

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL MEETING  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
Wednesday, April 1, 2026 @ 9:30 am**

**Microsoft Teams Meeting**

Meeting will be held virtually on Microsoft Teams (see code for meeting in your email or contact Jonathan.[Kinney@ct.gov](mailto:Kinney@ct.gov) for the code)

**MINUTES**

**Council:** Ms. Elizabeth Acly, Ms. Elizabeth Burgess, Chairman Paul Butkus, Ms. Marguerite Carnell, Mr. Thomas Elmore, Dr. Leah Glaser, Dr. Andy Horowitz, Ms. Catherine Labadia, Mr. Todd Levine, Mr. Kent McCoy, Ms. Deanna Rhodes and Dr. Sarah Sportman

**Absent:** Ms. Vincencia Adusei

**Staff:** Mr. Kevin Berger, Ms. Julie Carmelich, Ms. Mary Dunne, Ms. Erin Fink, Ms. Deborah Gaston, Mr. Jonathan Kinney Ms. Jenny Scofield, Ms. Elizabeth Shapiro, and Ms. Marena Wisniewski

**Guests:** Ms. Elizabeth Boyce, Ms. Lori Fusco, Ms. Jane Montanaro, Ms. Allison Sanders and Mr. Brian Sear

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.m.

**II. Review of Public Comment Procedures**

Chairman Butkus read aloud the Review of Public Comment Procedures.

**III. Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest**

Chairman Butkus read aloud the Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest and asked if there were any conflicts with staff members or Council. There were no conflicts.

**IV. Review and Approval of Minutes and Transcripts**

A. Minutes – March 4, 2026

*On a motion by Ms. Acly, second by Mr. McCoy, the Council voted to approve the March 4, 2026 meeting minutes.*

*(Y-9, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-1, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)*

## V. State Historic Preservation Grants – Action Items

### A. Unfinished Action Items

### B. New Action Items

#### 1. Federal Historic Preservation Enhancement Grant, Town of Wilton, Condition assessment for the Gilbert and Bennet Building, Wilton

On a motion by Mr. McCoy, second by Ms. Acly, the Historic Preservation Council voted to award a Certified Local Government, Historic Preservation Enhancement Grant, funded by the Historic Preservation Fund of the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, to the below-listed applicant in the amount shown. All federal and state grant guidelines and requirements shall be met by the below-listed applicant upon receipt of a grant as administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development. Staff recommended this application for funding.

(Y-9, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-1, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Applicant: The Town of Wilton

Amount: \$20,000

Ms. Dunne Presented this application. The Town of Wilton requested funding in the amount of \$20,000 to obtain the consulting services of a CFR-Qualified historical architect to prepare a condition assessment for the Gilbert and Bennett School, located at 49 New Street, Wilton. This building is owned by the Town of Wilton and is currently vacant. The Town is exploring new uses for building. This is a non-matching grant because it's under the federal CLG program. \$20,000 may not seem like a lot for the building, and possibly the two other houses, but several thorough reports and investigations have already been conducted. The Town would like to bring in a Historical Architect to look at the building again through a preservation lens, focusing mostly on the roof and issues in the basement. Ms. Lori Fusco, Chair of the Historic District Commission, along with Allison Sanders, were on the call to answer any questions or concerns.

Ms. Carnell mentioned the correction from consulting services of an Architectural Historian to Historical Architect.

Mr. Elmore commented that he wished he could drive by and see the property. Based on the scope that was presented, he felt that the fee was insignificant and it might be very helpful if a budget projection was part of the scope, so that they had some idea of order of magnitude for the different areas or issues that are presented. However, that's going to eat into the budget as well. He wasn't sure how to address it and asked Mr. McCoy for his opinion to see what his thoughts are on the scope and the budget.

Mr. McCoy replied, routinely when they do these kinds of assessments, a conceptual budget is part of it.

Ms. Dunne added, SHPO generally does require a statement of probable cost just to give the owner an idea, which is obviously not binding. She does agree that 20,000 is a little bit low, although she has been seeing buildings of this similar size and complexity assessed for about \$20,000. There are already a lot of investigatory reports completed on the building. They're just looking for a more preservation-oriented lens to look at issues and alternatives that might be more appropriate for a historic building.

Chairman Butkus asked when the RFP is complete that the applicant make it clear what level of information already exists and what they're tailoring their focus to, because their desire to consider the other two structures on the property is a lot to ask for based on the budget. In general, there's always been a challenge with these non-matching grants. It doesn't necessarily mean that the project can be done for that much. It's just that you're not forced to make a specific amount of contribution.

Ms. Dunne replied that the two houses are going to be presented as add/alts. So, they could be taken out of the equation altogether if the fee won't cover it. The RFP will include, if not the actual reports themselves, links to the reports so that whoever wants to bid on the project will know what's already be available as far as information. SHPO generally does ask the applicant if it's a non-matching grant, if they are prepared to make up any difference between the grant amount and what a proposer might bid.

Ms. Burgess added she enjoyed reading the application and thanked the applicant for how well it was written.

## **2. Survey and Planning Grant City of New London, Geophysical Survey of Human Burials, Williams Memorial Park, New London**

On a motion by Ms. Carnell, second by Ms. Rhodes, the Historic Preservation Council voted to award a Survey and Planning Grant, funded by the Community Investment Act of the State of Connecticut, to the below-listed applicant in the amount shown. All grant guidelines and state requirements shall be met by the below-listed applicant upon receipt of a grant as administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development. Staff recommended this application for funding.

*(Y-9, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-1, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)*

Applicant: City of New London  
Amount: \$7,500

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The City of New London requested funding in the amount of \$7,500 to obtain the consulting services of a CFR-Qualified archaeologist to prepare a geophysical survey for human burials at Williams Memorial Park. This is a former cemetery, now a designed park. The city was planning to do some development in or around the park, but then understood that it is a former cemetery, which is no longer marked. They want to make sure they're not disturbing any graves that may still be present. For these projects,

SHPO usually gives a non-matching grant, and they usually come in at \$5,000 to \$7,500. This area is a lot bigger, so the town is going to match the \$7,500 that they're asking for just in case the bids come in higher. Mr. Brian Sheer, City of New London, was on the call for any questions or concerns.

Chairman Butkus mention to Ms. Dunne the form has to be updated to match the upgrade on the cap due to survey reports coming in at \$5,000-\$7,500. He also asked if just the stones were moved and not the bodies? Mr. Sheer believes that they moved the bodies in the early 20th century. But, there wasn't a lot of documentation on that, and this is a reassessment to see what is left there.

Ms. Acly asked Mr. Sear if he had any clue where in the park, they were going to start the project if starting from scratch. Mr. Sear replied they were starting from scratch to cover the whole park.

### **3. Survey and Planning Grant, Town of Easton, Roof assessment for Easton Town Hall, Easton**

On a motion by Ms. Acly, second by McCoy, the Historic Preservation Council voted to award a Survey and Planning Grant, funded by the Community Investment Act of the State of Connecticut, to the below-listed applicant in the amount shown. All grant guidelines and state requirements shall be met by the below-listed applicant upon receipt of a grant as administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development. Staff recommended this application for funding.

*(Y-9, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-1, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)*

Applicant: Town of Easton  
Amount: \$2,500

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Town of Easton requested funding in the amount of \$2,500 to obtain the consulting services of a CFR-qualified architect/engineer team to prepare a roof condition assessment of the Easton Town Hall, located at 225 Center Road. Ms. Dunne was concerned about the budget, only asking for \$2,500 with a match, but apparently that's enough. There's easy access to the roof. There's no scaffolding or use of a drone required. Ms. Elizabeth Boyce was on the call to answer any questions or concerns.

Ms. Acly asked for some clarity on the water damage within the walls. Ms. Boyce replied it is coming from the exterior walls of the original structure, and it is quite likely that it's coming from the integrated gutter system, which has failed.

Ms. Acly asked if Ms. Boyce thought they could get some design work added into the RFP if they can identify the problem and a recommended solution whether that be design or materials. Ms. Acly added, typically in a conditions assessment, unless it's stated otherwise, they would get a written description, but not necessarily a design. Ms. Boyce agreed with that statement.

Chairman Butkus commented he had a similar feeling about this. Is this just the first pass to identify the potential causes and then they would come back for a

Survey and Planning grant to do the construction documents to replace all the failing systems and have a buttoned-up building? If it's a two-step plot, that makes sense, just go for the complete roof replacement and correct everything. He also thought about whether they had problems with deteriorating piping for the internal drains. If they're eligible for a future round, that should address the concerns.

Ms. Dunne added that the Town is currently under consideration to become a Certified Local Government. Their application is down at the Park Service right now for concurrence. Once that happens, they'll have access to the non-matching grants, but they would also have access to Survey and Planning grants. She looks forward to hopefully working with them again.

Mr. Elmore asked, due to water damage being an emergency, is there any way this process can be expedited? Ms. Dunne replied there are measures being taken right now as the building is currently occupied.

Ms. Boyce commented they did have roof technicians, by process of elimination, determining what it isn't. We have not been able to get someone with expertise on integrated gutters and that's one of the reasons why they are applying for this grant, in the hopes that there's someone with that expertise that they can get on site.

Chairman Butkus recommended to Ms. Dunne that it might be helpful to say, in the RFP, that the goal would be to identify any temporary repairs that could be implemented to minimize ongoing infiltration and then you set it up for the future round for a full replacement, or whatever the ultimate recommendation is to prevent future damage.

Ms. Acly suggested the report include pricing for the design of whatever the solution is so that they've already got that to think about for the next step.

## **VI. State Register of Historic Places Nominations**

- A. Unfinished Action Items**
- B. New Action Items**

## **VII. Local Historic District/Property Study Report/s**

- A. Unfinished Action Items**
- B. New Action Items**

## **VIII. Archaeological Preserves**

## **IX. Threatened Properties - CEPA Updates – Todd Levine**

### **1. 649 Howard Avenue – New Haven**

Mr. Levine reported that a State Review Board meeting was held last month, where the Board confirmed that 649 Howard Ave remained a contributing resource to the historic district. 649 Howard Avenue was referred to the Attorney General's office by HPC last month. There will be a meeting this afternoon with

the project team to go over the results of our site visit last month by the structural engineer and historical architect. SHPO will then make recommendations to the Attorney General's office. They will be present at this meeting to suggest how to proceed. OAG has not filed an injunction for 649 Howard Avenue yet, although we did get a moratorium signed by the owner and the Attorney General, which expires April 15<sup>th</sup>. In the next week a decision will be made between the owners and the Attorney General's office.

## **2. 956 Main Street – Willimantic**

The other ongoing CEPA item 956 Main Street in Willimantic, which HPC had referred to the Attorney General's office the month before. The Attorney General's Office filed an injunction, and SHPO is negotiating access now with the owner. We are working with a PSA from DECD to hire a structural engineer directly. You may recall from our discussions that Preservation Connecticut wasn't interested at that time in using TAC money to get somebody in there, but SHPO still must do our due diligence, which requires a structural engineer. SHPO will be moving forward, hopefully today, and we hope to have that paperwork into our Office of Finance.

## **3. 94 Bank St., New London**

94 Bank Street in New London has been threatened for several months now. The demo delay ran out months ago, but SHPO had not received community support demonstrating outcry. SHPO is not pursuing it at this time but thought it prudent to put on the State Review Board agenda because they only meet quarterly.

## **X. Preservation Restrictions**

### **XI. Report on State Historic Preservation Office – Jonathan Kinney**

The SHPO team has been working on closely tracking active legislation items at the State level. That's primarily House Bill 5508. Mr. Kinney and Ms. Carmelich left this meeting to enter a meeting with our legislative liaison here and Representative Rojas' office to talk about some proposed changes. We're also monitoring efforts at the federal level to revise the Section 106 process.

Mr. Kinney thanked members of the Council who provided feedback on the Statewide Plan over the last couple of weeks in our request for final stakeholder comments. The Plan is being reviewed now, incorporating the feedback, and putting together the final copy of the document for distribution.

### **XII. Report on Museum Properties – prepared by Liz Shapiro**

#### **Henry Whitfield Museum**

The big Semiquin grant project at the museum continues!

The first RFP to select a construction contractor resulted in 2 proposals but they were both over the \$497,500 budget and could not be considered.

A second RFP was posted March 20<sup>th</sup> with a \$590,000 budget and proposals are due April 9<sup>th</sup>.

Depending on how long it takes to finalize a contract with the chosen contractor, work is expected to begin in summer or fall.

In preparation for the construction project, staff have begun packing up the museum collection displayed in the Whitfield House. Most of the collection will be moved to off-site storage while larger pieces will be protected in place.

Staff plan to keep the museum open as much as possible to offer visitors a unique behind-the-scenes experience this year, seeing how Connecticut's oldest house is being preserved for future generations. A small pop-up exhibit will highlight the site's history related to America's 250th and popular annual events will be held on the museum grounds. It is expected that the Whitfield House will be closed to the public at various stages of the project.

### **Old New-Gate**

#### **Seasonal Hiring**

- 69 candidates applied for 13 positions (this is a record number in recent years)
- 12 candidates accepted the position, and we are filling our final spot.

#### **Viets Tavern / Semiquin Grant**

Chris Williams Architects has completed 80% plans and specs, which are awaiting approval from NPS.

Scope of the project has shifted slightly to focus on moisture control and structural reinforcement. Moisture control includes improved drainage, concrete basement with sub pump, and low HVAC system for consistent temperatures.

#### **Retaining Wall & Cell Block / Save Americas Treasures Grant**

Vegetation has been removed from the cell block, allowing more visual access and increased preservation efforts.

The first part of the retaining wall is set to be dismantled on March 30<sup>th</sup> by Stone & Lime and this dismantling/rebuilding will coincide with archaeological investigations from Archaeological Historical Services. The project is set to be complete by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Plays in Place**

New-Gate's site-specific play, focused on the 1781 Loyalist escape from New-Gate is set to be performed July 10 – August 30<sup>th</sup> – Friday, Saturday, Sunday for 8 weeks. A scene from the play was performed at the CT 1776 Conference at CCSU and was very well received. Tickets will be available by early May.

## **Museum Makeover/ Guardhouse Exhibit**

Our new interactive exhibit focused on the incarcerated individuals at New-Gate will open on May 8<sup>th</sup>, the first day of the season at New-Gate.

Curator Morgan Bengal has been speaking about New-Gate's role in the American Revolution, most recently at the CT1776 conference at CCSU on March 20/21, and next on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, in Wethersfield.

## **Prudence Crandall Museum:**

On March 30, Joan DiMartino presented a talk entitled "Crandall as Criminal?: The Complicated Context of the Canterbury Female Boarding School in Court, 1833-1834" for the CT Supreme Court Historical Society and the CT Bar Association. The success of the talk has resulted in plans to collaborate on a series based on the Crandall legal cases for the fall.

Three tours were held for the Judicial Branch as part of their Diversity Training for Black History Month and Women's History Month. Each tour included an hour debriefing session afterwards. Evaluations have shown real-life on the job application of what participants have learned from their time with us.

Preston Seniors Center toured the museum in March; rescheduled from February due to weather.

The Museum Curator, First Selectman, and Canterbury Elementary 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher were interviewed for a documentary feature that will be aired on WSHU.

An 1105 Form has been submitted and approved for a Historic Structures Report for Carter House.

## **Museum Collections, Jodi Polsgrove**

### *Henry Whitfield Collections:*

The staff is working on emptying out the Whitfield House (as much as possible) in preparation for the upcoming work to be done on the House as part of the Semi-quin grant from the NPS. This not only allows us to make sure our inventory is up to date but also gives us a moment to look critically at the collections, noting any condition issues, and even considering if it is something that should remain in the collections. Items that cannot be safely removed from the building will be crated in situ to prevent damage during construction. The objects will then go into an off-site, climate-controlled, secure storage facility. Special thanks in advance to all museum staff, volunteers and Beth Burgess from the Museum of CT History for assisting on our workday next week.

### *Eric Sloane Collections:*

Spurred on by the recent donations of the enamelware collection and more, staff will conduct a limited appraisal of the original Sloane paintings in the collection which should

be completed by the fall. This will help to determine up-to-date insurance values for the art.

Several pieces from our “Ironworks” collection have returned home after several years on display at the Mining and Mineral Museum located at the Connecticut Antiques Machinery Association. Several objects are already back on display at the museum.

*Old New-Gate Prison and Copper Mine Collections:*

Finding aids for a portion of the archival collections were completed because of a grant from the National Historical Publication and Records Commission (NHPRC), and three archival finding aids are now “public” on CT Collections. We hope to continue to use what we learned and create more aid for our archival materials, both here and the other museums.

The White Storage Barn, located behind Viets Tavern received some much-needed love this winter including a new door, windowpanes, and some repair work to the structure. This work will ensure a much more secure environment for the items stored there.

*Prudence Crandall Museum Collections:*

A small number of objects from the Crandall Anti-Slavery archival collection will be on exhibit at Norwich’s Otis Library for their Harris Sisters Month. The exhibit runs for the month of April.

*Other things:*

Jodi Polsgrove has collaborated with Beth Burgess on several projects. First, the creation of a working group for the upcoming American Association for State and Local History/National Council for Public History conference this September. This group (which has already met twice) is discussing the intricacies of working for government-run museums and how sometimes that is very difficult. There were over 50 respondents to our call, from every type of institution, small town run museums all the way to the Smithsonian.

Jodi and Beth also presented at the recent CT1776 Conference at CCSU. The talk, *Collecting the Revolution: Connecticut’s history, objects and memory*, was very well attended – and they were the last session of the 2-day conference! Chris Barlow, from the Berlin Historical Society, worked with the team on this presentation.

Jodi will be working with the CT League of Museums on a proposal for the New England Museum Association Conference in November, taking place in Mystic. The presentation will be about the success of their collections management system, CT Collections.

**Eric Sloane Museum:**

Planning is ongoing for the upcoming celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> for the Kent (Iron) Furnace, and we have received an Iron Work Apprenticeship Grant through Southern New England Apprenticeship Program.

Over 50 collection items have been donated to the museum over the last twelve months, including some extremely historically important records for the Kent Iron Furnace.

New Sloane exhibit this summer: “Eric Sloane- American Modern” exploring the museum exhibit in a new light, focusing on Eric Sloane’s response to an adaptation of the modernist art movement. This will be in partnership with Jim Mauck, renowned Sloane scholar and member of the Friends of the Eric Sloane Museum.

This season the museums will host six adult workshops and two children’s workshops between May and October – more info to come.

Trades Day will be happening at 3 of 4 State Museums this year, presented in conjunction with the Sloane Museum and TradesUp.

Andrew Rowand continues to speak around the state and in New England (and beyond). On April 15<sup>th</sup> he will be presenting at Historic RI, as the featured museum from CT. They are hosting one museum from each of the 13 colonies.

He will also be a Trades Education Presenter at the American Association for State and Local History conference from 9/16-9/19, 2026.

### **XIII. Old Business**

### **XIV. New Business**

### **XV. Liaison with Public & Private Agencies – Jane Montanaro**

Ms. Montanaro reported that the Connecticut Historic Preservation Awards will be Thursday, May 7th at the New Haven Country Club. She encouraged all to sign up as soon as the link for registration is released. Preservation CT is looking forward to celebrating many great projects this year.

### **XVI. Public Forum**

### **XVII. Adjournment**

*On a motion Dr. Glaser, second, Mr. McCoy, this meeting was adjourned at 10:19 a.m.*

Respectfully submitted by:  
Deborah D. Gaston

***Next regularly scheduled Council meeting:  
Wednesday, May 6, 2026 – Meeting Format TBD***