



Bellingham Historical Commission

Meeting Minutes, October 20, 2025

Location: Bellingham Public Library & Zoom

Attendance

In Person Present Members: Rick Marcoux, Jeffrey Prescott, Franco Tocchi, Lauren Hummell,

Members Present on Zoom: Steve Joanis, Bernadette Rivard, Jennifer Russo

Members Absent: none

Guest: Rob Lussier, Bellingham Director of Planning & Engineering

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jeff Prescott at 5:00 pm

Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

Rick Marcoux made a motion to approve the September minutes. The motion was seconded by Franco Tocchi and unanimously approved.

Correspondence: Email from Harvard University PhD candidate Aidan Connaughton requesting all Commission members answer their anonymous survey. Bernadette will send the link to all members.

Copy of letter from the Mass Historical Commission to Epsilon Associates about the Hartford Ave property.

Financial Report

Invoices paid since last meeting

9/12/2025 Amazon Business \$37.59 Cassette to MP3 Player

Municipal Budget

Starting Balance \$9000.00 Expenditures 1567.61 Ending Balance \$7432.39

Expenditures by Month

July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
1338.80	101.81	127.00	37.59								

Gift Fund

Starting Balance \$2179.23 Deposits \$120.00 Expenditures \$0.00 Balance \$2309.33

Income by Month

July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
0	80.00	40.00	0.00								

Bills received but not paid: None

Demolition Delay Discussion – Rick Marcoux made a motion to discuss the Demolition Delay Bylaw. Bernadette seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted.

We were joined in the discussion by the Bellingham Director of Planning and Engineering, Rob Lussier. The draft document that was prepared by Steve Joanis was shared with Rob and he attended the meeting to share his feedback on the draft.

Rob indicated that the Historical Commission could sponsor the Article at Town Meeting. Once the draft document is completed it should be sent to Town Counsel for review and will be then sent to the Select Board for their vote on Recommending the Article at Town Meeting.

Rob outlined the Public Hearing Process stating that demolition permits presented to the town would be shared with the Historical Commission for review to determine if the property meets the criteria set by the Historical Commission for properties that would need a public hearing for a demolition delay. He recommended that the Historical Commission procedure mirror the Planning Board Procedure. He also recommended that the draft be changed from 7 to 14 days for abutter notification, and that the notification spell out the 100 foot abutter notice distance.

He also recommended we look at the definitions in Section 2, update the location in Section A to be Bellingham, and outline in B) what criteria we are including (National Historic Register, State Historic Register, 200 years or older, etc.), and to be specific in defining what would fall under it. Section 4, Initial Review was recommended to request a short narrative be submitted with any permits that are being applied for. Any Hardship Appeals should be handled by either the Select Board or Zoning Board.

Old Business

Pete's Bluebird Sign Auction – The Town Clerk reports we have received one bid to date. Jennifer will do a few more postings before the deadline to help promote it more, and info will be in the November issue of the Bellingham Bulletin. The bids will be opened at our November meeting and Jennifer will stream the bid opening on Facebook live.

1198 South Main Street update – The letter Jennifer wrote to Mr. Khoury will be sent certified mail.

Historic Huddle Group Meeting Plan – 17 people from neighboring historical commissions and societies attended our meeting. It was a great discussion of CPA, Demolition Delay, and other issues that we all face as commissions and societies. The hope is that the huddles will become a quarterly or twice a year event. Attendees will be added to a spreadsheet that will be shared so we all have each other's contact information.

Crimpsville Comments- This issue is an introduction to the Revolutionary War and the role of the Bellingham militia on April 19, 1775; Bellingham Selectmen's January 1775 vote to support disowning Great Britain's authority over the colonies; and a story about a smallpox outbreak at the time. Other topics for the issue will be a profile of John Lundvall and Marcia Crooks as Historical Commission Chair. We are hoping to find a good copy of the muster roll to scan and include, as well as a 1700s era map that lists names of the families and where they lived, especially those that appear on the muster roll. Bernadette & Lauren will work on finalizing the fall issue of the Crimpsville Comments with a goal to get it out by Veterans Day the latest.

Follow-up on Whiting Family Donations – Jeff and Lauren met with Helen and Dale Whiting to get better descriptions of the items they donated. They audio recorded the stories they told about the items. The audio recording will be used to write up narratives for the museum collection.

00 Bellingham's First Fire Truck – Rick is working on finalizing the 3 quotes. He has put together a Committee of 7 people to work on fundraising. We have requested a meeting with Joe Laydon, Town Administrator to get him up to date on the project so the Fundraising Committee can start to meet.

Procedures for follow-up on inquiries to the Historical Commission – reviewed our vote last month to streamline procedures for public inquiries.

Museum Inventory – Bernadette & Lauren will work on the best way to record our inventory, cross reference sources and possibly identify a new numbering system for simplicity.

Donor Plaque – Tabled until next month.

New Business

Loan vs. Ownership – There are items in the museum collection that are listed as “On Loan From...” As we identify these items, we should attempt to return them to the person or family of the person that loaned them to us. If we are unable to locate the party, we will make a determination if the item should be added to the permanent collection or deaccessions from our inventory.

10 Steps to Researching the History of Your House In Bellingham – Proposed program by Marian Pierre-Louis of Medway. She has run this program at libraries throughout the state. **Bernadette made a motion to host this program in partnership with the library, hosted at the library in January or February at a cost of \$250. The motion was seconded by Lauren and unanimously approved.**

Rick Marcoux made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:32 pm. It was seconded by Franco Tocchi and unanimously adopted.

Next meeting date: November 17, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

Bernadette Rivard