

## Duchesneau, Adam

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**From:** Taryn D'Ambrogi Trexler <taryn.trexler@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 17, 2021 3:28 PM  
**To:** Duchesneau, Adam  
**Subject:** Re: CPC Comments re HD Design Guidelines Application

Hi Adam,

Please forward on the answers to the CPC's questions. I have been in contact with several consultants, MHC, and other towns who have undertaken similar projects and hopefully their insight will be helpful.

Thank you,

Taryn

*Please provide copies of the Fall River, MA and Falmouth, MA design guidelines which are referenced in the application materials.*

- Fall River only recently approved CPC funding for this project, so the guidelines are under development. The CPC request came from a non-profit in Fall River and they are still awaiting a first draft. They brought the project to their CPC because, "although the guidelines are tailored to our Local Historic District, the basic guideline theory is applicable to everyone's historic and older homes, and will be available to all homeowners on-line."
- Falmouth historic district guidelines can be found here: [shorturl.at/uTU38](https://shorturl.at/uTU38)

*Are there intentions to apply for a Massachusetts Historical Commission reimbursement grant for this project?*

- Yes, we submitted a letter of intent to MHC for a matching reimbursement grant; the next step would be for them to invite us to submit a full application (notices go out Dec. 8).
- MHC has generously funded back-to-back matching reimbursement grants to Sudbury (historic surveys and preservation plan) for a total of \$31,000 in committed grant money. It is worth noting the grant guidelines include the following, "MHC will consider statewide geographic distribution in its invitations for full application. MHC will also give special consideration to applicants who have not previously been awarded program funds." MHC has still encouraged Sudbury to apply.
- We have communicated with MHC staff, including the Local Government Programs Coordinator, regarding our application but also historic district design guideline projects in general. MHC funded the Newton design guidelines ([shorturl.at/qrM78](https://shorturl.at/qrM78)) and the Salem historic district guidelines, draft currently in progress ([shorturl.at/gIDQV](https://shorturl.at/gIDQV)).

*Please describe some of the challenges that are currently being dealt with due to the current Historic District Design Guidelines. Why are the current design guidelines not working or insufficient?*

- Though the commissioners are preservation advocates, not all are experts (nor are they required to be). Having a professional, expert set of guidelines with information and examples of today's best practices will help the commission be fair and consistent and properly preserve the historic homes and feel of the historic districts.
- The current guidelines lack comprehensive detail, are sometimes non-specific, have outdated guidance for new building and green technology, and offer few resources for homeowners. First meetings often take up homeowners, commissioners, and staff time talking through a project and offering feedback and suggestions. Often in design, time is money for homeowners. More information on how to prepare a successful application and what the Commission is looking for would be helpful for all parties.
- We get pushback from applicants when something is seemingly allowed in one place and not in another. While every application is discussed on a case-by-case basis, clearer and specific guidelines could help clear up confusion or frustration.
- Homeowners are certainly not required to be experts and even with best intentions may not understand how to treat a Federal period home vs. Italianate, etc. The guidelines should help to educate and inform.

*Budget Estimates - Not asked by CPC, but in our continued research we have received the following feedback and advice and are considering increasing our ask as a result.*

- MHC noted that they have recently found that fewer qualified consultants undertaking this type of work. MHC recently granted funds to Methuen for Design Guidelines, but they were unable to procure consultant services; they noted there is usually little interest in a project like this under the \$30K threshold. We have asked if they can share the budget for the current guideline project underway in Salem.
- Fall River based their budget of \$50k based on conversations with two architectural firms specializing in historic preservation. They are working with Preservation Design Partnership, LLC from Philadelphia who drafted guidelines for Newton (MHC funded, linked above) and Portsmouth, NH.
- Both the consultants used for the CPC-funded historic surveys and preservation plan have done this type of work for other Massachusetts towns. The consultant who led the survey project said they thought this type of project would be very helpful to Sudbury and they would be interested in receiving an RFP, if we get to that point.

On Wed, Oct 20, 2021 at 10:49 PM Duchesneau, Adam <[DuchesneauA@sudbury.ma.us](mailto:DuchesneauA@sudbury.ma.us)> wrote:

Hello Taryn,

Please find below the comments and questions that were raised at tonight's CPC meeting regarding the Historic Districts Design Guidelines application:

- Please provide copies of the Fall River, MA and Falmouth, MA design guidelines which are referenced in the application materials.

- Are there intentions to apply for a Massachusetts Historical Commission reimbursement grant for this project?

- Please describe some of the challenges that are currently being dealt with due to the current Historic District Design Guidelines. Why are the current design guidelines not working or insufficient?

If you could please respond to these questions in advance of the CPC's next meeting on November 3, 2021, that would be appreciated.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you.

Adam

Adam L. Duchesneau, AICP

Director of Planning & Community Development

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