with some 4-over-4). The lower unit will remain largely unchanged in appearance. The chimney will also be removed since it is non-functional. The rear elevation is minimally visible from public ways, mostly limited to partial second-story views from nearby streets. Mr. Beath noted he is not enthusiastic about the deck connection but sees it as necessary to meet egress requirements.

Chair Clark asked for comments and questions. He explained several guideline issues regarding the dormers. He stated they should be set back further from the sides, not run up to the ridge, and stay within recommended width limits. Members agreed the current design is close but may need minor adjustments such as slightly increasing setbacks or lowering the dormer from the ridge to better align with HDC guidelines while also balancing the building's small size.

The stair layout was discussed and clarified. While somewhat awkward, it will be simplified into one set of stairs and largely hidden from view. The Commission members were generally comfortable with it.

The members also requested additional details including window/door specifications and material cut sheets (siding, trim, railings, roofing). Chair Clark recommended continuing this application to the next meeting so the applicant can refine the dormer design and submit complete material specifications.

Informal Discussion Regarding a Proposed Streetlamp Replacement Project in the Station Street Parking Lot

Ms. Ashley Broyer, DPW Superintendent, explained the proposed streetlamp replacement project in the Station Street parking lot. Chair Clark shared his screen to show some options for the streetlamp replacements. Ms. Broyer explained the plan proposes installing 27 new, uniform light fixtures throughout the Station Street parking area to address safety concerns caused by poor lighting and dark spots. Existing newer lights near Euromart will remain unchanged, while older and mismatched fixtures, currently about four different styles, will be replaced.

Commissioner Daley asked if the lights were gas. Ms. Broyer answered that they were LED lights. Commissioner Aborn asked about the color temperature of the lights. Ms. Broyer said they would be a warmer color and would be downward-facing. In summary, the proposed parking lot lights will be about 14 feet tall and designed to resemble nearby lantern fixtures, though simpler in design. The proposed lights will not match the more decorative downtown lights due to budget constraints, and the project is limited to the Station Street lot. A sample light will be installed, with a warmer 3000K color preferred. Funding for the project must be used before June 30. Final approval will come from the Select Board.

MOTION by Commissioner Smoczynski to allow the chair to sign a letter of support for the proposed Station Street parking lot streetlamp replacement project.

SECOND by Commissioner Daley

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aborn – Aye
Smoczynski - Aye
Daley - Aye
Clark – Aye
Donaldson - Aye

4. Mike Ahern - 709 Main Street (continued from January 15, 2026)

Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish two additions and an existing detached garage and to build a new addition and pool house at 709 Main Street located in the Glad Tidings Historic District

Chair Clark asked Mr. Mike Ahern to share his screen and to focus on design revisions made since the last meeting. Mr. Ahern presented updated plans, highlighting the addition of a connector/mudroom to separate the house and garage, relocation of the garage to reduce the length of the façade, and lowered rooflines to better differentiate structures. He also noted adjustments to window layouts, site improvements including a simplified walkway and added landscaping, and proposed material options for the garage and guest house. He clarified the pool house design, including bifold barn-style doors opening to an outdoor kitchen.

Chair Clark shared a comparison of earlier and current elevations, noting the design has become more cohesive, with a cleaner front elevation and improved side views. He also emphasized the thoughtful reuse of the existing shed and overall positive evolution of the project. The discussion then opened for Commission questions.

Commissioner Aborn said he liked the latest proposal, noting its responsiveness, visual interest, and cohesive relationship between the rear building and overall project. Commissioner Donaldson raised concerns about the removal of the interior central staircase, questioning its impact on the home's historic character as perceived from the exterior. She also commented that the pool house design felt disjointed and expressed dislike for the use of barn doors. Commissioner Daley shared similar concerns about preserving the staircase as a historic feature even though the visibility impact may be limited. Chair Clark clarified that interior elements, such as the staircase, are outside the commission's purview unless they affect the exterior. He did encourage Mr. Ahern to consider preservation of the staircase if feasible.

Commissioner Smoczynski identified inconsistencies between the plans and elevations, particularly with window and door alignment across façades. Chair Clark agreed and pointed them out showing the elevations. Mr. Ahern acknowledged the errors but said the plans reflected the intended design. He stated that corrected elevations will be provided.

Commissioner Daley noted that the design has improved significantly and that the hyphen connector successfully reduces the perceived massing. She expressed concern, however, that the rooflines are too low in pitch, creating a "squat" appearance that feels inconsistent with the historic structure and overall

proportions. She suggested increasing the roof height to improve balance and visual harmony. Commissioner Smoczynski made adjustments to the elevations in real time and received strong support from multiple members.

Commissioner Daley also recommended considering cedar shingle siding on the garage and outbuildings to better break up the massing and to align with the site's traditional style. Mr. Ahern said he preferred to maintain painted siding for durability and sustainability reasons.

Discussion then focused on window placement. Adjustments were made to the elevations during the discussion to improve symmetry and alignment, with general agreement that more balanced spacing enhanced the design. This created further discussion regarding exterior aesthetics and interior functionality, particularly regarding bedroom window placement and layout constraints.

Chair Clark reviewed the modifications agreed upon for the main portion of the house. The updates to the main house include increasing the roof pitch on both the first addition and the connector, revising elevations to reflect correct window layouts on the north and south sides, and adjusting the garage's north elevation to match the south. The stone wall opening will remain the same width but be shifted to align with the door, and associated wall elements will be relocated accordingly.

Discussion moved on to the pool house. The focus was on door design, proportions, and overall balance. Commissioner Daley questioned the use of solid colonial-style doors and suggested incorporating glass to reduce a heavy, opaque appearance. She also recommended widening the barn doors for better proportion and considering repositioning the adjacent door to create a more balanced façade. Additional suggestions included adding or adjusting windows on the right side to improve symmetry, though concerns were raised about impacts on upper wall space. Commissioners also discussed the roof proportions, with suggestions to adjust the ridge height or detailing (such as adding rafter tails) to improve overall scale and appearance.

Mr. Ahern then presented proposed options for materials. Discussion focused on design details and site planning. The front door will match the original home's 6-panel style, and the members agreed Mr. Ahern's preference to color-match the existing white instead of using "Jewett White."

Regarding the pool fence, concerns were raised about a 6-foot fence enclosing the entire property. Alternatives were discussed, including adjusting fence placement, reducing its extent, or reconfiguring the pool and pool house location to minimize visual impact and improve openness. There was general interest in exploring layouts that push the pool and fencing farther from the street and driveway.

The fence style was considered acceptable but potentially subject to change depending on layout, with suggestions for less prominent colors. The group also discussed materials, supporting the proposed stone wall, traditional roofing, and historically appropriate window details. Pavers and driveway materials will need further review, especially if non-standard options are used. Additional feedback included refining the pool house roof proportions and possibly lowering and adjusting its pitch for better scale.

The Commission members agreed to defer decisions on the pool, pool house, and fencing to a future meeting, while moving forward with approvals for the main house with noted revisions.

Discussion began on options for siding for the house and additions. Concerns were raised about the uniform, synthetic appearance of the proposed composite. Members discussed alternatives to break up

the massing, including the use of shingles or vertical siding. There was also hesitation about replacing the original wood siding, though the applicant noted much of it is damaged and not salvageable. No decision was made and the siding discussion was deferred for further review.

In an effort to move the project along, motions were made on parts of the project while other aspects of the project will be continued to the next meeting.

MOTION by Commissioner Smoczynski that approval is based on the plans as reviewed and amended tonight to include revisions to the windows on the north elevation to match those shown in the plan for the kitchen and on the north elevation of the garage to match the south elevation on the addition with windows to match those as shown on the floor plan, and to increase the height of the rooflines for the addition and the connector to 2'7" below the main ridge.

The approval is contingent upon submission of drawings to the Historical Preservation Administrator for confirmation.

SECOND by Commissioner Daly

MOTION by Commissioner Smoczynski to amend the previous motion as follows: The Mill Lane elevation windows will not be as per the plan but would be evenly spaced windows as shown (roughly) on the second floor plan and mirrored on the first floor to align the three windows and one door with those windows. The pavers to the front door and on the addition side should be City Hall Pavers.

SECOND by Commissioner Daly

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aborn – Aye
Smoczynski - Aye
Daley - Aye
Clark – Aye

MOTION by Commissioner Aborn to amend the previous motion as follows: The motion as amended does not include the siding material for the primary house.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aborn – Aye
Smoczynski - Aye
Daley - Aye
Clark – Aye

OTHER BUSINESS

Due to the lateness of the hour, Chair Clark decided to defer the rest of the agenda items, including approval of meeting minutes, until the next meeting.

ADJOURN

MOTION TO ADJOURN by Commissioner Daley
SECOND by Commissioner Donaldson

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Donaldson - Aye
Smoczynski - Aye
Aborn – Aye
Daley – Aye
Clark - Aye

Meeting adjourned at 10:22 PM

Respectfully submitted by Robin Gorfine, Recording Clerk