

Historic Preservation Commission of Mendon N.Y.

August 12, 2026 Meeting

Members Present:

Geoff Tesch (Chair), Kim Roberts (Board Liaison), Lynn Buehlman, Martha Bush and Kaley Catlin

Members Absent:

Diane Ham (Historian)

Visitors from the public:

None

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tesch at 7:06PM

Minutes from May 2026:

Motion- Martha moved and Lynn seconded

Action- Minutes approved

New Business

- **3694 Rush Mendon Road.** This property has been purchased; the new owner is building a new home and desires to demolish the old house. The house is not designated either locally or at the state or national level. The owner has specified in their letter of intent that they are willing to work with the town. We have been asked for our comments.
 - This home, known as the Porter Homestead and Shamrock Farms, was built between 1825 and 1830 and is an example of both Greek Revival and traditional farmhouse style of architecture. As such, it is local designation eligible.
 - The property is within the 500' buffer of the Porters Corners designated cemetery.
 - The property is within the 500' buffer of the designated Holforth house at 965 West Bloomfield.
 - On the application form, question #6 "Is the plan consistent with the predominant characteristics of the existing built landscape?" The homeowner answered YES and our commission believes the answer should be "NO".
 - We have been in touch with the state SHPO on this property and they reminded us that the best protection for local historic properties is local oversight.
 - We would like to recommend, and would be happy to work with the owner if either:
 - If this historic property is demolished, the town should request some mitigation from the owner as it might if the owner were to impinge on an environmentally sensitive area -- perhaps a monetary compensation to support historic preservation elsewhere in the town?

- That the owner considers an adaptive reuse of the historic property and NOT destroy it. The old home is not in the way of the new home to be built, perhaps it could be saved and reused.
 - This recommendation was moved by G. Tesch, Seconded by L. Buehlman and carried.
- **Memo from the ECB board on June 3.** This memo was sent to a wide audience regarding the buffer zone for Mendon Ponds Park. It included several misunderstandings. We discussed and approved the following reply to this memo:
 - Although the previous administration deliberated about updating the Historic Preservation Code for several years, when they finally put it in front of a public meeting and voted on it last August, they opened up several gaping liability holes —
 - By adding code that the HPC will review all properties with any (state, federal and local) designations they are putting a new onus on unsuspecting homeowners without informing them or asking for their input. Homeowners who have designated their properties locally know that they have a buffer and restrictions on changing their buildings. Property owners with a state or federal designation do not.
 - This memo from the ECB points out that by neglecting to clarify the buffer around the park, the new code also opens the town to some liability.
 - The memo from the ECB implies that we, the Historic Preservation Commission, RECOMMENDED that the buffer around the park be removed. This could not be further from the truth! In fact, we simply identified that we could not find any background material that showed why the Park was put under our jurisdiction in the first place. The previous administration were the ones who said they wanted to take the park out of EPOD 5 and put it into an Environmental EPOD
 - We presented MANY versions of the new EPOD 5 map over the course of four years, always with two versions — one with the buffer around the park, and one with out the buffer.
 - We were told to use the map without the park buffer.
 - The previous administration said they would update the code to include the park in the Environmental EPOD and failed to make this change.
 - Note:
 - The ECB seems to be suggesting a new EPOD #10 be created, which would prohibit activities in protected zones.
 - If all development is prohibited within 500 ft of the park, the town better plan on informing the homeowners who currently live within that boundary.

Old Business

Code updates from August 2025. As discussed above, there are issues with the code changes from last summer.

1. The new code extends EPOD #5 to cover protections and requirements for all listed properties, national, state and local. The previous code only provides these provisions to locally designated properties. We don't believe the 20 property owners who now have new protections and requirements have been asked for input or notified.
2. The new code took out the buffer for Mendon Ponds park from EPOD #5 and neglected to put it into the Environmental EPOD as planned. This has created a code gap.

EPOD #5 Map:

- Martha has a meeting with Corey Gates on Aug 17th to discuss his input to the current map.

Historian's Report- Diane Ham

- Diane was not in attendance

Town Liaison Report - Kim Roberts

- A recent workshop was held to work on the Employee Handbook, social media policies and procurement policies.
- Many road construction projects are underway
- The Climate Smart task force is working to achieve Bronze certification.
- The planned Urgent Care building in the village has a Town easement. There are some questions remaining about the environmental testing and whether remediation might be required to avoid town liability.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Bush and Geoff Tesch