

Meeting Minutes

AIA Massachusetts – Government Affairs Committee (GAC)

Date: Wednesday, May 13, 2026

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Topic: Mat 13, 2026 GAC Meeting Minutes

Chairs: Russ Feldman, AIA; Larry Spang, AIA

Staff: John Nunnari, Executive Director

Attendance: Approximately 40+ participants

1. Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chairs Russ Feldman and Larry Spang called the meeting to order at approximately 8:30 AM and welcomed attendees. The agenda for the meeting was reviewed.

2. “State of Play” Legislative & Regulatory Update

Mr. Nunnari provided an overview of recent legislative and regulatory activity as the Legislature moves through budget season and toward the July 31 formal session deadline.

Legislative Update

Key topics discussed included:

- FY2027 state budget activity following House passage and in advance of Senate budget debate.
- Increased activity surrounding several proposed ballot questions, including legislative audits, public records, income tax reductions, all-party primaries, recreational marijuana repeal, and rent control.
- Ongoing legal and political disputes involving ballot initiatives and state oversight issues.
- Continued legislative focus on affordability, housing, energy policy, and economic competitiveness.

Regulatory Update

Mr. Nunnari reported on several active regulatory initiatives, including:

- Continued development of the 11th Edition Massachusetts State Building Code.
- Ongoing review of residential provisions of the 2024 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC).
- Recent BBRS discussions regarding code amendments, public accessibility of code documents, and certificates of occupancy.
- Activity before the Board of Elevator Regulations, Plumbing Board, and Sheet Metal Board.
- Transition of professional licensing systems within the Division of Occupational Licensure, including implementation of the new Eclipse licensing platform.

Members discussed experiences with the new licensing system, continuing education requirements, and license renewal procedures. Participants generally reported a smooth transition to the new platform.

Energy Affordability Legislation

Mr. Nunnari provided a detailed update on House Bill 5151 and broader energy affordability discussions.

Key points included:

- House passage of an energy bill containing a proposed \$1 billion reduction in Mass Save funding.
- Removal of earlier language that would have weakened the legally binding nature of the Commonwealth's greenhouse gas reduction requirements.
- Public statements by Senate leadership indicating that the Senate is unlikely to adopt the House's proposed Mass Save reductions.
- Senator Mike Barrett's interest in identifying alternative sources of utility cost savings, including possible reforms to the Gas System Enhancement Program (GSEP).
- Expectations that significant policy negotiations will likely occur through a conference committee process later in the session.

Members discussed potential opportunities for advocacy and the importance of maintaining support for successful energy-efficiency programs while addressing affordability concerns.

3. Working Group Updates

Embodied Carbon / ECICC Working Group

Mr. Nunnari summarized recent activities of the Embodied Carbon Working Group.

Discussion topics included:

- Continued review of the recommendations of the Embodied Carbon Intergovernmental Coordinating Council (ECICC).
- Development of an AIA Massachusetts Embodied Carbon Resource Hub and Toolkit to support member education and implementation.
- Ongoing efforts to engage with DCAMM and other state agencies regarding practical implementation considerations.
- Development of a practitioner survey intended to gather information regarding:
 - Current embodied carbon practices;
 - Familiarity with ECICC recommendations;
 - Use of whole-building life-cycle assessments and Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs);
 - Training and resource needs; and
 - Time and cost implications associated with embodied carbon analysis.

Members emphasized the importance of documenting the real-world impacts of embodied carbon requirements on project delivery, staffing, fees, and contractual services.

The Working Group also discussed future opportunities for member participation in forthcoming ECICC Technical Advisory Committees.

Historic District Commission (HDC) Legislation Working Group

Mr. Nunnari provided an update on the Historic District Commission Legislation Working Group.

Key discussion points included:

- Continued refinement of proposed legislation intended to provide municipalities with optional tools, greater consistency, and clearer statutory authority.
- Ongoing stakeholder outreach to preservation organizations, local historic commissions, and municipal officials.
- Recognition that portions of the preservation community have expressed concerns regarding the legislation's intent and potential impacts.
- Discussion regarding demolition delay provisions and the absence of a clear statutory framework in state law.

- Efforts to improve messaging and explanatory materials to better communicate the legislation's goals.

Next steps include continued stakeholder engagement, further refinement of legislative language, and development of materials outlining legislative intent and desired outcomes.

Single-Stair / State-Level Activity

Mr. Nunnari reported on the status of the state commission studying single-stair residential building design.

Updates included:

- All designated organizations have submitted their representatives to the commission.
- Formation of the commission remains pending gubernatorial appointments.
- Once appointments are completed, commission members will be sworn in and formal work can begin.
- AIA Massachusetts continues to maintain a neutral position on single-stair legislation pending further study and review of public safety considerations.

Members discussed the composition of the commission, anticipated timelines, and the importance of evaluating both life-safety and housing-production considerations.

4. General Discussion / Member Input

Members discussed several broader policy topics, including:

- Opportunities for AIA Massachusetts to contribute more proactively to statewide housing policy discussions.
- Ongoing Board-level conversations regarding development of a housing policy framework and strategic priorities for the organization.
- Potential future member surveys related to housing production challenges and barriers.
- Ways architects can contribute practical solutions to housing affordability and production challenges across the Commonwealth.

Mr. Nunnari also announced plans for the June 10 GAC meeting, which will feature a moderated forum on the proposed rent control ballot question with representatives from both the supporter and opponent campaigns.

5. New Business

No additional new business was raised.

6. Next Steps and Adjournment

- AIA MA will continue monitoring FY2027 budget negotiations, energy legislation, and regulatory developments.
- The Embodied Carbon Working Group will continue development of its practitioner survey and resource hub.
- The Historic District Commission Working Group will continue stakeholder outreach and refinement of legislative language.
- AIA MA will monitor formation of the Single-Stair Commission and coordinate member participation as appropriate.
- Preparations will continue for the June 10 GAC forum on rent control.

The meeting adjourned at approximately **10:00 AM**.