



Town of South Kingstown Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 22, 2026 at 5:30 PM
South Kingstown Town Hall, Planning Department
180 High St., Wakefield, RI 02879
www.southkingstownri.gov

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

A. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at: 05:31 PM

B. Roll Call:

Members Present: Murray Gates, Richard Youngken, Bettina Monaco, John Desmond, Elle Moore

Members Absent: Sharon Henderson, Nick Furcolo

Staff: Brian Wagner, Deputy Planning Director

C. Approval of Minutes:

1. 12/10/2025 Draft Minutes ([See Attachment](#))

A Motion to approve minutes from 12/10/2025 was made by Richard Youngken. The motion was seconded by John Desmond. Upon a vote by all members present, the motion was approved unanimously.

D. Correspondence & Public Comment:

1. 1/13/2026 Email from David Hill - Forwarding link to URI research on stone walls. ([See Attachment](#))

The HDC received the 1/13/2026 email from David Hill regarding URI research on stone walls. Mr. Wagner stated that Mr. Hill's correspondence was to inform the HDC of URI researchers launching a local stone-wall study and suggested that discussion of this topic be held under **Old Business**.

2. Correspondence re: RIDOT Rte 138 Project ([See Attachments](#))

The HDC received several items of correspondence from RIDOT regarding its Rte. 138 upgrade project. Mr. Wagner stated that the correspondence consists of emails from RIDOT acknowledging they have received the HDC letter and mentioning the project continues to move forward. Mr. Wagner stated that he sat in on a ZOOM meeting as a first step in the construction and contracting for the project including introducing the contractors.

E. New Business:

1. Application for Certificate of Appropriateness / 1859 Mooresfield Road - Discussion and possible decision on application to construct/install an outdoor storage shed. Plat 24-4, Lot 23. ([See Attachments](#))

The property is owned by the Kingston Improvement Association and leased/operated by the Fayerweather Craft Guild. The application for a COA concerns the construction and installation of a shed at the back of the propriety. Representing the Fayerweather Craft Guild was Claudia Smith. Ms. Smith summarized the shed's purpose, its method of construction and installation, and its placement on the property and answered specific questions about the type of roof (asphalt shingles), siding (T111), the support (footings on gravel pad), the color (white), and the concealment (existing and possibly new shrubs).

Ms. Monaco moved that the Application for Certificate of Appropriateness/1859 Mooresfield Road as prepared by staff be approved. Mr. Youngken seconded. Mr. Younken added the following to the motion: that all the findings of fact the staff has prepared and the additional findings made in this meeting including that the size of the shed is appropriate, that the shed mirrors other out buildings in the district, that the shed does not create a false historical appearance, that the shed meets the HDC standards, that the existing vegetation and wall in front of the shed screen it appropriately, and

that the conditions of approval listed by staff for the construction and installation be as presented.

A Motion to approve the application for Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of an exterior shed at 1859 Mooresfield Road, in accordance with the draft motion prepared by staff, as amended by Mr. Youngken, was made by Bettina Monaco. The motion was seconded by Richard Youngken. Upon a vote by all members present, the motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Smith was directed to obtain a building permit for the Town of South Kingstown to track the shed's history.

2. Approval of 2026 HDC Meeting Schedule

Mr. Wagner stated that the schedule does not prevent the HDC from canceling a meeting or changing the date of a meeting. Ms. Moore pointed out a typo, "March 67," and suggested the term be changed to "March 26."

A Motion to Approve HDC Annual Meeting Schedule for 2026 was made by Bettina Monaco. The motion was seconded by Elle Moore. Upon a vote by all members present, the motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Wagner mentioned that on the date of the February 2026 meeting of the HDC, February 26, the South Kingstown Town Council is scheduled to meet to consider zoning changes to the Old Tower Hill Road corridor at 6:00 pm or 6:30 pm. Mr. Wagner must attend that meeting. The HDC agreed to meet at 5:00 pm rather than at 5:30 pm to allow Mr. Wagner time to attend the Town Council meeting.

3. 2026 CLG Grant Application - Discussion and possible action on preparing and submitting an application for CLG grant funding to RIHPHC. ([See Attachments](#))

Mr. Wagner said Erica Luke of the South County Historical Society is interested in re-submitting its prior application for project to research and survey the Matunuck Hills area of South Kingstown to identify resources related to the area's pre-1910 multi-racial history to the RIHPHC for CLG funding.

Discussion of other possible projects that may be developed into applications that could be submitted to the CLG for funding followed. Mr. Gates asked Mr. Wagner if a vote must be taken to re-submit the Matunuck Hills project. Mr. Wagner said not at this meeting. He will re-package the application and submit it to the HDC at its next meeting, then a vote should be taken in support of the re-submission.

F. Old Business:

1. Discussion of Potential Protections for Stone Walls ([See Attachment](#))

Members discussed David Hill's email with a forwarded link to URI research on stone walls, including the purpose of the research to examine the effects of stone walls on biodiversity and ecosystem processes across New England; the existence of a map of all the stone walls located in Rhode Island; and the impact of both the map and the biodiversity findings on a possible proposed ordinance protecting the stone walls of South Kingstown. Mr. Gates suggested the HDC see the map of all the stone walls in Rhode Island and discover how the possible proposed ordinance may be affected by this knowledge.

2. Matunuck Beach Historic Resource Survey - Discussion and possible action on next steps.

Mr. Gates stated that the CLG Project is closed and that the continuing education of people to make their properties water resilient needs to be done. Mr. Wagner mentioned that the HDC needs to reach out to Anne Terry about meeting with property owners interested in creating a historic district or listing individual historic properties.

G. Staff Update & Planning Department Activities:

1. RI Main Street Training

Mr Wagner said that the RI Main Street Training is not a South Kingstown town project and that it is a project spearheaded by a group of private individuals.

Mr. Youngken said that he was going to a RI Main Street meeting tomorrow, January 25, in Providence to learn more about their plans for design. He said he had been invited to the meeting and would share what he learns with the HDC at its next meeting.

2. Route 138 Project

Mr. Wagner said that the RIDOT would get back to him with any new information to share with the HDC.

3. Training Opportunities

Mr. Wagner said that he has not heard of any new training opportunities for HDC members that are available yet. Mr. Youngken said that the SKHDC should update its own standards and guidelines as they have not been updated since 2012-13. HDCs in other Rhode Island towns have done so. He suggested that the whole commission meet to review the standards and guidelines.

H. Recurring Discussion Topics:

1. Coordination with Affordable Housing Committee

Mr. Youngken stated that he had talked to Peter Swain on the AHCC concerning the Old Tower Hill Road project. Mr. Swain recommended the HDC attend the Town Council meeting in which the project will be discussed on Thursday, February 26, to gather information on mixed-use design of a street that includes a combination of commercial, office, and housing.

Mr. Wagner pointed out that mixed-use design is form-based zoning code rather than the Euclidean-based zoning code that the Town of South Kingstown uses.

Mr. Youngken mentioned a plan to locate the Watson Farm building on its own lot and to build twelve units of affordable housing of a compatible nature with the Watson Farm building on the adjoining property. Concerning building affordable housing on the sites of the closed South Road and Wakefield schools, Mr. Youngken mentioned that the Town will start with the site of the South Road school, then turn to the Wakefield school site.

2. U.S. 250th Celebration - Local Update

Mr. Desmond stated that Deb Suggs gave the first talk in the speaker series January 11 at South Kingstown High School, the Kingston Red will perform a reenactment skirmish at the Olmsted Park on February 7. Evan Wilson will give a talk February 11 at South Kingstown High School, and the 250th Celebration has been receiving extensive coverage in the *South County Independent*.

3. New Veterans Memorial

Mr. Desmond said that Sharon Henderson gave an update on the plans for the Memorial at the last meeting of the 250th Celebration Committee; however, as she did not attend tonight's HDC meeting, he would defer to Ms. Henderson for the specifics of the plans at a later meeting.

I. New Discussion Issues & Future Agenda Items:

None.

J. Adjournment:

A Motion to adjourn was made by Richard Youngken. The motion was seconded by Bettina Monaco. Upon a vote by all members present, the motion was approved unanimously.