



## Westport Historic District Commission

Town Hall

Westport, Conn. 06880

# How to Establish a Local Historic District or Local Historic Property in the Town of Westport; a resident's perspective...

**Step 1\*:** Call or better yet visit the Historic District Commission's CLG Coordinator/Staff Administrator in the Historic District Commission Office, Room 108, to discuss your idea. If appropriate, the Coordinator will put your item on the Historic District Commission's (HDC) agenda at a regularly scheduled meeting. The HDC meets once a month on the second Tuesday of the month in the Town Hall.

**Step 2\*:** Attend the HDC meeting. Come prepared with supporting materials including whatever historical information you may have on the proposed Local Historic District or Local Historic Property and current photographs of same (a copy of any of the materials for the Commission would be appreciated). If it is a Local Historic District that you are proposing, it would be especially helpful (but not a requirement) to have a signed letter of support from as many of the owners within the proposed district as possible. If it's a local property you want designated and you are unable to attend the meeting, a signed letter of request will suffice. The Commission will review this information and may ask you questions. They will then vote on whether or not to accept your proposal for study.

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**Step 3\*:** Assuming the HDC accepts your proposal for study, the Study Committee (a permanent sub-committee of the HDC) will prepare a Study Report and send it to the Historic Preservation & Museum Division of the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT). The Study Report will contain the following information:

1. An analysis of the historical significance and architectural merit of the buildings, structures, places or surroundings proposed as historic properties or those to be included in the proposed district and the significance of the district as a whole.
2. In the case of a proposed Local Historic District, a complete description of the area, including the number of buildings and their ages.
3. Listing of address(s) and current property owner(s) of record within the proposed district.
4. A proposed ordinance for the creation of a Local Historic District or Local Historic Property.
5. A map showing the boundaries of the proposed Local Historic District or a description for a Local Historic Property.
6. Contextual photographs of the proposed Local Historic District or Local Historic Property.

**Note: as a resident, your participation is not required beyond this point, though some may wish to stay involved in the process by attending meetings, etc.**

**Step 4\*:** After being reviewed by staff at the CCT, the Study Report is presented to the Historic Preservation Council at its monthly meeting in Hartford. The public is welcome at these meetings and it is an especially good idea to attend and speak when your application is on the agenda.

**Step 5:** If the Preservation Council votes to approve the Study Report, the HDC Coordinator is notified and a HDC public hearing is scheduled (not less than 65 days or more than 130 days after the date that the Study Report was sent to

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CCT\*\*). Additionally, the Study Report is forwarded to P&Z for review and comment.

\*\*Note: it is permissible to schedule a public hearing less than 65 after the Study Report is sent to CCT provided comments and recommendations from both CCT and P&Z have been received.

**Step 6:** The Town Attorney prepares the RTM Ordinance Committee Checklist for the proposed Local Historic District or Local Historic Property.

**Step 7:** The RTM Ordinance Committee meets to review and approve the ordinance.

**Step 8:** Written notice of the HDC public hearing is mailed at least 15 days beforehand to all owners of record in the proposed Local Historic District or of the Local Historic Property - together with a copy of the Study Report (or a fair and accurate synopsis of same). Additionally, legal notice of the public hearing is published twice in the local paper ( the first being not more than fifteen days or less than ten days and the second notice not less than two days before the public hearing).

Note: A complete copy of the Study Report is to be made available at the Town Clerk's office together with a copy of comments from CCT and P&Z.

**Step 9\*:** The HDC holds a public hearing on the proposed Local Historic District or Local Historic Property. After the public portion of the meeting the HDC goes into a work session to prepare and approve a Final Report on the proposed Local Historic District or Local Historic Property.

**Step 10:** A copy of the Final Report is forwarded by the HDC CLG Coordinator/Staff Administrator to the RTM Moderator and the Town Clerk within 65 days after the public hearing.

**Step 11:** In the case of a Local Historic District, the Town Clerk mails official ballots to each owner of record within the proposed district not more than 65 days from receipt of the Final Report. Legal notice of the balloting is published in

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the local paper and is subject to the same time requirements as described in step 8. Note: the ballot return date cannot be any less than 15 days.

**Step 12:** The Town Clerk tallies the ballots received by the close of business on the return date. The results are forwarded to the RTM.

For a Local Historic District - if two thirds of the property owners who return ballots vote in the affirmative, the RTM votes to accept the Final Report and enact the ordinance or return the Final Report to the HDC with recommended revisions.

For a Local Historic Property - if more than 50% of the owners do not object within 30 days of the public hearing, the RTM votes to accept the Final Report and enact the ordinance or return the Final Report to the HDC with recommended revisions

**Step 13\*:** The RTM takes action in the form of two meetings. The initial meeting is for a “first reading” of the proposed ordinance for the establishment of a Local Historic District or Local Historic Property. At the second meeting, the RTM votes on whether or not to accept the Final Report and adopt the ordinance.

Note: it is possible to have a first reading before the ballots have gone out to the owners of record.

**Step 14:** If the ordinance passes the RTM, the Town Clerk records it on the land records.

Local Historic Districts and Local Historic Properties are automatically included on the State Historic Register.

Congratulations, you've done it!

Note: Some Town Boards and Commissions do not meet during the month of August. In December the RTM holds an organizational meeting only - no action taken.

\* Resident involvement is required for steps 1 and 2. Resident involvement is suggested but not required for steps 3, 4, 9 & 13.