

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL MEETING
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Wednesday, December 4, 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, Ms. Elizabeth Burgess, Chairman Paul Butkus, Ms. Marguerite Carnell, Mr. Thomas Elmore, Dr. Leah Glaser, Dr. Andy Horowitz, Ms. Deanna Rhodes and Dr. Sarah Sportman

Absent: Ms. Sara Nelson

Left meeting Early: Ms. Vincencia Adusei, Dr. Sarah Sportman

Staff: Mr. Cory Atkinson, Mr. Kevin Berger, Ms. Julie Carmelich, Ms. Mary Dunne, Ms. Erin Fink, Ms. Deborah Gaston, Mr. Jonathan Kinney, Ms. Catherine Labadia, Mr. Todd Levine, Ms. Jenny Scofield, Ms. Elizabeth Shapiro, and Ms. Marena Wisniewski

Guests: Mr. Grayson Braun, Ms. Donna Douglass, Mr. Jon Heflin, Mr. Carl Holte, Ms. Jane Montanaro, Ms. Louise Wagner

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:34 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:

- *Ms. Deanna Rhodes recused from agenda item V.B.1 - Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Norwich*
- *Ms. Beth Acly recused from agenda item V.B.2 – Mathew Curtis House, Newtown*

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes and Transcripts

A. Minutes – November 6, 2024 Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Burgess, second by Ms. Carnell, the Council voted to approve the November 6, 2024 meeting minutes.

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-1, Recused-1) (Roll call vote)

V. State Historic Preservation Grants – Action Items

A. Unfinished Action Items

B. New Action Items

1. Survey and Planning Grant, Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Geophysical Survey for Human Burials, Former Episcopal Church of Norwich

On a motion by Ms. Acly, second by Ms. Adusei, 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.

Applicant: Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut

Amount: \$5,000

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-1, Recused-1) (Roll call vote)

(Ms. Rhodes recused herself from this agenda item.)

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut requested funding in the amount of \$5,000 to conduct a geophysical survey for human burials at the former Episcopal Church of Norwich. This application was unusual in the fact that the Church was deconsecrated and by virtue of an agreement, the church has to give the property back to the descendants of the original landowners. There are known burials in the parking lot and possibly in other locations on the property. Before giving the property back, the skeletal remains need to be located, exhumed, identified, and reburied elsewhere. The area is less than an acre and the budget will be sufficient for this project. Mr. John Heflin from the Episcopal Diocese was on the call for any questions or concerns.

Dr. Sportman wanted to clarify it is unlikely that the GPR is going to be able to give you that level of resolution to identify skeletal remains, but what it will do is give you a good estimate of the number of burial shafts or features which could be a very different thing than the number of skeletons. That is something to keep in mind moving forward.

Mr. Heflin wanted to clarify that they are just trying to identify the area(s) of burials so they don't dig arbitrarily all over the property. This would certainly streamline the process so they could do what is required of them to do for the descendants of the property.

Ms. Dunne added she should have been more mindful and noted this method is to detect anomalies and possible burial shafts not actual bodies or skeletal remains.

Dr. Horowitz asked if there was some kind of precedence or restriction on funding a project such as this with the intent of destroying the historic site? Ms. Dunne replied that this grant program has not covered a project of this nature before. She will be mindful of what the implications of funding are. Dr. Horowitz wanted the minutes to reflect that he was not voting on the actual removal of the remains, simply to support the survey as a planning tool for the applicant. This is an important use of these funds.

Ms. Acly asked if the property was on any registers and whether it will be protected in the future. Ms. Dunne will investigate it. Mr. Heflin replied the property was not listed as far as they knew. They have found two descendants of the original family and before they can turn the property over to them, skeletal remains must be removed, then they can decide what they want to do with the property.

Chairman Butkus asked, according to the GIS database for Norwich, where the original church building was located? Mr. Heflin replied, the first stone was laid for the church in 1849 and there were various parcels the family decided to donate and now there is one large parcel.

Mr. Elmore asked if the property is not on the Register, does HPC have the authority to approve the application? Ms. Dunne replied this is considered a survey grant, so it doesn't need to be listed. However, it is a contributing resource to the Chelsea Parade National Register District in Norwich. But, because this is considered this a survey grant, that's not a prerequisite.

2. Survey and Planning Grant, Newtown Historical Society, Condition Assessment, Matthew Curtis House, Newtown

On a motion by Mr. Elmore, second by Ms. Carnell, 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.

Applicant: Newtown Historical Society
Amount: \$15,000

(Y-7, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-2, Recused-1) (Roll call vote)

(Ms. Acly recused herself from this agenda item.)

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Newtown Historical Society requested funding in the amount of \$15,000 to complete a condition assessment for Matthew Curtis House. The Historical Society has received a donation from very generous donors for this project. Work has already been completed that does meet the Secretary of Interior's standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings. They would like to move forward with additional work but would like to pause and look at the property as a whole so as to make better informed decisions about moving forward. SHPO was happy to hear this and recommends approval. Ms. Louise Wagner was on the call for any questions or concerns.

Mr. Elmore asked when the house was sold. Ms. Wagner added the house was sold to the Newtown Historical Society in the 1970s by a doctor.

3. Survey and Planning Grant, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church, Baltic, plans and specifications for Bell Tower Restoration, Baltic

On a motion by Ms. Acly, 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.

Applicant: St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church, Baltic
Amount: \$20,000

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-2, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Ms. Dunne presented this application. St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church requested funding in the amount of \$20,000 to complete plans and specifications for restoration of the bell tower. This application is project-specific for plans and specifications, but clearly the architect or engineer will have to conduct an initial assessment. This is considered a non-matching grant because they do plan to take the plans and specifications and apply to the Historic Restoration Fund grant program. The applicant received a verbal construction cost estimate of about \$400,000, SHPO's cap is \$20,000 which should be enough for plans and specs for this discrete project. This grant will be competitively bid if the grant is awarded. Mr. Carl Holtz was on the call for any questions or concerns about the budget.

Ms. Acly asked if this was a bell frame project? Mr. Holtz replied yes. The supporting structure under the bell frame is leaking on to the organ, has dropped about 6 inches, and needs to be restored due to rot and deterioration.

Mr. Elmore added SHPO has funded emergency projects in the past, is this project deemed an emergency and can funds be expedited to prevent collapse?

Ms. Dunne replied that the threatened property fund is no longer available and SHPO will do what can be done to assist the Applicant. Mr. Holtz added this is a matching grant and Ms. Kathy Austin is working to achieve additional funding.

Chairman Butkus asked Ms. Dunne to include anything that can be done temporarily to address this immediate issue and to prevent future loss in the RFP.

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

1. Local Historic Property Study Report, 216 Hillspoint Road, Westport

On a motion by Ms. Carnell, second by Dr. Glaser, the Historic Preservation Council recalled this item to the table.

Pursuant to CGS §7-147 q (c), on a motion by Ms. Mr. Elmore, second by Ms. Burgess, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance and boundary for the proposed 216 Hillspoint Rd., Westport, CT as presented in the study report transmitted by the Town of Westport on October 15, 2024.

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-2, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Ms. Dunne presented this application. This application was tabled at the last meeting due to concerns that there were multiple parcels delineated on the site, which may technically warrant designation as a historic district, even if there is only one structure present. Ms. Dunne stated that the Town considers it one parcel and taxes and assesses it as one parcel, which has not been the case in other multiple parcel single property districts. It was determined that it would be left as a one parcel property. Any concern from the Council will be added to the letter. Ms. Donna Douglas and Ms. Daryn Raymond-Lock were on the call for any questions or concerns.

Ms. Rhodes asked the Town representatives if the lots can be documented as merged so this issue will not come up again. Ms. Raymond-Lock commented they had spoken to Town Attorneys. The property is already deemed as one lot and they didn't think it was necessary to have paperwork drawn up. She can ask the Town if this is possible. Ms. Dunne commented she will add Ms. Rhodes' comment into the letter.

B. New Action Items

1. Local Historic Property Study Report, Cross Highway Bridge over Deadman Brook, Westport

Pursuant to CGS §7-147 q (c), and on a motion by Ms. Carnell, second by Mr. Elmore, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance and boundary for the proposed Cross Highway Bridge over Deadman Brook as presented in the study report transmitted by the Town of Westport on October 15, 2024.

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-2, Recused-0) (Roll Call Vote)

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Town of Westport submitted a study report that contained documentation for six properties and the Council voted on each one separately. Any Council comments on the boundaries and ordinances will be conveyed to the Report Committee. This is an attempt to protect and recognize these local bridges as state and national agencies do not have to comply with local ordinances. Ms. Donna Douglas of Westport was on the call for any questions or concerns.

Dr. Glaser commented that the preservation point here is the documentation. There was a little bit of discussion about the role of transportation infrastructure in Westport. If more could be added about the style and construction of the stone bridges to put that in a larger context with the whole idea that stone was used before concrete. Ms. Dunne replied she will make note of this.

Ms. Carnell applauded the effort to document and protect the 6 bridges. She asked if a thematic multiple nomination had been considered and had the Historic District Commission thought about a strategy for future rehabilitation of the bridges.

Ms. Dunne replied when Carol Leahy was the CLG coordinator in Westport, she approached her with a multiple resource property documentation form for these bridges. We have not received anything to date, but there has been a discussion about it.

Ms. Acly mentioned the drawings that were uncovered that show specifics should be mentioned and could prove helpful for restoration in the future.

Chairman Butkus added the Jessup Road Bridge, without having the parapet walls, there's a question mark about whether those removed at some point in time, especially with that center span being, slightly different with the cast road deck, span and the metal railing. It was a question, was it different earlier on? If there were existing original drawings, those would be helpful if the cover page and each of the images were labeled.

2. Local Historic Property Study Report, Evergreen Avenue Bridge over Deadman Brook, Westport

Pursuant to CGS §7-147 q (c), and on a motion by Ms. Burgess, second by Mr. Elmore, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance and boundary for the Evergreen Avenue Bridge over Deadman Brook as presented in the study report transmitted by the Town of Westport on October 15, 2024.

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-2, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

3. Local Historic Property Study Report, Greens Farms Road Bridge over Muddy Brook, Westport

Pursuant to CGS §7-147 q (c), and on a motion by Mr. Elmore, second by Ms. Acly, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance and boundary for the Greens Farms Road Bridge over Muddy Brook as presented in the study report transmitted by the Town of Westport on October 15, 2024.

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-2, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

4. Local Historic Property Study Report, Jesup Road Bridge over Deadman South Brook, Westport

Pursuant to CGS §7-147 q (c), and on a motion by Mr. Elmore, second by Ms. Carnell, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance and boundary for the Jesup Road Bridge over Deadman South Brook as presented in the study report transmitted by the Town of Westport on October 15, 2024.

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-2, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

5. Local Historic Property Study Report, Long Lots Road Bridge over Muddy Brook, Westport

Pursuant to CGS §7-147 q (c), and on a vote by Mr. Elmore, second by Ms. Acly, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance and boundary for Long Lots Road Bridge over Muddy Brook as presented in the study report transmitted by the Town of Westport on October 15, 2024.

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-2, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

6. Local Historic Property Study Report, Myrtle Avenue Bridge over Deadman South Brook, Westport

Pursuant to CGS §7-147 q (c), and on a motion by Mr. Elmore, second Ms. Carnell, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance and boundary for the Myrtle Avenue Bridge over Deadman South Brook as presented in the study report transmitted by the Town of Westport on October 15, 2024.

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-2, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Chairman Butkus added now that all six bridges have been approved, the Town should be encouraged to pursue a Multiple Property Documentation Form listing. Especially with changing DOT requirements, any help HPC can provide would be beneficial.

VIII. Archaeological Preserves

IX. Threatened Properties - CEPA Updates - Todd Levine

25 & 31-35 South Main Street – Norwalk

Mr. Levine spoke about the developer's initial proposal and showed slides highlighting the main block of the building which goes straight up six stories then there's a step back and it goes up an additional story. Council had previously talked about breaking it up and having some level of rhythm from the ground level, that better reflects the smaller scale buildings to the right in the picture. What is there now is a two- and three-story building that would be demolished. Mr. Levine discussed prudent and feasible alternatives with the project team, including the preservation of just the façade, which they declined to do because of cost. Since these buildings have not been adaptively reused over the years and everyone wanted to find a solution, SHPO asked them to do a step back at the second level so that that rhythm of the existing two- and three-story buildings is not lost in this big mass, which they did. They came up with a setback of three feet at the second level, and in between the existing historic building and their new construction, they set it back five feet. So, there is some level of setback that helps with the rhythm and size. We talked with the Office of the Attorney General's and think this is probably the best we're going to get. This is not something the AG's Office is going to pick up and pursue. We also talked to them about reincorporating some of the historic fabric into the design, and they said they're going to make every effort to do so because they also said they wanted to do that with the municipality.

Chairman Butkus added HPC's concern was that the new proposed massing being right at the sidewalk level was too much of a change from the existing context. This proposal, where the center block is at the scale of what was there previously and pushing things back is an improvement, putting more emphasis on the existing scale of that district versus the scale of the adjacent hotel building, which was a noncontributing resource. Just a note for Council members, they are still obligated to go back to the City's Design Review Committee and present a preservation plan and how they were going to incorporate or preserve some of the historic elements. That review is still pending.

X. Preservation Restrictions

XI. Report on State Historic Preservation Office – Jonathan Kinney

Mr. Kinney thanked the members of the HPC for their partnership with SHPO and their hard work throughout the year 2024.

Mr. Kinney highlighted a few items that will be coming up in 2025:

- 2025 meeting schedule – The first HPC meeting of the year will be January 8th and will focus on HRF grant review.
- Continued work on the HPC's statutory language
- Development of a set of Bylaws and Procedures for HPC
- Continued work with the Governor's Office to fill HPC membership appointments
- Training for HPC
- Ms. Dunne also reported on grants and budget updates for Council's benefit

XII. Report on Museum Properties – Liz Shapiro

Ms. Shapiro updated the Council on a number of museum-related items.

Off Season:

- Museums are working on updating Emergency and Safety policies and procedures
- Scheduling off-site professional development opportunities, with our first being a visit to the Stowe Center in December.
- Continuing to move all the current (and future) historic preservation projects at New-Gate and Whitfield.
- Both Old New-Gate and the Prudence Crandall Museum are working with the Salisbury School (a private preparatory high school in Salisbury CT) on their research for their annual Troutbeck Symposium, on a project called "Coloring Our Past". The New-Gate piece has been completed, and the group will be taking a field trip to the Crandall Museum in the next few weeks.
- All four museums will have at least a portion of their collections live online via Connecticut Collections, an online database of museum collections that shares data from over 20 CT collections. New-Gate and Crandall are the last to be "live".

Crandall Museum

1. Ceiling replacement work at the museum is on schedule to be done next week, hoping that this time the plaster replacement is successful.
2. Dr. Jennifer Rycenga's long awaited book on Prudence Crandall and the Canterbury Female Boarding school has just been released. The museum will host an author talk and book signing for *Schooling the Nation* on Sunday January 12th from 1-3 p.m.

3. Curator Joan DiMartino is working with an independent museum education professional to explore and review options for programming at the museum that is linked to the themes of the semi quincennial. The project is part of a grant from The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor.

Eric Sloane Museum

1. Curator Andrew Rowand, Mr. Mason Lord of TradesUp, and Ms. Shapiro are developing further strategic partnerships between the Museum and the TradesUp organization. The museum's current focus on historic (and contemporary) trades skills has opened a world of possibilities for the museum programs, and we have some great partners on board already.
2. This season is the museum partnership with PreK at the Kent Center School. For the past two years, the group has been visiting the museum and using it as an indoor / outdoor classroom with activities run by the teachers and by Andrew. This has developed into a very strong and valuable relationship, that will be further developed for 2025.
3. Continuing to work with DEEP regarding the transfer of property from DEEP management to DECD management.

Old New-Gate Prison & Copper Mine

1. Earned revenue from the Light into the Dungeon event in 2024 was \$79,720, with visitation of 4,520. That yields a net profit from the event of \$53,146! Total visitation for the season was 12,805, with a total general admission income of \$46,512.
2. Working on restoring/replacing the windows on the Guardhouse, which is an overdue project.

Henry Whitfield State Museum

1. Henry Whitfield State Museum hosts our last event for the season on Friday December 6, from 4 pm to 7 pm, the Firelight Festival. We are very fortunate to have had the rain needed to wet the ground enough to lift the outdoor fire ban, so we can celebrate the 25th year of this event that features a candlelit Whitfield House, roasted marshmallows, and hot cider and cookies.

XIII. Old Business

XIV. New Business

XV. Liaison with Public & Private Agencies – Jane Montanaro

Ms. Montanaro provided several updates to Council. The first involved the 1772 Foundation grants. It's a private foundation that supports maintenance and repair grants for museums, historical societies and nonprofits. The window to submit letters of intent is open. They're due December 13th at 5 p.m. on an on-line platform. PCT has hired a

Circuit Rider Fellow. Ms. Montanaro was excited to announce that Andrea Florsheimer has joined us this week and this is a position that was fully funded by the Board of Trustees at Preservation Connecticut. Ms. Florsheimer comes to us with a Bachelor of Arts in History from Columbia, and she most recently worked as the engagement associate at MIT Hello and as the Archivist and Heritage Cultural Collections Coordinator for a native community in Alaska, the Kajak Meiot. She has a nice amount of experience and exposure to working with various communities, community outreach and education programming, grant writing, grant administration, and she even administered a capital grant. Andrea is going to be a great candidate to be out in the field with our circuit riders and she's going to be providing support for our CIF grant in Bridgeport. Preservation CT is excited to welcome her to our team and hope you get a chance to meet her. Extending best holiday wishes to you all and thank you for another terrific year working in partnership with the SHPO and with the Council.

XVI. Public Forum

XVII. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Horowitz, second by Ms. Acly, this meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Deborah D. Gaston

***Next regularly scheduled Council meeting:
Wednesday, January 8, 2025 – Meeting Format TBD***