

CONCORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION

2/12/2026

Minutes

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk's Office, the Concord Historical Commission held a virtual Meeting on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. using the Zoom meeting platform.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Douglas J. Ellis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. by roll call.

Historical Commission Members Present: Chair Douglas J. Ellis, Nancy Fresella-Lee, Marybeth Kelly

Historical Commission Members Absent: Melissa Saalfield and Lauren Meier

Historical Commission Associate Members Present: Nancy Nelson, Carol Aronson, Rob Munro, Sarah Kussin

Historical Commission Associate Member Absent: Callie Nairus

Staff Present: Kim Johnson, Admin Assistant

19 Sudbury Road – Bigelow House – CHC historic marker update

Homeowners did not attend and so the topic was tabled.

Mimi Graney – Black Heritage Trail Marker proposed project presentation

- Mimi Graney and Jen Turner presented a proposal for a pilot project to install 8-10 interpretive trail markers for a Black Heritage Trail. The project, initiated during Black History Month, aims to make the stories of Concord's Black residents and its abolitionist history more visible and accessible in the public landscape.
- **Presentation Summary:** The project aligns with the Concord 2025 Historic Preservation Plan by highlighting underrepresented stories. Key partners include The Robbins House, the DEI Committee, the Concord Visitor Center, and the Economic Vitality Division. It is funded by a \$28,000 budget (\$14,000 U.S. Office of Travel and Tourism grant matched by \$14,000 in town ARPA funds), which must be encumbered by the end of the fiscal year. Potential sites for the markers, which are not permanent monuments, are along the established Black Heritage Trail and include The Great Field, First Parish Meeting House, Old Hill Burying Ground, the Francis and Ann Bigelow House, and Walden Woods. An advisory committee is overseeing the project, which will involve extensive outreach and require final approval from the Select Board and property owners.
- **Commission Discussion:** Doug Ellis praised the project's goal but noted concerns about the short timeline and the need for a town-wide policy on historical signage. Jen Turner supported the concept but highlighted that crucial details like specific designs, content,

and confirmation of discussions with property stewards (e.g., Trustees of Reservations, National Park Service) were still needed. She suggested providing a letter to the Select Board and HDC once these details are available and advocated for a more holistic town-wide conversation about all signage. Nancy Nelson questioned the visual impact and whether a single design would fit diverse locations. Robert Munro noted that Black history is dynamic and markers should be easily maintainable. The use of QR codes was also briefly discussed. Mimi Graney acknowledged the tight timeline, with a Select Board presentation in June requiring paperwork by the end of May. The project organizers will return to the commission with more refined plans before a formal recommendation is made.

Section 106 Review – Assabet River Pedestrian Bridge

The commission discussed the Section 106 review for the Assabet River Pedestrian Bridge. Nancy Nelson recalled that the Historical Commission had previously in April 2024 reviewed the project and, despite a comment about the amount of light, had determined no adverse impact on historic resources. Doug Ellis clarified that the bridge's purpose is to connect employees from the nearby office park on Baker Ave Extension to West Concord and the Bruce Freeman Trail.

1/30/26 Work Session summary and update

- Preservation Plan Work Session: Doug Ellis stated the need for another in-person work session to review feedback on the preservation plan compiled by Carol Aronson and Ann Clifford. The group tentatively discussed meeting on February 20th to be confirmed with Ann Clifford when she returns to the office.
- Upcoming Deadlines & Tasks:
 - March 2026: Begin drafting the scope for the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) regarding rezoning reviews.
 - June 30, 2026: The preservation plan should be finalized.
 - July 1, 2026: Funding becomes available for the MCI thematic survey.
 - October 2026: Coordinate with the library for its Conantum exhibit.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Ellis suggested reviving the preservation awards and urged members to think about potential new candidates for the commission, as some members' terms end in May.

Approval of meeting minutes: 1/8/26

Ms. Nelson motioned to approve the minutes of January 8, 2026. Ms. Fresella-Lee seconded the motion. The motion passed by a roll call vote (5-0).

ADJOURN

Chair Ellis motioned to adjourn.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at **7:57p.m.**

The next Historical Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes Approved: March 26, 2026