



NEWPORT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION 2023 Annual Report

HDC Membership

- **Commission Members as of 12/31/23:**
 - Deanna Amorello (Chair)
 - Rosemary O'Brien (Vice Chair)
 - Michael Ryan (Secretary)
 - James Madson
 - Kelly Moran
 - John Laramee
 - Dale Nelson
 - Frank Balla (Alternate)
- **New Members required for 2024:**
 - Alternate (1)
- **Attendance:** See Exhibit A

HDC Business

- **Meetings** - The Commission held twelve (12) Monthly Meetings in 2023
- **Site Visits** - The Commission conducted site visits in support of applications as appropriate
- **Applications: 236 Total Applications** received by City
 - **67 Administrative Approvals (28%)**
 - 169 Applications heard by HDC
 - **145 HDC Approvals (61%)**
 - 14 Applications Withdrawn by Applicant/Dismissed without prejudice (6%)
 - 5 HDC Denials (3%)
 - 5 Applications Continued to 2024 (2%)
- **Total 2023 Application Closure (incl. Approvals/Withdrawals/Dismissals): 95%**

2023 Activities/Accomplishments

In addition to the regular monthly agenda of application review, the Historic District Commission had the following activities and accomplishments:

HDC Organization

- New Preservation Planner
 - The City of Newport and Commission welcomed and trained a new staff Preservation Planner
- New Commission Members
 - The Commission onboarded and trained new Commission Members
 - John Laramee
 - Dale Nelson
 - Frank Balla
- New Commission Organization
 - Adopted new leadership effective November 2023 – Deanna Amorello (Chair) and continued officers Rosemary O’Brien (Vice Chair) and Michael Ryan (Secretary)

Ordinance Review

At the request of City Council, the HDC provided recommendations for **Historic Zoning Ordinance and Policy** changes. The Preservation Planner aggregated HDC input with other sources and is on track to provide to City Council in Q1 of 2024.

Mission, Policy and Procedures

- The Commission initiated a full review of its internal **Mission, Policy and Procedures** document. The review is to align the document with current best practices in the operation of the Commission, a review process last completed in 2019. An updated document will be reviewed and adopted in early 2024.

Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

- APPROVED **Appendix to Policy Statement and Design Guidelines for Elevating Historic Buildings – “Appendix A: Graphical Support to Building Elevation Design Concepts”**
 - In partnership with the State of Rhode Island (CLG Grant), the Newport Restoration Foundation (NRF), Roger Williams Graduate School of Architecture and several local architects, the HDC completed an 18 month long project to develop and adopt a comprehensive graphical appendix to support the landmark *Design Guidelines for Elevating Historic Buildings*. The \$30,000 State CLG Grant resulted in a comprehensive and beautiful 70+ full-color image Appendix to support home-owners, architects, city staff and the Historic District Commission understand and integrate the appropriate

methods and materials for elevating historic buildings in the wake of rising sea levels and severe storms. The HDC anticipates this Appendix being shared with other Rhode Island communities and beyond.

- **APPROVED Policy Statement on Application Submission Timing**
 - Provides administrative guidance to applicants, city staff and the HDC regarding the time frame and materials needed to be submitted for effective review by the Commission.
- **APPROVED Policy Statement on Application Continuance**
 - Provides administrative guidance to applicants, city staff and the HDC regarding how long an application may be continued without attendance or action.
- **APPROVED Policy Statement on Signs and Awnings**
 - Provides design guidelines on the appropriateness of placement, materials and lighting of signs and awnings within Newport Historic Districts.
- **DRAFT Policy Statement on Sustainability, Resiliency and Community**
 - Opened early discussion on matters of sustainability, resiliency and community as they relate to historic preservation at the federal, state and local levels. In a developing topic at all levels of historic preservation (public and private), the HDC will be thoughtful and deliberate in its path forward in these areas.

Education and Training

- In accordance with required training as stated in RI General Law §45-70-4, four HDC Members and Preservation Planner completed the **National Association of Preservation Commissions Training CAMP** facilitated by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC).
- HDC continued collaboration with **Newport Restoration Foundation** to advance homeowner awareness and training on best practices and methodology for restoration and preservation.
 - With funding, in-person workshops and public access to supporting video content is anticipated in the future
- Two HDC Members and Preservation Planner attended the **2023 Historic New England Summit**, a non-profit led annual forum for learning and education in areas of historic preservation. Themes included Sustainability and Climate Change, Community Advocacy, Reframing Historic Education and the Future of New England Cities.

Community Engagement

- Preservation Planner Jillian Chin and HDC Chair Andy Bjork served on the judging committee for the **17th Annual 2023 Doris Duke Historic Preservation Awards** in partnership with Newport Restoration Foundation, presented August 2023 at Rough Point.
- HDC Chair Andy Bjork was recipient of the **2023 NRF President's Award**

2024 Initiatives

- Adopt updated Newport Historic District Commission Mission, Policy and Procedures document in Q1 2024.
- Identify and implement an HDC liaison within City Council to promote open and timely communication between the Commission, City Staff and City Council.
- Develop Outreach and Community Engagement to support the mission of Newport Historic District Commission

Recognition

The Commission would like to extend thanks to the City of Newport Department of Building and Inspections. Specifically, the direct support of Jillian Chin, City Preservation Planner, Patricia Reynolds, Director of Planning and Economic Development and Julie Henderson, Administrative Support.

The Commission would also like to extend appreciation to Andy Bjork for his service to the City of Newport and commitment to the HDC since 2017, including a leadership role serving as Chair, 2019-2023.

EXHIBIT A – HDC 2023 ATTENDANCE

HDC 2023 Attendance											
Meeting Date	Meeting Type	Andy Bjork Chair (Jan-Oct)	Deanna Amorello Chair (Nov-Dec)	Rosemary O'Brien Vice Chair	Michael Ryan Secretary	Jim Madson	Kelly Moran	Dale Nelson	John Laramee	Frank Balla	Nancy Stafford
Tuesday, January 17, 2023	Regular	<i>Meeting Cancelled</i>									
Tuesday, February 7, 2023	Make-Up	P	P	A	P	A	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	P
Tuesday, February 21, 2023	Regular	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	A	N/A	N/A
Tuesday, March 21, 2023	Regular	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	N/A	N/A
Tuesday, April 18, 2023	Regular	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	N/A	N/A
Tuesday, May 16, 2023	Regular	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	P	N/A	N/A
Tuesday, June 20, 2023	Regular	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	N/A	N/A
Tuesday, July 18, 2023	Regular	<i>Meeting Cancelled</i>									
Tuesday, August 8, 2023	Make-Up	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	N/A	N/A
Tuesday, August 15, 2023	Regular	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	N/A
Tuesday, September 19, 2023	Regular	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	N/A
Tuesday, October 17, 2023	Regular	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	N/A
Tuesday, November 14, 2023	Regular	<i>Meeting Cancelled</i>									
Thursday, November 30, 2023	Make-Up	N/A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A
Tuesday, December 12, 2023	Regular	N/A	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A
Individual Present		9	11	8	11	8	11	9	8	4	1
Individual Absent		1	1	4	1	4	1	2	3	0	0
Attendance Percentage		90.00%	91.67%	66.67%	91.67%	66.67%	91.67%	81.82%	72.73%	100.00%	100.00%

HDC Membership

- Andy Bjork Term Complete Effective November 2023
- Nancy Stafford Term Complete Effective February 2023
- John Laramee Appointment February 2023
- Dale Nelson Appointed February 2023
- Frank Balla Appointment August 2023

EXHIBIT B – HDC 2023 METRICS (From published HDC Meeting Agendas & Minutes)

HDC 2023 Metrics								
Meeting Date	Administratively Approved Applications	Continued Applications on the Agenda	New Applications on the Agenda	TOTAL Applications on the Agenda	Approved by HDC	Withdrawn / Dismissed	Continued	Denied
Tuesday, February 7, 2023	6	8	16	24	15	1	7	1
Tuesday, February 21, 2023	6	7	6	13	6	3	4	0
Tuesday, March 21, 2023	7	4	11	15	12	0	3	0
Tuesday, April 18, 2023	6	3	15	18	13	0	4	1
Tuesday, May 16, 2023	8	4	10	14	11	1	2	0
Tuesday, June 20, 2023	3	2	19	21	16	1	4	0
Tuesday, August 8, 2023	9	4	18	22	11	1	9	1
Tuesday, August 15, 2023	2	9	11	20	9	2	9	0
Tuesday, September 19, 2023	2	9	7	16	13	1	1	1
Tuesday, October 17, 2023	8	0	22	22	18	1	2	1
Thursday, November 30, 2023	1	3	13	16	9	1	6	0
Tuesday, December 12, 2023	9	6	13	19	12	2	5	0
Total # of Applications	67	<i>New apps received in 2023:</i>	161	<i>18.3 apps/month average</i>	145	14	<i>5 cont. to 2024</i>	5
		Total heard by HDC (includes 8 cont. from 2022):	169		97.04% Approved, Withdrawn, Dismissed, or Continued			2.96% Denied
		Total apps received (including admin approved):	236					

- **2023 Applications: 236 Total Applications** received by City (245 Total Applications 2022, 3.4% Decrease Y/Y)
 - **Total 2023 Application Closure: 97%** (97% 2022, Flat Y/Y)
 - 5 HDC Denials (3%) (6 Denials 2022 (3%), Flat Y/Y)