



THE METHUEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
Priorities for Preserving Methuen's History

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Mission

The Methuen Historical Society (MHS) is committed to protecting and maintaining the rich historical character of Methuen through advocacy, education, outreach, and the preservation of historical records, artifacts, structures and monuments that are unique to our city. The MHS believes that the preservation of our past enhances the lives of those who live in and visit Methuen today, and for generations to follow.

Priorities

1. **The Methuen Historical Society believes the Methuen Historic District Commission serves an essential function in the preservation of the historic character of our community.** Pursuant to the provision of M.G. L. c. 40C, the purpose of the Commission is to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its cities and towns. The Society calls upon Methuen's Mayor and City Council to support the Commission as it seeks to enforce its rules and regulations and as it seeks to expand those properties that warrant the protections provided by the Methuen Historic District Ordinance.

Specific priorities include:

- a. Reasonable expansion of the Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District to provide logical and rational boundaries that are fair and understandable by property owners and community residents.
 - b. An inventory of historically significant properties which are geographically and thematically distant from the existing Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District which should be considered for designation as single-property historic districts.
 - c. Approval of an amendment to the Methuen Historic District Ordinance to include the "Thomas Dow House Historic District."
 - d. Active engagement of the Historic District Commission in the planning and implementation of a M.G.L. 40R Smart Growth Zoning District in Methuen's downtown to ensure history is respected and incorporated into the business, cultural, and residential development initiatives.
 - e. The appointment and/or reappointment of Commissioners who have a demonstrated commitment to the mission of the Historic District.
2. **The Methuen Historical Society supports the preservation of historically significant municipal buildings.** Municipal government should be held to the same preservation and restoration standards that would be imposed on private property owners. The Society calls upon Methuen's Mayor and City Council to lead by example by maintaining historically significant municipal buildings to the highest preservation and restoration guidelines. Where appropriate, the City should seek preservation and restoration grants from public (i.e. Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund) and non-profit sources (i.e. The Methuen Festival of Trees, Inc.) to fund these efforts.

3. **The Methuen Historical Society supports the Methuen Museum of History as a community resource and catalyst for teaching Methuen’s rich and unique history to residents and guests of our community.** The Society has developed the Museum, with support from our members and Methuen’s Edwin J. Castle Fund, to present Methuen’s history in an accessible and easily understandable manner. It incorporates significant artifacts from the Searles, Tenney, and Nevins families as well as important items from Methuen’s historic collection. The Society calls upon Methuen’s Mayor, City Council, and state legislative delegation to support the Methuen Museum of History.

Specific priorities include:

- a. Utilization of the Museum as a key component of a local history curriculum for the Methuen Public School System.
 - b. Support the expansion of the Museum to include a function room for community and educational events, space for environmentally safe storage of key Methuen artifacts, and efficient office space for the Society.
 - c. Support additional funding for the acquisition and preservation of significant historical artifacts and documents; as well as for the production and distribution of programming and informational materials for community and visitor education.
 - d. Advocate on behalf of the Museum with the Department of Conservation Resources and the Massachusetts Historical Commission to secure support for Museum expansion.
4. **The Methuen Historical Society supports the Methuen Historic Preservation Special Permit zoning ordinance to encourage the preservation of historic buildings during the development of their land.** The Society calls upon Methuen’s Mayor, City Council, and community development professionals to identify and support opportunities to utilize the Historic Preservation Special Permit to preserve historic properties while also facilitating economically viable development.
 5. **The Methuen Historical Society supports the Methuen Preservation Committee to help prevent the demolition of historically significant buildings.** The Society calls upon Methuen’s Mayor and City Council to support the Committee as it seeks to prevent the needless demolition of historically significant buildings and to work with property owners to find alternative development opportunities consistent with the preservation of these properties. In addition, the Society supports the appointment and/or reappointment of members who have a demonstrated commitment to the mission of the Preservation Committee.

For more information:

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METHUEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Methuen's Historic Organizations

Methuen Historic District Commission

The Methuen Historic District Commission is established by the Methuen Historic District Ordinance (Chapter 24 of the Methuen Municipal Code) pursuant to Chapter 40C of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The purpose of the ordinance is to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the distinctive characteristics of the buildings and places significant in the history of the City of Methuen or their architecture and through the maintenance and improvement of settings for such buildings and places and the encouragement of design compatible therewith.

Methuen Historic Commission

The Historical Commission is established by Chapter 3, Section 22 of the Methuen Municipal Code. The Historical Commission shall conduct research into places of historic and archaeological value, shall cooperate with the State Archaeologist in conducting such research or other service, and shall seek to coordinate the activities of unofficial bodies organized for similar purposes. They may acquire by gift, purchase, or otherwise, articles, artifacts, books, paintings, and other materials of historical interest or value and shall provide a proper place for the storage and display of any such materials as may be acquired. The Commission may advertise, prepare, print and distribute books, maps, charts, plans, and pamphlets which it deems necessary for its work. For the purpose of protecting and preserving such places of interest as it deems worthy, it may recommend to the City Council, and, subject to the approval of the City Council, that such places be certified as a historical or archaeological landmark.

Methuen Preservation Committee

The Demolition Delay Ordinance (Chapter 25 of the Methuen Municipal Code) was adopted for the purpose of preserving and protecting significant buildings within the City which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City; to encourage owners of such buildings to seek out persons who might be willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore such buildings rather than demolish them. To achieve these purposes, the Methuen Preservation Committee is empowered to advise the Building Commissioner with respect to the issuance of permits for demolition of significant buildings.

Methuen Historical Society, Inc.

The Methuen Historical Society is a private member organization committed to protecting and maintaining the rich historical character of Methuen through advocacy, education, outreach, and the preservation of historical records, artifacts, structures and monuments that are unique to our city. The MHS believes that the preservation of our past enhances the lives of those who live in and visit Methuen today, and for generations to follow. In 2017, the Society opened the Museum of Methuen History in the Tenney Gate House. The Society is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the membership of the Society.