



Town of South Kingstown Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 28, 2025 at 5:30 PM
South Kingstown Town Hall, Council Chambers
180 High St., Wakefield, RI 02879
www.southkingstownri.gov

Murray Gates, Chair
Richard Youngken
Sharon Henderson
Bettina Monaco
John Desmond
- Vacant -
- Vacant -

A. Call to Order:

B. Roll Call:

C. Approval of Minutes:

1. 6/26/2025 Draft Minutes

Approval of the minutes was deferred to the September meeting.

D. Correspondence & Public Comment:

No correspondence or public comment was received.

E. Old Business:

1. Discussion of Potential Stone Wall Protections

Mr. Gates presented materials on stone walls for discussion. Mr. Youngken inquired whether the issue was something that the Council had expressed interest in. Mr. Gates indicated that members of the Planning Board had expressed interest and that it was his vision that the HDC work with the Planning Board on a proposed ordinance and that the Planning Board advance it to the Council. The members engaged in a discussion of various issues that a local ordinance would need to address. Mr. Youngken and Mr. Gates asked if there were ways to identify or inventory existing walls, possibly using GIS. The discussion was continued to the September meeting.

2. Discussion Regarding Potential Coordination with Affordable Housing Committee

Mr. Youngken reported that this discussion lost headway over the summer and needed to be reinitiated.

F. New Business:

1. Discussion re: Route 138 Improvements Potential Impact to Kingston Historic District

Staff distributed a copy of a letter to RIHPHC seeking information about the Route 138 Project. Staff noted that RIHPHC had responded by saying that they would treat the inquiry about documents as an Access to Public Records Request and provide relevant information. Mr. Youngken discussed town comments to RIDOT about the project.

2. Discussion re: Public Presentation of Matunuck Beach Historic Resource Survey - Public reaction and next steps.

A motion was made by Mr. Gates to advance agenda item F.2. relating to the Matunuck Beach survey for discussion. Ms. Henderson seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Members of the board briefly discussed the public meeting at the S.K. Land Trust barn. Ms. Ann Terry spoke as a member of the public who attended the presentation in Matunuck and noted that her discussions in the area suggested that there might be a number of residents that might be interested in working to create a National Register Historic District and was looking for help. A discussion followed about why residents might be interested in creating a new historic district in Matunuck and which area where they considering a new district. Mr. Youngken discussed the process for researching and nominating a National Register District and educating residents in the district.

3. Review of Laws & Ordinances for HDCs - Review and discussion of HDC legal framework for new members, including: education & training requirements; Open Meetings Act, HDC jurisdiction and Standards & Guidelines.

Mr. Gates inquired whether new members had any questions about the information distributed by staff about the laws governing the HDC. There were no questions. Mr. Youngken reviewed the process of reviewing applications for work in the Kingston Historic District.

4. Elections - Discussion and possible action to elect board officers.

Elections were deferred to the September meeting.

G. Staff Update & Planning Department Activities:

None.

H. Recurring Discussion Topics:

None.

I. New Discussion Issues & Future Agenda Items:

None.

J. Adjournment:

Mr. Desmond moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Henderson and approved unanimously.