



Proposed changes to Section 1 of CGS 7-147e: Changes to this section include requiring that “all public hearings held by the commission shall be broadcast contemporaneously and continuously on an Internet web site identified in such notice.”

This places an excessive burden on the municipality to purchase recording equipment if it does not already have it and attempts to hold the Historic District Commission to a higher standard than other municipal boards and commissions.

Proposed changes to Section 2 7-147i: Any person or persons severally or jointly aggrieved by any decision of the historic district commission or of any officer thereof may, within fifteen days from the date when such decision was rendered, take an appeal to the [superior court for the judicial district in which such municipality is located, which appeal shall be made returnable to such court in the same manner as that prescribed for other civil actions brought to such court. Notice of such appeal shall be given by leaving a true and attested copy thereof in the hands of or at the usual place of abode of the chairman or clerk of the commission within twelve days before the return day to which such appeal has been taken. Procedure upon such appeal shall be the same as that defined in section 8-8] zoning board of appeals in accordance with the provisions of section 8-7.

This means that the Zoning Board of Appeals, a locally elected body of officials, will have final say over the process of the Historic District Commission instead of an impartial Superior Court Judge. In the case of municipalities that are Certified Local Governments, there is a partnership with the State and Federal Government which requires the Historic District Commissions to be staffed by “qualified” members when making determinations regarding historic properties. There is no such parallel requirement for Zoning Board of Appeals members.

Sec. 3. Section 7-147k of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective October 1, 2026): (a) The provisions of this part shall in no way impair the validity of any historic district previously established under any special act or the general statutes. Any and all historic districts created under the general statutes, prior to October 1, 1980, otherwise valid except that such districts, district study committees, municipalities or officers or employees thereof, failed to comply with the requirements of any general or special law, and any and all actions of such districts or historic district commission, are validated. (b) The provisions of this part shall not apply to any property owned by a nonprofit institution of higher education, for as long as a nonprofit institution of higher education owns such property. (c) The provisions of this part shall not apply to any property owned by a state agency, as defined in section 4-67g,

or a municipality, for as long as such state agency or municipality owns such property. In lieu of the requirements of this part, any state agency or municipality that intends to erect or alter a building or structure within an historic district shall submit to the historic district commission (1) any plans, elevations, specifications and materials pertaining to such erection or alteration, and (2) if such plan involves demolition or removal of a building or structure, a statement of the proposed condition and appearance of such property after such demolition or removal. Not later than sixty-five days after such submission, the commission shall issue a nonbinding opinion of the appropriateness of such erection or alteration, which may include recommendations concerning the design, arrangement, texture, material and similar features of such erection or alteration. If the commission determines such erection or alteration is not appropriate, such opinion shall include the bases for such determination.

Changes to this section will allow municipal and state-owned properties to be exempt from the full Historic District Review process and reduce the role of a Historic District Commission to an advisory one. Municipal governments, in particular those that are Certified Local Governments, have a responsibility to protect their historic assets and comply with the ordinances administered by the Local Historic District Commission in a fair and complete way. Allowing municipalities to bypass historic district regulations contradicts that commitment and erodes public trust. Finally, historic districts are places that have an overall character that is greater than the sum of their parts, and the purpose of local historic districts is to protect that overall character. Creating exceptions to historic district regulations erodes that character.