

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL MEETING
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Wednesday, April 10, 2024 @ 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 for the code)

MINUTES

- Council:** Ms. Elizabeth Acly, Ms. Vincencia Adusei, Vice-Chairman Paul Butkus, Ms. Marguerite Carnell, Mr. Thomas Elmore, Ms. Sara Nelson, Ms. Deanna Rhodes, and Dr. Sarah Sportman
- Absent:** Ms. Elizabeth Burgess, Dr. Leah Glaser, and Dr. Andy Horowitz
- Staff:** Mr. Cory Atkinson, Mr. Kevin Berger, Ms. Mary Dunne, Ms. Erin Fink, Ms. Deborah Gaston, Mr. Jonathan Kinney, Ms. Catherine Labadia, Todd Levine, Ms. Jenny Scofield, Ms. Elizabeth Shapiro, and Ms. Marena Wisniewski
- Guests:** Ms. Sharyn Esdaile, Mr. William Brinton, Mr. David Sherwood, Ms. Gioia Zack, Ms. Priyanka Panjwani, Ms. Renee Tibert, Mr. Andrew Coburn, and Mr. Joseph Migani

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order @9:34 a.m.

II. Review of Public Comment Procedures

Vice-Chairman Butkus read aloud the Review of Public Comment Procedures.

III. Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest

Vice-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 reported.

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes and Transcripts

A. Minutes – March 6, 2024, Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Carnell, second by Ms. Nelson, the Historic Preservation Council voted to approve the March 6, 2024 meeting minutes with minor corrections.

(Y-7, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-3, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

V. State Historic Preservation Grants – Action Items

A. Unfinished Action Items

B. New Action Items

1. Survey and Planning Grant, Dixwell Avenue United Congregational Church of Christ, Architectural Plans and Specifications, New Haven

On a motion by Ms. Nelson, second Ms. Adusei, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend the award of 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 the application for funding.

(Y-7, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-3, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Applicant: Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ

Amount: \$20,000.00

Ms. Dunne presented this application. Dixwell Congregational has been the recipient of 2 HRF grants in the past and they are planning for a third. This application is to support predevelopment costs, specifically architectural plans and specifications. Mr. Joe Megani, the consultant architect, has been competitively selected for the previous projects and is on the call for any questions or concerns.

Vice Chairman Butkus asked if there were any more phases to come or is this the final phase of work? Ms. Dunne replied this should be the final phase. Mr. Migani confirmed this would be the final phase but cannot promise everything found will be addressed with the money that is available. The roof is deteriorated and leaking, code compliance, accessibility, deferred maintenance, and so on, to name a few. They are making good progress and are thankful for the assistance SPHO is providing by working together with the committee to preserve this historic asset.

2. Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Enhancement Grant, Education and Public Outreach for *Preservation In Action* publication, Town of Wethersfield

On a motion by Ms. Nelson, second by Ms. Adusei, 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-7, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-3, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Amount: \$6,500
Applicant: Town of Wethersfield

Ms. Dunne presented this application. This is federal funding that SHPO is required pass through to certified local governments. Wethersfield became a CLG in the past few years and this is their first application. This is an eligible expense and will be going towards the printing costs, which is an eligible expense under the federal grant. Mr. Gioia Zack was on the call to answer any questions or concerns.

Ms. Acly commented that this was an interesting project and wanted a little background on its origin. Ms. Dunne replied the town had been working on this project for a while and was aware there were funds available for a project such as this. SHPO does submit a notice of funding opportunity to CLG making them aware of what they are eligible for. The smaller grants are usually for education and outreach. SHPO has not funded something like this in about ten years.

VI. State Register of Historic Places Nominations

A. Unfinished Action Items

B. New Action Items

1. Listing to the State Register of Historic Places, John & Anna Wooding House, 63 Hoadley Road, Bethany

On a motion by Ms. Nelson, second by Ms. Acly, the Historic Preservation Council voted to list the John & Anna Wooding House, located at 63 Hoadley Road, Bethany, to the State Register of Historic Places. Staff recommended approval of this listing.

(Y-7, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-3, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Ms. Wisniewski presented this application. The John and Anna Wooding House at 63 Hoadley Rd., Bethany, CT is eligible under Criterion 2 at the local level for significance in architecture. As an intact example of a center chimney cape, which retains most of its character defining features, including planned framing, fieldstone, foundation, and chimney base, as well as simple ornamental molding reflective of the federal period during which it was constructed. Though there have been additions, the house retains a good degree of integrity, including location, rural setting, materials design, and the original workmanship, feeling, and association of a small early 19th century farm characteristic of the area. Ms. Renee Tribert, author of the nomination, and town historian Mr. William L. Brinton, were on the call to answer any questions or concerns.

Chairman Butkus asked for minor corrections that would clarify the date of construction and the name of the house.

Ms. Carnell commented it was a solid application and she was happy to support it.

Ms. Wisniewski added this property is a rare resource in town, as I'm sure Mr. Brinton may want to comment on, it's a very simple, very small house and it retains its acreage from when it was originally parceled off, including the stone walls. The property is unique to the town.

Chairman Butkus added it's great that it's protected around the perimeter by the water company land.

Ms. Acly added that in the circa 1900 photograph, there's a screen (not material but wood) coming down from the eve. It's unusual and she did not see anything mentioned in the write-up about it.

Ms. Renee Tribert commented it was unusual and she didn't see any other examples of this and couldn't provide any context to that addition, but it does seem to be original to the house. She apologized for not having caught it at all. Originally, we thought it was an addition, but it seems to have been built at the same time as the house.

Vice Chairman Butkus added, it just doesn't have the foundation under it, so maybe that was led to some confusion as to the sequence. Ms. Acly added it would be interesting to study to see if that is in any other houses. Maybe it's a vernacular thing, but it is unique and unclear. Maybe it was just like a sunshade kind of thing, but it's interesting.

Ms. Wisniewski added that it might make an interesting paper topic for VAF (Vernacular Architecture Forum).

William L. Brinton added that he wished he had known about the screen. If you look, it's also in the 1920 image and at least something is in the 1925 photo. He unfortunately has no answer to that. He supports this application and it was noted in the application that the important commercial industrial area, that's one of the few buildings that's above ground at this point. There's a lot of foundations and there were three mills in the immediate area. This is one of the few buildings that still exist from that time period.

VII. Local Historic District/Property Study Report/s

VIII. Archaeological Preserves

IX. Threatened Properties - CEPA Updates

X. Preservation Restrictions

XI. Report on State Historic Preservation Office – Jonathan Kinney

Mr. Kinney reported that he had several updates for Council. The first was a legislative update. SHPO is following a number of bills related to their work.

The first is House Bill 5190. This is regarding the historic homes rehabilitation tax credit, which is a SHPO program and this bill was created to address an issue that arose from a bill last year that was intended to correct or make the process easier for users of the historic homes tax credit.

The change that was made last year shifted from the selling of these credits to Eversource to the users being able to take them directly on their personal taxes. However, in making that change, the legislature unintentionally created issues for our nonprofit housing partners who were unable to take advantage of the process in the new format.

House Bill 5433 deals with the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act, which is our state level regulatory review process, different than the Protection Act which you guys are typically involved with. This legislation arose out of a working group that SHPO participated in regarding our role in the CEPA process and whether there were any tweaks that could be made to address some of the concerns we were hearing about unknowns and risks for developers.

SHPO, through the working group, developed measures that would address some of these concerns including timelines, mitigation caps, and generally trying to minimize the unknowns within what SHPO could control. Obviously, CEPA is a much larger law and SHPO is a little piece of it.

There are bigger issues within that larger CEPA law that need to be addressed. Procedural issues that are beyond SHPO's role that would require opening that larger law. Essentially, we assumed as we were going through this that the recommendations coming out of the working group would be for language that would be put in regulations or an internal SHPO process that was requested. But the legislators moved forward and put the language into statute. There are now larger process changes that might impact the way that all state agencies comply with the CEPA law. There are some positives, we are now memorialized in the law, and our process is more clearly memorialized, which is a positive. However, we do have some concerns about some of the measures. As it's written, the DECD Commissioner will have the ability to review and recommend revisions to mitigation suggestions. If the applicant decides to pursue an appeal, we have some concerns about the unknowns associated with that. We're continuing to have conversations with other state agencies about the law and the potential impacts of the bill. It has been voted out of committee and can now morph as it gets changed or amended. And as we have another month to go in the session, we will continue to work with folks to make whatever changes or address as many of these concerns as we can. But we don't know exactly what this final piece of legislation is going to look like and obviously we will keep you updated as that moves forward.

Ms. Carnell commented that she is deeply concerned about this proposed legislation. She asked if folks need to reach out or write letters to legislators again to just let them know.

Ms. Shapiro responded that we work for the Governor of the State of Connecticut and often there is no advance notice to be able to give you. At this stage in the process, things are really moving forward. She wanted to make everyone aware that while we are doing our best to watch this and when we are, when people reach out to us, we are having

conversations. We are limited by what can be done, what she would say as, and this is what I tell you know people in general about the governmental process that the most important voice is the voice of the constituents. She always urges everyone that maintaining a personal relationship with their legislator is always an excellent way to participate in government so that your voice always has meaning and carries weight and in all circumstances.

The second item is just a very quick update regarding the Protection Act, which is the process that you guys are involved in. We just completed drafting a protection act process document which lays out all the steps in the process. It was just approved by our DECD legal, and we forwarded it over to the OAG. They're taking one more look at it and then once that is completed, we will share that with you. Mr. Kinney thinks that will be a very helpful document for the Council to be able to look at and refer to during meetings. That will lay out all the steps and roles and should go a long way in helping clarify everybody's part in that process.

Finally, Mr. Kinney provided an update on HPC membership. Most everyone is good and on a current term, at least until 2025. Mr. Kinney has reached out to the Governor's office and is working on reappointing Vice Chairman Butkus as the Chair and we are waiting on that update.

Dr. Glaser's term ends in June of this year, so we'll need to work on filling that spot.

Ms. Sarah Nelson has now completed her third term because she is the FDR of the HPC. Which means that we need to find somebody to fill her seat and thank Ms. Nelson for her patience.

XII. Report on Museum Properties – Liz Shapiro

General

- The museums are scheduled to open the first and second weekend of May!
- Hiring is moving forward on museum seasonals. The five who worked at New-Gate last season are returning and we will be looking to hire five additional. Offers should be going out this week.
- Our March staff meeting was held at the newly reopened Peabody Museum and featured a pre-opening tour led by David Skelly, Museum Director. Next week's final staff meeting of the season will be held at Old New-Gate Prison where we will be joined by our colleagues from the Museum of CT History at the State Library. We'll have a tour of Old New-Gate, a group discussion on planning for the 250th, and a group projects to move over 300 jack o' lanterns into storage in time for the 2024 unveiling of the CT Re-Entry Hall of Change plaque in the visitor's center on April 25.

Crandall Museum

On April 2nd and 3rd, the Crandall barns were emptied and most items were approved for disposal and some items have been identified for surplus.

Update on the faulty plaster situation at Crandall: Kronenberger, the contractor, has removed the plaster from the room where the plaster failed. David Barkin, state architect, will be meeting Kronenberger onsite tomorrow (4/11) to review the situation. The project engineers are still recommending removal of all the replaced plaster ceilings. Unfortunately, this delay will result in a delayed opening of the museum this season.

Eric Sloane Museum

Andrew Rowand at the Eric Sloane Museum attended an event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce in Kent on April 2. His notes on the meeting, “I had a great day at Sloane yesterday. The chamber hosted a successful non-profit meet up last night. There are 38 nonprofits in town.

It was nice to see so many familiar faces and realize we have worked with quite a few so far, lol. It’s taken 4 years, but I am finally feeling the museum is considered part of Kent.”

DECD has been working with DEEP to finally achieve some clarity on land use documents and boundaries at the Eric Sloane Museum, regarding which agency manages which portions of the large parcel of state-owned property there, and what rights and land leases are valid and held by the CT Antique Machinery Association that operates its museums on the site. This deep dive was made a topic of high importance due to the advance of the narrow-gauge railway that CAMA has been building (and sometimes operating) on the state property. Many thanks to DEEP and DECD’s legal team for reviewing old deeds, land transfers, etc. We think we finally have this pretty much figured out for posterity.

Old New-Gate Prison & Copper Mine

The Save America’s Treasure’s grant project to stabilize the four-story cell block has had multiple twists and turns. At present, the Park Service has denied our request to dismantle a portion of the cell block to move forward in the full stabilization process, and we are working with the engineers to develop a solution that features temporary stabilization and removal of the undergrowth from the area that is adding to the destabilization.

Meanwhile, we have been advised that we need to work with the state’s Department of Administrative Services (who is responsible for the maintenance of state properties) on the restoration project at Viet’s Tavern. Because of new staff at DAS, this seems to have slowed the process down.

Henry Whitfield State Museum

The Henry Whitfield Museum is working on remediating high radon levels in both the visitors center and in the museum. The state does not have a vendor on contract for this service, so we are currently waiting for proposals.

For those of you who are familiar with the Chaz and AJ radio show on WPLR, 99.1, the DJ's visited the site last Friday, teaming up with the Make a Wish Foundation, to raise money for Guilford resident Cameron's wish for a backyard playhouse. AJ sang a Taylor Swift song accompanied by Henry Whitfield (who remained stoic throughout!) AJ sang at several spots around town.

XIII. Old Business

XIV. New Business

XV. Liaison with Public & Private Agencies

XVI. Public Forum

XVII. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Rhodes, second by Ms. Adusei, the meeting was adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Deborah D. Gaston

***Next regularly scheduled Council meeting:
Wednesday, May 1, 2024 – Meeting Format TBD***