

An Introduction to Historical Commission Membership

Historical Commissions in Massachusetts operate under General Law Chapter 40 section 8d. This law was accepted by Greenfield in 1972 in order to identify, protect and develop the town's historic resources: whether they are areas, buildings, structures, landscapes or objects deemed important to the town's heritage. In 1985 an inventory of these resources was completed by a team led by Margo Jones and funded by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. This inventory has been expanded over the years and now includes places not recognized or that didn't meet the 50 year threshold in 1985.

Although many cities and towns have regulatory duties for local historic districts under General Law Chapter 40 section 8c or a local statute, the Greenfield Historical Commission is advisory to town government except for administering a Demolition delay review of certain buildings under Chapter 58 of the town code.

Public information, the Commission's major program, uses its web site: www.preservationgreenfieldma.org and short publications including "The Road to Freedom Tour Guide", "Historic Hope Street: A Guide to Buildings", "Tax & Other Incentives for Preserving Your Historic Building" and "History On the Ground" leaflets available at 114 Main Street. It has also helped identify the town's heritage landscapes under a regional program and prompted the conservation of the two town-owned burial grounds.

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month and members are expected to become familiar with the basic literature included in this packet.

MGL Chapter 40 sect. 8d: Historical Commission Powers and Duties

Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) publications:

"Preservation Planning Manual"

"Preservation Through Bylaws and Ordinances"

Greenfield's Town Report: The 1985 reconnaissance survey

"Know How" leaflets #3 "The National Register" & #6 "Inventory Forms"