



## **Historic District Commission**

### **AGENDA**

Wednesday, March 18, 2026      4:30 PM      City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Council Chambers

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call**
- 2. Minutes:**
  - a) February 18, 2026 Regular Meeting
- 3. Outreach Project Update**
- 4. Staff Updates – [NH Planning & Zoning Spring Conference – Saturday, May 9, 2026](#)**
- 5. Joint HDC & Heritage Commission Meeting – Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm**
- 6. New Business**
- 7. Upcoming Dates of Interest:**
  - a) Next HDC Meeting: April 15, 2026 – 4:30 pm
  - b) HDC Site Visit: April 15, 2026 – 3:30 pm (To be confirmed)
- 8. Adjourn**

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

4:30 PM

Council Chambers,  
City Hall

**Members Present:**

Anthony Ferrantello  
Louise Zerba  
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair  
Councilor Edward Haas  
Hope Benik, Vice Chair

**Staff Present:**

Evan Clements, Planner / Deputy Zoning  
Administrator

**Members Not Present:**

David Bergeron, Alternate  
Russell Fleming, Alternate  
Peter Poanessa, Alternate

1) **Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 4:34 PM. Roll call was conducted.

2) **Election – Chair and Vice Chair**

Councilor Haas made a motion to nominate Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos as Chair. Ms. Benik seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Ferrantello nominated Ms. Benik for Vice Chair. Ms. Zerba seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3) **Minutes: November 19, 2025 Regular Meeting**

Mr. Ferrantello made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 19, 2025. Ms. Zerba seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote. Councilor Haas abstained.

4) **Staff Updates – New Historic District Rankings Map & Table**

Mr. Clements stated that Planning Technician Emily Duseau did a great job of updating the map for the historic rankings within the district, as well as updating the spreadsheet of properties within the district with some additional information. He continued that in the agenda packet, he

31 included a portion of the most relevant information in the spreadsheet. There are more columns  
32 with more information, and if the HDC would like the Excel file that has everything, he would  
33 be happy to send it to them, and they could reorganize it however they want. That additional  
34 information includes, for example, the Land Use Code and the tax map parcel number.

35  
36 Mr. Clements continued that this stuff has not gone live on the website yet because there is one  
37 more tweak Ms. Duseau wanted to do on the map first. He thinks she updated that after he had  
38 sent out the agenda packet. Once it is up on the website, he will send the links to the HDC. This  
39 map and this list are what staff use to understand what ranking category a project property is and  
40 what level of Historic District regulations will apply to the project.

41  
42 Mr. Ferrantello asked if this changes the information the HDC members have in their binders.  
43 Mr. Clements replied yes. Mr. Ferrantello asked if they could get updated hard copies. Mr.  
44 Clements replied yes, he will get that for them.

45  
46 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she is looking at the spreadsheet information in the agenda  
47 packet, and it seems to not be organized in a particular way – for example, not by street, by year,  
48 or by ranking. Mr. Clements replied that that is a good catch; it seems to be all over the place.  
49 He continued that when he posts it online, he will probably organize it by street. As an FYI, they  
50 will notice that some properties are listed as Non-Contributing with an asterisk next to them.  
51 That is because those properties are not yet 50 years old.

52  
53 **5) Joint HDC and Heritage Commission Meeting – Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM**

54  
55 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the HDC is supposed to have one joint meeting per year  
56 with the Heritage Commission, and they are due for one. She asked if Wednesday, May 13 at  
57 4:30 PM works for people. She asked for anyone who knows they cannot be there to let her and  
58 Mr. Clements know, so they can assure quorum. Mr. Clements stated that if the HDC does not  
59 have an application in May, it is up to the Chair whether they want to have a separate HDC  
60 meeting the week after the joint meeting or just count the joint meeting as their monthly meeting.  
61 He continued that if there is an application, they will need to meet. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos  
62 replied that the odds are good that they will only need to meet once in May.

63  
64 **6) New Business**

65  
66 Mr. Ferrantello stated that he would like to discuss the status of the HDC's collaboration with  
67 Keene State College (KSC), because the end result of the initiative is to get interest in what the  
68 HDC does and the historic fabric Keene has. He thinks the presentation was received well. He  
69 does not want this to lose momentum, now that they have all the students geared up to give that  
70 presentation. The next step is to stay with the architecture department chair and ask him what his  
71 next step is, to keep the momentum going. The chair told him that his students would need new  
72 houses/buildings to canvas, maybe in the fall. He is curious to see at what level or for what time  
73 period they are going to use the existing assessment and bring it to different layers of information  
74 so that they have a way to get information out to the public about the significant architectural  
75 features. He does not know where things are at right now; he thinks they are at a standstill, since

76 the presentation was a high point and now that is complete. He thinks he should reach out to the  
77 chair, check in, and try to keep the momentum going.

78  
79 Ms. Zerba stated that Mr. Ferrantello had mentioned that the next step with the existing buildings  
80 was to have the students look at the history as well as write up all the architectural features. She  
81 asked if that would be the next step before they move on to new homes. Mr. Ferrantello replied  
82 yes, sequentially, that is what would happen. He continued that they would take the existing  
83 assessments and filter through different layers of more information, such as who has owned the  
84 house, whether the architectural features were harmed in any way through the years or whether  
85 they are still intact, the connections of that particular motif to wherever in history it originated  
86 from, and things like that.

87  
88 Mr. Clements stated that his understanding was that the fall semester was an analysis of the built  
89 form of the existing homes, and the spring semester coursework was going to be more related to  
90 what Mr. Ferrantello was just describing. He continued that the HDC needs to figure out how  
91 they want to engage with the spring semester, and start thinking about new project properties for  
92 the next fall term. Mr. Ferrantello agreed, and added that the question is whether the previous  
93 students, who were juniors, will follow through with their initial assessments, or if they are  
94 moving on to different curricula and there will be different students taking on this task.  
95 Discussion ensued. Mr. Clements replied that he thinks students have some flexibility on their  
96 senior practicum and they might be able to self-select a project like that. Mr. Ferrantello stated  
97 that the students who did the presentation seemed really psyched. He continued that they talked  
98 about how they juxtaposed the old tax maps with what they found on site, and they were  
99 different, and they had to reconcile it. It made the students think about how things change over  
100 time. Mr. Clements replied yes, that kind of thing happens frequently.

101  
102 Mr. Clements stated that the question is how they tie this all back. Mr. Ferrantello replied that  
103 they tie it back to how influential all this stuff can be towards citizens of Keene. Will it  
104 influence their awareness of what Keene has? Will they care? Is there an aesthetic element to all  
105 of this that people will appreciate? He thinks there is. He continued that it would be good to get  
106 this out to arts groups and various other groups in the city that will take it and run with it. They  
107 should also ask the chair of KSC's architecture department how he will involve the film  
108 department and other arts departments and make it multidisciplinary. That would be exciting.  
109 And again, how to turn this around and make it impactful to Keene so people are aware of it.  
110 That is the trick – a large volume of work is nothing if it is not publicized.

111  
112 Ms. Benik stated that the last time the HDC met, they talked about maybe getting an article in the  
113 newspaper. She continued that Mr. Ferrantello had reached out to someone at City Hall, which  
114 she thinks was put on hold. As she recalls, this was born out of the idea of exposing the HDC to  
115 the public, so her thought was what they can do that they can put on social media or just media in  
116 general. The question is how to expose more people to what the HDC is doing, so that this is not  
117 just corralled to the students and professors. How can the HDC showcase that they are working  
118 with KSC, to get the attention on the HDC?

119  
120 Mr. Ferrantello replied that the students are experts in social media. He continued that the  
121 students can do it, for the benefit of themselves, KSC, and the HDC. It would benefit all of

122 them. Mr. Clements stated that they have communications and social media resources through  
123 the City. He continued that it is a matter of the HDC generating content that they can hand off to  
124 the City's social media team to publicize and promote. The City's social media team does not  
125 have the capacity to help the HDC create the content, beyond limited editing. It is on the HDC  
126 to come up with a game plan, and then if they want to do, say, 5-second video clips, they could  
127 schedule with Asah Cramer to help shoot some video. It is the HDC's responsibility to do the  
128 thinking ahead of time, so they have a vision and plan.

129

130 Mr. Ferrantello replied that he likes that, and they could capture people's attention with a  
131 question like, "Did you know that this Corinthian column has references to such and such that  
132 this particular building showcases?" Ms. Benik replied that she was thinking, rather, the  
133 question should be, "Did you know Keene has a Historic District Commission?" She continued  
134 that they could first explain their existence and their work. Mr. Clements replied that  
135 coincidentally, Ms. Cramer and the Communications Team are doing just that – introductions to  
136 the boards. He continued that they can dig into that a little bit. Promoting what they have  
137 started, and the relationship between the HDC, KSC, and the City, is important.

138

139 Mr. Ferrantello stated that he saw a sign advertising a "Meet Your Councilor" gathering every  
140 Thursday morning, and he is thinking out loud, but a "Meet a Historic District Commission  
141 member" gathering could be good. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she thinks it would be  
142 possible to put together a two- or three-minute video of the students' work to put on social  
143 media. She continued that she does not know the exact terminology, since the HDC did not put  
144 any money towards this, but the initial video could say something like "Sponsored by the  
145 Historic District Commission," which would, as Ms. Benik suggested, let the public know the  
146 HDC exists. She continued that there could be one video for each student's project.

147

148 Councilor Haas asked if the students' presentation in December was the last time anyone from  
149 the HDC has been in touch with them. Mr. Ferrantello replied yes. Councilor Haas replied that  
150 he thinks it is incumbent upon the HDC to reach out to them as soon as possible, such as tonight  
151 or tomorrow, to reassure them that they are still loved. He asked if the presentations the students  
152 did at KSC exist in the form of a slide show or video, or some other format that can be shared.  
153 Discussion ensued. Mr. Ferrantello stated that he did not see anyone filming. Councilor Haas  
154 stated that he can think of many ways to publicize the students' work, and they should, but first,  
155 they should reach out to the students so they do not think it was just another forgotten thing from  
156 the City. Mr. Ferrantello stated that it would also be good to continue to keep the homeowners in  
157 the loop, the people whose homes were showcased in the presentations.

158

159 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she is a big fan of action items. She asked who will take on  
160 reaching out to the students. Mr. Ferrantello replied that he will do it.

161

162 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that regarding creating some videos for social media, the first  
163 step is probably to come up with a length and a basic format for content. She continued that the  
164 HDC is meeting next month. Mr. Clements stated that he, too, was going to suggest that they  
165 come up with some action items for building the frameworks for what they are envisioning. He  
166 continued that it would be great to nail those things down next month and come up with a game  
167 plan. Mr. Ferrantello spoke about how the students have photos of the buildings. He continued

168 that if the students do not have those, the next task would be to go out and photograph and film  
169 the buildings.

170  
171 Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the homework for next month is for each of them to brainstorm  
172 what they envision a two- to three-minute video about each of these projects would include, as a  
173 basic format. She continued that it is important to keep in mind that it is up to the HDC, with  
174 some help from Ms. Cramer, to actually execute this, so they should keep it doable and not get  
175 too carried away.

176  
177 Ms. Zerba asked if they are talking about the houses' interiors or exteriors. Mr. Ferrantello  
178 replied mostly exterior, because that is what the HDC is all about – they are tasked with  
179 approving or disapproving external things like roof materials. Interiors are a different ball game,  
180 but it is part of the students' assessment if they are willing to go that deeply.

181  
182 Mr. Clements stated that he thinks there is potential synergy involved with the work of the  
183 Heritage Commission. He continued that it might be worth combining forces a little bit with that  
184 group. Mr. Ferrantello replied that they met a woman from the Heritage Commission, Rosie  
185 Carey, who has been filming a few things already. He continued that maybe they should check  
186 in with her, and with KSC, to see how they could collaborate. Mr. Clements replied that he  
187 would suggest being conscious of “scope creep.” Mr. Ferrantello replied that to get the  
188 excitement going, they have to really get the big picture and then hone it down.

189  
190 Councilor Haas stated that he suggests the HDC members circulate their ideas amongst each  
191 other via email, without responding and without deliberating, so that when they come to the next  
192 meeting, they can be prepared to talk about the ideas and make some progress. Chair Cunha-  
193 Vasconcelos asked Mr. Clements if it is correct that HDC members could email things to him,  
194 and he could share it with the whole group, and they should avoid hitting “reply all” so they are  
195 not discussing anything as a quorum. Mr. Clements replied yes, they need to comply with RSA  
196 91:A, which means not discussing anything as a group over email, because that would be  
197 creating a meeting. He continued that he recommends setting a deadline for everyone to have  
198 their notes done by. Everyone can send what they have to him, and he can compile it into a  
199 document to share with the HDC ahead of time, so everyone can review everyone's thoughts and  
200 ideas.

201  
202 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the next HDC meeting is March 18. She suggested March  
203 11 as the deadline for getting notes to Mr. Clements. She asked if that works for him. Mr.  
204 Clements replied yes, and then he will include the document in the agenda packet, which he will  
205 get out by March 13 at the latest. HDC members can start sending him notes and ideas as soon  
206 as they have them, with a March 11 deadline.

207  
208 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the other action is that Mr. Ferrantello kindly offered to  
209 communicate with the architecture department chair. Mr. Ferrantello replied that he will do that  
210 tomorrow.

211  
212 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if there was any other new business.

213

214 Ms. Zerba asked if Mr. Ferrantello can, for the benefit of HDC members who were not at the  
215 presentations, explain how far along the students went with the houses. She continued that she is  
216 curious about that, as the HDC starts to think about how they would like to proceed. Mr.  
217 Ferrantello replied that students put their posters and their work on the wall, and each poster had  
218 floor plans and elevation sections. He continued that that is the beginning of documenting the  
219 architectural arrangement of these homes. They went pretty far, because to get to that  
220 conclusion, they had to make an appointment with the homeowner, field measure everything,  
221 take photographs, then generate all these things. It took quite a while to get to that point, and he  
222 thinks there was an excellent result. Ms. Zerba replied that it would be nice if the students could  
223 display those at the Keene Public Library. Mr. Ferrantello replied that he can ask the chair if  
224 those posters are still alive and accessible, and whether they could be given to the Library to  
225 display. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that they would need to have the Library's buy-in on  
226 that. Ms. Zerba replied that she thinks the Library would be interested. Councilor Haas replied  
227 that the Library did display those models that the architecture students created for Gilbo Ave.  
228 redevelopment several years ago, so there is precedent.

229  
230 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if Mr. Ferrantello, since he will be communicating with the  
231 architecture department chair tomorrow, can ask whether those posters are still available and  
232 whether they would like to potentially display them at the Library. She asked if Ms. Zerba could  
233 communicate with the Library, if so. Ms. Zerba replied that she can do that. Mr. Ferrantello  
234 replied that if he finds out that the posters are available and the students and chair are interested,  
235 he will communicate with Ms. Zerba, and CC Mr. Clements on the email. Mr. Clements replied  
236 yes, Mr. Ferrantello should just email him and Ms. Zerba, not the whole group. He continued  
237 that he could also help with talking with the Library if they need that.

238  
239 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if there was any other new business. Mr. Clements stated that  
240 when the HDC meets in March, he will have more information available about that "meet your  
241 boards and commissions" initiative that is going on.

- 242  
243 **7) Upcoming Dates of Interest**  
244 **A) Next HDC Meeting: March 18, 2026 at 4:30 PM**  
245 **B) HDC Site Visit: March 18, 2026 at 3:30 PM (to be confirmed)**  
246

247 Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if it is correct that as of now, there is no site visit for March. Mr.  
248 Clements replied that is correct. He continued that currently, they do not have any regulatory  
249 applications.

- 250  
251 **8) Adjournment**  
252 There being no further business, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 5:10 PM.

253  
254 Respectfully submitted by,  
255 Britta Reid, Minute Taker

256  
257 Reviewed and edited by,  
258 Evan J. Clements, AICP  
259 Planner/Zoning Administrator

**From:** Anthony F [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 20, 2026 2:48 PM  
**To:** Evan Clements  
**Subject:** Fwd: HDC & Keene State Joint Collaborative

Evan,

Please see reply from Noah that you may forward to KHD members, as the assistance and momentum are definitely there!

AJF

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Noah Ives [REDACTED]  
**Date:** Fri, Feb 20, 2026 at 2:19 PM  
**Subject:** RE: HDC & Keene State Joint Collaborative  
**To:** Anthony F [REDACTED], Fernando Del Ama Gonzalo [REDACTED]

Hi Anthony, thanks for the follow up. We're definitely excited to keep the process going. I've put Answers below in red. As noted below, I'm out on paternity leave now (and Fernando is on sabbatical) so please bear with any slower replies. I'll be back to KSC starting early April.

Best,

Noah

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**From:** Anthony F [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 20, 2026 8:49 AM  
**To:** Fernando Del Ama Gonzalo [REDACTED]; Noah Ives [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** HDC & Keene State Joint Collaborative

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the University System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Fernando and Noah,

Just following up on that presentation students made in December last year.

To help keep the momentum going in advertising students' progress, a few questions please:

1. Are the works of students available digitally to then place on illustration boards that we can display at the public library? We have some contacts at the library and can work out whether displays can be placed on easels or on walls somewhere in the library.

Also thinking of giving a copy of poster or illustration to each of the three respective owners of the homes. This as a thank you and also to keep them in the loop.

Yes, this sounds great. We still have the files and can print them for display and for the homeowners. Just let us know how we can support.

2. Could a short descriptive summary of students' findings be made on a postcard sized piece of paper that accompanies each illustration board? This might include students' experiences in visiting with each homeowner, site measurements, going to the Cheshire Historical Society to gather information, finding discrepancies with stuff at the Historical Society and at the sites and how they reconciled or mentioned the discrepancies. With the students' permission, this could also include a post stamp size photo, name and year of study of each student?

Some students included short writeups on their boards that we could also print separately. I'm happy to follow up with students to see if they can do an additional write-up, but it may be hard to get everyone's participation since they'll be busy with this semester's coursework.

3. Did anyone record the presentations via film or photos?

Unfortunately we did not.

4. I may have missed it, but was there an article in the Sentinel about students' presentation? Do we know who the writer of the article was and does he have more photos of the occasion? I can contact the person.

I am not aware of an article in the sentinel.

5. Will the same students further work on these homes or other students? will they add more layers of information like history of changes through the years, references to other buildings that may showcase similar features, etc.?

We still need to figure out next steps for this project. It happens that both Fernando and I am on leave this semester (Fernando on sabbatical and me on paternity leave), but we will put our heads together when we're back about what makes sense from our end. We are also happy to receive any suggestions. It's helpful to have some kind of target output, so if it is a recurring display at the library or something similar, it helps create momentum.

Thanks in advance for your help!

Anthony

**From:** [Councilor Edward Haas](#)  
**To:** [Evan Clements](#)  
**Subject:** Historic District Commission: Promotion of KSC research on Historic District buildings - 10 ideas!  
**Date:** Thursday, March 12, 2026 7:03:08 PM

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1. Displays in KPL
2. Displays in City Hall lobby
3. Displays in Rec Center lobby
4. Presentation to City Council
5. Public presentations at: Birdies, Co-op, Brewbakers
6. WKBK Radio interview
7. Weatherproof displays for each building in front of each building
8. Some related participation in the 250<sup>th</sup> celebration parade / events
9. A weekend day of public display in Central Square - weather permitting of course
10. Connection with the Historical Society?

Thought I had sent this last week! Really good ones from my idea would be 7, 5, 6, 9, in that order.

Ed Haas  
Councilor - Ward Two

**From:** Hope Benik  
**Sent:** Friday, February 20, 2026 4:03 PM  
**To:** Evan Clements  
**Subject:** Video Ideas for HDC

Hey there,

I'm really just trying to get back to what prompted this whole conversation about HDC visibility. Below are a few easy reel ideas. I put together a rough sample that would need better photos, etc., but just to get an idea of what might work.

## 15 Second HDC Video Ideas

### 1. "Did You Know?"

#### Format Structure

- **0–3 sec:** Hook ("Did you know...?")
- **3–10 sec:** What the HDC does (clear, simple)
- **10–15 sec:** Positive benefit and call to action

#### Sample Script

"Did you know Keene has a Historic District Commission?  
If you own property in the district and want to make exterior changes, we help review plans to preserve the character of our historic downtown.  
We're here to protect what makes Keene special."

#### On-Screen Text Ideas

- "Did you know Keene has an HDC?"
- "Protecting Keene's historic character"
- "Learn more at [keene.gov](https://www.keene.gov)"

Rough Sample Video: [canva.com](https://www.canva.com)

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### 2. "Why It Matters" Community Pride Spot

#### Format Structure

- **0–5 sec:** Beautiful visuals
- **5–12 sec:** Why preservation matters
- **12–15 sec:** Role of the HDC

## Sample Script

“These buildings tell Keene’s story.  
From historic storefronts to classic New England homes, they give our city its character.  
The Historic District Commission helps preserve that story for future generations.”

## Alternate Ending Line:

“Preserving the past. Supporting the future.”

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## 3. “What Needs Approval?” Myth-Buster

**Goal:** Clarity + reduce intimidation

**Tone:** Friendly, reassuring

**Visuals:** Quick bullet-style text animations

### Format Structure

- **0–3 sec:** “Thinking about making changes?”
- **3–10 sec:** 2–3 examples
- **10–15 sec:** Reassurance

## Sample Script

“Live in Keene’s Historic District?  
Planning to replace windows, change siding, or update signage?  
The HDC reviews exterior changes, and we’re here to guide you through the process.”

## On-Screen Text:

- Windows
- Doors
- Siding
- Roof
- Signage
- “We’re here to help.”

Thanks!!

Hope