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Collection Summary

Repository: Manchester City Archives. Office of the City Clerk. City of Manchester, NH.

Creator: Historic District Commission. City of Manchester, NH.

Title: Historic District Commission Records

Collection Number: 0411.003

Accession Number: 2012.221

Dates: 1974 – 1994

Volume: 1 linear foot

Languages: Collection materials are in English.

Related Collections: Heritage Commission Meeting Minutes (0411.010); Amoskeag Corporation Housing Historic District Photographs (0411.002).

Access: Access to collection is open to the public. Please contact the archives for an appointment to view materials. Cite the collection number, box and folder numbers when making an appointment.

Digital Note: Materials are not accessible online at this time.

Conservation Notes: Not applicable.

Finding Aid Prepared by: Mike Intranuovo, 2017.

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Historical Note

Manchester's Historic District Commission was established by ordinance on June 05, 1979. It consisted of the Mayor and six other appointed members, with approval by the Board of Aldermen. The commission was charged with the general duty to develop policies to identify and subdivide physical areas in the City of Manchester, for the purpose of creating historic districts.¹ Prior to the passage of this ordinance, the state government had granted municipalities the authority to establish historic districts, as well as the ability to create historic district commissions in order to execute these districts.

Before its creation, other city government entities were working towards the establishment of Manchester's Historic District Commission. In 1979, John F. Grogan, the Director of the Planning Department, wrote to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading to let the members know of the Planning Board's full support of creating a commission. The board concluded that "creation of the commission...is consistent with and a step toward providing for protection of areas of historic and architectural value."²

The commission was tasked with the responsibility of determining the most practical means of protecting the corporation housing area located in downtown Manchester, and identifying other buildings or areas that may have historical and/or architectural significance.

One of the commission's first, and perhaps most significant action, was the creation of the Amoskeag Corporation Housing Historic District, located in the vicinity of Canal, Mechanic, Pleasant, and Franklin Streets. An ordinance was drafted by the commission and sent to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for approval; the ordinance was passed on May 6, 1980 and signed by Mayor Charles Stanton. The district was recognized as an area of unique character and architectural nature which contributed significantly to the attractiveness and vitality of downtown Manchester. The area reflected the historic identify of the city's early development alongside the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, and establishing it as an historic district would preserve its architectural and historic characteristics, through the development of coordinated landscaping, pedestrian ways, and improvements of private and public open spaces.

The Historic District Commission continued overseeing the city's historic districts until 1996, when the Board of Mayor and Aldermen passed an ordinance to consolidate the commission with the newly formed Heritage Commission. The reasoning behind this ordinance was because of the Historic District Commission's limited regulatory powers and purview over the city's historic districts. The Heritage Commission would assume all duties and powers granted to the Historic District Commission, as well as advisory powers over historic structures, resources, area, etc. throughout Manchester. This would allow for the Heritage Commission to have a stronger and more proactive role to oversee and protect historic resources than its predecessor commission. The Heritage Commission was established by ordinance of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on October 01, 1996, signed by Mayor Raymond Wieczorek.

¹ Ordinance, June 05, 1979. Volume F. Ordinances of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Collection 0100.004, accession 2007.24. Manchester City Archives. Office of the City Clerk. City of Manchester, NH.

² Letter to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading from John F. Grogan, May, 7, 1979. Governance Documents: Legislation establishing Historic Commission, 1978-1980. Box 01, Folder 05. Historic District Commission Records. Collection 0411.003, accession 2012.221. Manchester City Archives. Office of the City Clerk. City of Manchester, NH.

Collection Description

The Historic District Commission records document the activities and initiatives of the commission, especially in regards to the Amoskeag Corporation Housing Historic District and the Amoskeag Millyard Historic District. The collection consists of records created or used by the Historic District Commission while conducting its official business, and is entirely paper-based. Records from the Amoskeag Neighborhood Association, as well as from internal city departments such as the Planning Department, are also included. It contains three record series: Governance Documents, Reference Files, and Subject Files.

In general, the meeting minutes found in the Governance Documents record series give the best overview of the commission's actions, decisions, and tasks, as well as its history as a whole.

Series Descriptions & Inventory

Series 1: Governance Documents, 1978-1994

Governance documents consist of records recording the commission's process of governing. It includes minutes of official meetings, which may have marginalia and supplemental documents attached.

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Meeting Notices, 1979-1994	01	01
Agendas, 1980-1994	01	02
Meeting Minutes, 1979-1994	01	03
Bylaws and Philosophy, 1979-1983	01	04
Legislation establishing Historic District Commission, 1978-1980	01	05

Series 2: Reference Files, 1980-1982

This series includes documents that were not created by the Historic District Commission, but were instead used by its members for informational purposes. Records include reports, brochures, newsletters, and maps. These materials offer information about specific areas within Manchester, tax incentives, design guidelines, and other related subjects.

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Amoskeag Past and Present Report by Amoskeag Neighborhood Association, 1980	01	06
Brochures, n.d.	01	07
Design Guidelines, n.d.	01	08
Indian Archaeology Map, n.d.	01	09
The Overseer's Record Newsletter, 1981-1982	01	10
Tax Incentives, n.d.	01	11

Series 3: Subject Files, 1974-1994

Subject files contain various documents relating to a specific subject. These documents can include correspondence, memorandums, reports, spreadsheets, forms, etc.

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Amoskeag Corporate Housing buildings listed on the National Register or eligible for listing, circa 1980	01	12
Application Materials, n.d.	01	13
General Correspondence, 1979-1981	01	14
Millyard Mixed Use (MXU), 1994	01	15
New Hampshire Municipalities with Historic Districts, 1974-1980	01	16
Ordinance Packet, 1980; 1984	01	17
Property owners in Amoskeag Corporate Housing Area, 1980	01	18
Violations, 1980-1982	01	19