

TOWN OF HINGHAM

Historic Districts Commission



MEETING MINUTES

DATE: March 19, 2026

PLACE: Remote Meeting via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT: Justin Aborn, Joshua Blevins, Catherine Daley, Eric Smoczynski

ALTERNATE MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary Anne Donaldson

ALSO PRESENT: Heidi Gaul, Historic Preservation Administrator

MEMBERS ABSENT: Steven Sadler, Carol Pyles, Chair, Daniel Clark

Call to Order: Commissioner Eric Smoczynski, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. He 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

Commissioner Eric Smoczynski announced that the voting members for all agenda items would be Commissioners Aborn, Daley, Blevins, Donaldson, and himself.

1. Tyler Beath, 188 South Street, (continued from February 19, 2026)

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

Mr. Tyler Beath presented updated plans and materials, confirming the use of Brosco double-hung, 6-over-6 wood windows with low-E insulated glass. While general specifications were provided, the Commission requested additional detail, including cut sheets and confirmation of mullion (muntin) dimensions, noting a preference for a 5/8-inch width. Simulated divided light windows were deemed acceptable, though authentic divided lights are preferred, if feasible.

Revised plans dated March 9 and updated March 18 were submitted, with the primary change being the lowering of the dormer approximately six inches from the roof peak. The dormer length remained unchanged. Commissioners agreed that the revised dormer proportions were appropriate and responsive to feedback from the previous meeting.

It was clarified that the doors would not be visible from the public way, minimizing concern; however, the Commission noted that cut sheets may still be required for any visible elements, including lighting. The applicant confirmed that the exterior paint color would remain white.

Overall, the Commission expressed satisfaction with the proposal and agreed that outstanding details, including final window specifications and lighting documentation, could be reviewed and approved administratively. There were no public comments.

MOTION by Commissioner Daley to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to add two dormers to the roof and extend the deck at 188 South Street, located in the Lincoln Historic District Extension (Phase II). Lighting and window cut sheets to be shared with the Administrator for final approval.

SECOND by Commissioner Aborn

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aborn – Aye
Daley - Aye
Blevins – Aye
Donaldson - Aye
Smoczynski - Aye

2. Hingham Congregational Church, 378 Main Street (also known as 0 Main Street)

Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a HVAC condenser unit at the rear of the church in the Hingham Center Historic District (Phase II)

Mr. Timothy Greene presented a revised HVAC proposal for the AT&T installation within Hingham Congregational Church. The previously approved design included window vents and exhaust fans, which were never installed and are no longer feasible. The updated proposal replaces those elements with a Mitsubishi mini-split system, requiring installation of a new exterior condenser. The unit would be located at the rear of the building on a concrete pad, adjacent to two existing HVAC condensers, with minimal visibility from the public way.

Commission members discussed the size and placement of the unit (approximately 4 feet high) and whether it should be elevated to address snow concerns. Mr. Greene confirmed that it would remain on a ground-level pad. Members also asked about adding screening, such as a fence, to mitigate visual impact. After some discussion, there was general consensus that it was not essential due to the limited view from the public way.

Additional discussion confirmed that all line sets would be routed internally, minimizing exterior visual impact. Members noted that the revised approach would have less impact on the historic structure than the previously approved window venting system.

MOTION by Commissioner Aborn to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for 378 Main Street, located in Hingham Center Historic District Extension (Phase II), to allow the installation of an HVAC condenser unit at the rear of the church, adjacent to the existing condenser unit. This Certificate is conditioned upon the work being completed in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted in the application dated February 25, 2026.

SECOND by Commissioner Blevins

There was no further discussion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aborn – Aye
Daley - Aye
Donaldson - Aye
Blevins – Aye
Smoczynski - Aye

3. Keith Orlanderra and Caitlin Slodden, 76 Lincoln Street

Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to create a two-story addition to the left side of the home, to create a 2-story addition to the right side of the home to include an attached garage and to relocate the driveway at 76 Lincoln Street located in the Lincoln Historic District Extension (Phase III)

Mr. Daniel Quaile, the architect representing the applicants, presented an updated and more developed proposal, building on an earlier preliminary presentation, and shared updated drawings for Commission feedback. He provided historical context for the house, explaining that the original center portion dates to 1743, with an addition on the right from the early 1900s and a kitchen addition on the left added in 1999. He noted that the house has expanded incrementally over time and that the current proposal continues that pattern.

The proposed project includes an expansion of the existing kitchen with a gambrel roof designed to match the home's architectural character, along with a new two-car garage and a mudroom connector. The garage has been pushed farther back and separated from the main house to reduce visual massing, with its rear aligned to the back of the existing structure. The kitchen will be expanded outward, and a second-floor bedroom will be added above it—an update from the previous proposal. A primary suite is proposed above the garage connector, and a small dormer at the attic level will improve usability in that space.

Mr. Quaile described how the design uses varied rooflines, setbacks, and dormers to break up the overall scale, and noted that materials will largely match the existing house, including cedar clapboards and similar window proportions. The proposal also incorporates design elements from the original structure, such as diamond-shaped windows, which may be repurposed and integrated into the new garage façade.

Site constraints were discussed, including the long, narrow lot and a sloping rear yard with an existing retaining wall and patio. The project will extend and replicate the existing stone retaining wall along the rear and potentially along the driveway, with the garage partially set into the slope to minimize height. The garage floor will be set lower than the main house to maintain a subordinate roofline.

Minimal demolition is proposed, primarily limited to portions of the 1999 addition while retaining parts of the existing foundation. Additional details included proposed materials such as asphalt shingles to match existing roofing, Marvin Ultimate double-hung windows with simulated divided lights, carriage-style garage doors, and traditional-style lighting.

Commissioner Daley expressed her appreciation for the quality of the presentation, particularly the side-by-side renderings, noting they were very helpful. Initial discussion addressed proposed hardscape elements, including brick pavers and walkways connecting the driveway, mudroom, and existing granite steps, with a preference indicated for Boston City Hall-style pavers. Clarification was requested on the full scope of hardscape work and supporting documentation.

As discussion moved to general comments, several members raised concerns that the proposed additions, while attractive and well-balanced, diminish the visibility and character of the original historic structure. Commissioners noted that the scale and proportions of the side additions, particularly the gambrel roof forms and garage massing, made it difficult to distinguish the historic core of the house. Suggestions included reducing the height and scale of the additions, adjusting roof proportions, lowering ridge lines, and simplifying or modifying dormers—especially the more contemporary dormer over the garage—to better align with traditional forms.

Members also discussed the potential use of differentiated materials to help the original structure stand out, such as varying shingle or siding treatments between the main house and additions. Additional design refinements were suggested, including possibly eliminating or reducing the number of dormers, breaking up roof connections, and mitigating exposed foundation areas.

The Commission acknowledged the challenges of adapting the historic house for modern living, including functional limitations such as small rooms, and expressed support for improvements that allow continued use while preserving historic character. Everyone appreciated that many original windows have been restored and will remain.

Commissioner Smoczynski asked if there were any comments from the public. Mr. Chris Carroll of 18 Bremer Circle, stated the he is an abutter up the hill from the proposed driveway and garage. He expressed concerns about how the garage massing, the third-floor sightlines, and coordinated lighting might affect the other residences up the hill.

Overall, the Commission felt the proposal was close to approval but would benefit from another design iteration to better balance historic preservation with new construction. A continuance was recommended to allow the applicant to refine the design, including further differentiation of old and new elements, adjustments to scale and massing, and submission of additional details such as material specifications and retaining wall plans.

4. Patrick Czorniak and Leigh Colihan, 235 Main Street

Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove the rear asphalt parking area and to replace it with lawn; to construct fieldstone or boulder walls to retain proposed lawn and revised driveway/parking area; to construct new retaining walls at house to match existing stone walls; to create new turnaround area of crushed stone/gravel; and to install a new picket fence and gate at the proposed new yard area at 235 Main Street in the Pear Tree Hill Historic District.

Mr. Sean Papich, of Sean Pappich, Landscape Architecture represented the homeowners and shared his screen to display photos and other materials. He displayed a landscape redesign proposal for 235 Main Street, a historically significant property with prior renovations and an expansive asphalt driveway. The project aims to remove a substantial portion of the existing asphalt and introduce a more functional and family-friendly layout, including new lawn areas for the homeowners' young children. Due to the property's steep topography and limited usable lawn space, the plan focuses on regrading portions of the

site, creating flatter play areas, and improving vehicular circulation.

Key elements of the proposal include constructing new rustic fieldstone retaining walls to match existing walls, adding stone steps, and introducing a crushed stone turnaround area to reduce the visual impact of paving. The design also proposes lowering the driveway grade to improve safety and reduce visibility of parked cars, along with the addition of a simple picket fence and gate to enclose the play area. Materials such as granite slabs or cobbles for the driveway apron remain under consideration.

Commissioner Smoczynski asked Mr. Papich to focus on what would be visible from the street. Mr. Papich emphasized that most changes would have limited visibility and would match existing materials. Commissioner Daley expressed some concerns about locating the parking area closer to the street and introducing more modern landscape features. She commented that while it is attractive, it isn't particularly historically accurate.

Commission members expressed support for reducing the large asphalt area and improving the site's usability, noting the proposal softens the overall appearance. Ms. Ally Donnelly, an abutter at 227 Main Street, spoke in favor of the project, citing support for making the property more suitable for a young family.

MOTION by Commissioner Aborn to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for 235 Main Street in the Pear Tree Hill Historic District to remove the rear asphalt parking area and replace it with lawn; construct fieldstone or boulder retaining walls to support the proposed lawn and revised driveway/parking area; construct new retaining walls at the house to match existing stone walls; create a new crushed stone turnaround area; and install a new picket fence and gate enclosing the proposed yard area.

The motion was conditioned upon the work being completed in a manner consistent with the application and materials received on February 26, 2026, as well as updated materials and plans received, including the revised plan dated March 19, 2026.

SECOND by Commissioner Donaldson

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aborn – Aye
Blevins – Aye
Daley - Nay
Donaldson - Aye
Smoczynski - Aye

5. Mike Ahern, 709 Main Street (continued from February 19, 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

Commissioner Smoczynski asked Administrator Gaul to remind everyone where this application stood as of the last meeting. She replied that revised plans had been submitted that evening and she suggested that Mr. Ahern review the changes. She added that the main house had largely been approved last time, the outstanding items limited to siding materials, the pool house, and the fence.

Mr. Ahern presented updates addressing previous comments, including revised window placements, roofline adjustments, and corrected plans to align with earlier feedback. The site plan was modified to relocate the pool and pool house further from Main Street, reducing the visibility and length of the proposed fence. The pool house was also shifted out of the setback to comply with zoning requirements. Additional changes included material updates for the pool house (clapboard and shingle), revised door and window configurations, and the use of Boston City Hall pavers. The proposed paint will match the existing house color, though the exact color name is unknown.

Commission members discussed zoning considerations, including setbacks, deck size allowances, and potential height limits for the accessory dwelling unit, with confirmation that further verification may be needed.

Commissioner Smoczynski asked for comments or questions. Commissioner Donaldson said she still remained unconvinced about the appropriateness of the proposed fence design and pool house doors, citing concerns about compatibility within the historic district.

Other members expressed appreciation for Mr. Ahern's responsiveness and the evolution of the proposal, noting that the project now better fits the lot and streetscape. Discussion focused primarily on siding materials for the historic house. Commissioners Daley and Blevins emphasized concern about using a new composite siding on the original structure, advocating instead for traditional wood cladding to preserve historic character, particularly given the scale of proposed additions. Commissioner Aborn voiced support for the proposed composite material, citing its appearance and potential as a viable option for future applications. Mr. Ahern explained the rationale for the composite siding, highlighting durability, resistance to rot and termites, and long-term sustainability, especially given the building's proximity to the ground and existing deterioration. A compromise was reached with agreement from Mr. Ahern for using wood cladding on the primary historic structure, supplemented by a limited use of composite material, such as two courses at the base, for added protection against rot.

Further discussion focused on evaluating the use of composite shingles on the garage to differentiate it from the main house and confirming details such as window colors and trim materials. Commissioner Daley also encouraged salvaging original architectural elements where possible.

MOTION by Commissioner Daley to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to build a detached pool house with an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and to approve composite clapboards to be used on the front of the pool house, the addition and on the rear portion of the historic home. Composite shingles will be used on the sides and rear of the pool house and on all sides of the garage volume. Cedar clapboards will be used on the sides and front of the historic home with two courses of composite clapboards at the water table. The front door façade will be restored as best as possible. The work shall be completed in a manner consistent with revised plans received on March 19, 2026.

SECOND by Commissioner Aborn

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Blevins – Aye
Donaldson - Aye
Aborn – Aye
Daley – Aye

Smoczynski - Aye

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Approval of Minutes

MOTION by Commissioner Aborn to approve meeting minutes from February 19, 2026.

SECOND by Commissioner Daley

ROLL CALL VOTE:

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

MOTION by Commissioner Aborn to approve meeting minutes from January 15, 2026.

SECOND by Commissioner Daley

ROLL CALL VOTE:

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

Administrator Gaul gave a brief update on some department issues. She said that Greenbush grant applications are due Monday, May 4, and also reminded everyone about the history essay contest open to Hingham residents who are high school students (regardless of where they attend school), focused on Hingham history from 1945 or earlier. The prize has been increased to \$2,000, and community members are encouraged to spread the word and promote student participation.

ADJOURN

MOTION TO ADJOURN by Commissioner Daley

SECOND by Commissioner Donaldson

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Daley – Aye
Donaldson – Aye
Blevins - Aye

Aborn – Aye
Smoczynski - Aye

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 PM

Respectfully submitted by Robin Gorfine, Recording Clerk