



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE, MAYOR

MEMORANDUM

Office of the Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor

FROM: Michael F. Glavin, Executive Director

DATE: October 24, 2011

SUBJECT: (3) Reappointments and (1) Appointment to the Historic Preservation Commission.

The Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD) respectfully requests that you forward to the Board of Aldermen (BOA) this memo recommending one new appointment and three reappointments to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). As the BOA is aware, the HPC is a 14-member commission and each of the seats on the Commission are designated for specified groups or skills, with a three year term.

BACKGROUND

Over the past eight months of this year the Historic Preservation Commission has handled ninety-five (95) cases, involving alterations to locally designated historic properties, review of building demolition applications, and comments on Planning Board cases and projects using federal or Massachusetts state funds. The Commission has continued work on expanding the number and size of local historic districts in Somerville by revising informational materials and distributing it to all eligible property owners to ensure that they are fully aware of the proposed designation. Forty-six (46) properties within fifteen new local historic districts have been approved over the past year by the Board of Aldermen and additional properties are under review.

Over the past two years the Commission also actively participated in drafting amendments to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance that created incentives for preserving and restoring historic properties, including converting historic carriage houses to new uses, and increasing the size of bed and breakfasts. This summer work on the first Historic Bed and Breakfast has been completed in the Davis Square area, and the house, as well as the streetscape, has been

substantially and visibly restored as a result. Forty-four (44) properties in the Union Square area have been surveyed to determine their historical merit and a Preliminary Report with recommendations for creating new districts is in progress. The Design Guidelines for the Commission are in the process of being updated and the first newsletter to historic property owners was prepared and distributed widely. Enhancements and stabilization of several municipally owned historic structures, including the Milk Row Cemetery, Prospect Hill Tower, and the West Branch Library, are ongoing. In addition, the Commission has continued to sponsor events and programs throughout the year that both market the City's historic assets and help inspire Somerville pride in the community. Public outreach projects have included the annual Preservation Awards Program with the Somerville High School, historic walking tours and bike rides, videotaped events for cable television, and re-enactments of the January 1st Flag Raising and Patriot's Day Ride.

HPC RECOMMENDATIONS

The following individual is recommended for a new appointment to the Historic Preservation Commission to fill the seat as noted:

- Architectural Historian (#2) (Alternate) – George Born, 14 Arlington Street, Apt. 2 – George has a Master's Degree in Historic Preservation, and is currently a PhD candidate at Boston University for an American Studies degree with a major field in architectural history. He has over twenty years of professional experience working for preservation-related firms, including the Providence Preservation Society, the Historic Florida Keys Foundation, Inc., and the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. He currently lives in East Somerville.

George Born has attended meetings of the Commission over the past two months and is now familiar with its responsibilities and operations. His resume and "Application Form for Membership" are attached.

In addition, the following individuals are recommended for re-appointment as their terms expired in May 2011:

- Architect/Historic District Resident – Eric Parkes, 54 Vinal Avenue
- Architect/Historic District Resident (Alternate)– Derick Snare, 158 Central Street
- Real Estate Broker (Alternate) – Tom DeYoung, 15 Victoria Street

Each of these three members have served for several years and would like to continue to volunteer as they have found their work on the Commission to be very meaningful and satisfying on behalf of the long-term interests of Somerville.

These appointments will keep the composition in compliance with the membership requirements for the Commission under the Historic Districts Ordinance of 1985 as amended, and for the Commission to remain a "Certified Local Government" authorized by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of Aldermen appoint George Born, and reappoint Eric Parkes, Derick Snare, and Tom DeYoung to the Historic Preservation Commission for the seats as noted.