

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

November 17, 2025 at 5:45 PM

Chairman Long called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Long, Levasseur, E. Sapienza, Fajardo

Absent: Alderman Thomas

Messrs.: J. Belanger, S. Garrity

1. Communication from Stan Garrity, Chair of the Heritage Commission, requesting the enactment of a policy requiring property owners to seek official permission before altering any structure located in the historic downtown district which contains original brickwork.

Chairman Long: Asking for permission from whom?

Alderman Fajardo: The Heritage Commission.

Alderman Fajardo moved to approve the request. **Alderman E. Sapienza** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Levasseur: Just one comment. I think we have enough. My understanding is that you have to go to the Heritage Commission already for anything as it is, if you want to do anything. I don't know if this is a double down or a change, or it's a different type of requirement that wasn't there before, because I've owned those properties down there and we always had to go to Heritage Commission. Is there a different change?

Chairman Long: I know when I was sitting on the Heritage Commission, there were some entities that would just do whatever they were going to do.

Alderman Fajardo: There's been a trend that the Heritage Commission has noted where people are painting the original brickwork, the top of the building or the bottom. So, I think the idea would be to at least have some kind of conversation before that is undertaken with at least the opportunity for the Heritage Commission to do something.

Alderman Levasseur: Interesting. Is that a restriction already? Jeff, do you know if there's no restriction on somebody painting their building?

Alderman Fajardo: Not that we were aware of.

Alderman Levasseur: Like the beautiful ones in Georgetown, D.C. Because I would have painted mine 20 years ago.

J. Belanger: As I read this letter, I believe the request is to expand the jurisdiction a little bit. I think it's because there's the mention of the downtown. So currently there's two historic districts, the AMH and the ACH. Those do not include the downtown, the CBD. So, I don't want to put words in Mr. Garrity's mouth. He might be able to attest to this

better than I can, but I'm just looking at the face of the letter. From the face of the letter, it appears that there would be an expansion, and it would be an expansion based on the wording here: change, cover, paint, deface or demolish original exterior brickwork. So, I think the the request is to expand it.

Alderman Levasseur: Is there an appeal from the Heritage Commission to the Planning Board or to this Board?

J. Belanger: Good question. I've never seen that, but it's possible they could go from Heritage to ZBA, but it might just go straight to Superior Court. I would need to look that up.

Alderman Levasseur: I don't think we should be going all the way to Superior Court. That costs a lot of money. There's no appeal for this, right?

Chairman Long: Stan, what's the intent?

Stan Garrity, Chair of the Heritage Commission: The reason why we put this letter out is just to show that we have some concern about the way some of the historic buildings in the city, downtown and in the historic district, are getting painted. That they're painting over brick buildings that have been there for 150 years. And it's a quick fix a lot of people try to do. I don't believe there's any restriction on that in the city for painting. I mean, somebody can actually come in here if they want to paint the Amoskeag Bank black. There are no restrictions on that, as far as we know. What we're trying to do is just to get some kind of manner where they have to come see us first before they want to do things, and maybe we can work something out. Or maybe we can express how important the historic buildings are in the city. I mean, we do have some strange painted buildings. Right out on Elm Street here, there's one that's painted mustard that really doesn't look too historic. Mustard and things like that. There's one across here on Stark Street, which is one of the oldest buildings on Elm Street, if not the oldest, was built in 1844. It's up for renovations. It's been painted gray before. Like the gray you see on the back there. It's all peeling off because the paint peels off, and underneath there's a pretty nice building. So, what we want to do is just get the concern out there and see if we can find a better way to have some kind of control on it. In the historic district, if they want to come down and paint it black, they can, if somebody owns one of the mills, he wants to paint it black.

Alderman Levasseur: I never knew that. I always thought you couldn't paint your buildings at all. So that's interesting.

S. Garrity: Well, it happened at the Chop House. They did that in one day.

Alderman Levasseur: What do you consider the historic downtown? Are we talking from Webster all the way down? What do you consider?

S. Garrity: Well, the downtown was laid out in 1838. All the lots were laid out and they have a map on it. So, all of downtown is historic. It was established by the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company. They bought up all the lots, sold all the lots on auctions, and people built their buildings, which makes it historic.

Alderman Levasseur: What about the steps that lead down to the river in Arms Park? Would that be considered within the district?

S. Garrity: Yes, that is part of the district. Sure.

Alderman Levasseur: So, they would have had to go in front of you.

S. Garrity: They did. I don't think they really had to, but they came and saw us and we gave approval. We thought it was a good idea. So, we want to work together with the building owners and things like that. But we have to be careful of what we're doing or else, all the buildings will be painted black. Not too long ago, on Hanover Street, all the street was white. At 48 Hanover Street, which is a beautiful building now, in 1985, when we had a big fire there, the building was painted white. I have pictures to show it. Now they're painting buildings black and we're worried about the copycats that say that guy did it, why don't I do it? So, we just want to have some oversight and go slowly instead of one day we ride down Hanover Street and a nice building that's been there a long time just went and painted it black. They actually painted one on Manchester Street, which really concerned me. As you take a left on Manchester Street, on the right-hand side, that building is black. Now, on that building you have what was a ghost ad. A ghost ad is an advertisement of something that used to be there. There's only a few left in the city. They painted right over that ghost ad. That's an historic ad. If you go to Keene, they've actually preserved all the ghost ads. They've all been redone. It looks beautiful. So, I just think we need better control and oversight. We're just looking to start that process.

Alderman Fajardo: The ability to at least have a conversation about it. I think in my experience on the Heritage Commission, when projects have come before the Heritage Commission, there's often a moment where we're able to impart some of the historic significance that they may not have been aware of. It's usually very collaborative. So, I just think it's important to be able to have that conversation. And like Stan said, not necessarily to say no on everything, but to be thoughtful about when and how we say yes.

Alderman Levasseur: I'm not a big fan of painting over brick.

S. Garrity: I can't see why somebody would be.

Alderman Levasseur: Your board's going to change at some point. So, looks to me like you got a good, strong board that probably sides with your view. So, I wonder where we'll go down the road if there's no appeal from your board's decision. How many people are on the Heritage Commission?

S. Garrity: Eight. Right now we have a good board, and everybody participates. Everybody's concerned. Everybody cares about the city, and that's the kind of people we want.

Alderman Levasseur: I wanted to put a sign up, and you guys didn't have a quorum for 4 or 5 months, so that was slowing things down.

S. Garrity: We always have a quorum now. People enjoy what they're doing.

Alderman Levasseur: I like the idea of giving you guys that; I didn't before. Now I understand where you're going with all this, I like it. I just wish there was an appeal process. Not only because you guys may get it right, but you might get it wrong. And I think another level of oversight might be there. I don't know if that's something you guys would be okay with.

S. Garrity: We just kind of want to get the ball rolling on this so we don't get blindsided by something. After they come to us then we can go forward and in the best way to take care of it.

Chairman Long called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Communication from Matthew Normand, City Clerk, submitting draft language to Rule 8 of the Rules of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Chairman Long: I think this ought to be sent to the full Board. I think the next Board should look at enforcement of this. So, this Board shouldn't have that discussion because the next board is going to have to hear that. Let them decide what the enforcement is.

Alderman Fajardo: I just was wanting to get clarification on the bold text that was added. The board affirms that it does not tolerate any type of workplace violence or harassment committed. So, what's the enforcement mechanism? What's the recourse? Can our attorney go into that? I did read the entire policy that you included with this. It's all very clear, and I agree with it, but I just don't understand how that would play out if it were to be violated.

Alderman E. Sapienza: I have the same question. What exactly are we doing here? What are we doing that hasn't already been done? Because I see this has already been adopted in the past.

Alderman Fajardo: It is a change to the rule.

Alderman E. Sapienza: The bold is new, right? I understand that, but even at that, reading the bold, I still don't understand what exactly is being added. So, can somebody explain its enforcement currently? And what would the new enforcement be? I don't see.

Chairman Long: That would be up to the new board to decide what that would be.

Alderman E. Sapienza moved to refer the issue to the 2026-2027 Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Alderman Fajardo: I would also like to just draw attention to rule six. We can make whatever changes we want to rule eight, but if we don't have a mayor that's going to enforce rule eight, it just becomes arbitrary at that point. So, it would also be my recommendation, that if we consider any adjustments to rule eight, that we also consider rule six, which is Mayor to Preside: "Mayor shall preserve decorum and order. The mayor shall speak to points of order in preference to other members, and shall decide all questions of order, subject to an appeal, to the board."

Chairman Long: Alderman Sapienza, do you have an issue with what she just added on to your motion?

Alderman E. Sapienza: I have no issue with you.

Alderman Levasseur: We should bring back some tar and feathering.

Alderman Fajardo duly seconded the motion that the proposed changes to Rule 8 of the Rules of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen be referred to the newly elected 2026-2027 Board of Mayor and Aldermen, and further that the new Board consider changes to Rule 6. The motion carried unanimously.

TABLED ITEM

3. Conflict of interest proposal submitted by Alderman Terrio.
(Note: Tabled on June 4, 2024.)

This item remained on the table.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman E. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Fajardo**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.



Clerk of Committee

Meeting Start Time: 5:45PM
Meeting End Time: 5:58PM
Minutes Prepared By: Michael Intranuovo