

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL MEETING
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Wednesday, December 6, 2023 @ 9:30 am**

MINUTES

Council: Ms. Elizabeth Acly, Ms. Vincencia Adusei, Ms. Elizabeth Burgess, Vice-Chairman Paul Butkus, Ms. Marguerite Carnell, Mr. Thomas Elmore, Dr. Leah Glaser, Dr. Andy Horowitz, and Ms. Sara Nelson, and Dr. Deanna Rhodes

Absent: 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. Cathy Labadia, Mr. Todd Levine, and Ms. Marena Wisniewski

Guests: Ms. Jane Montanaro, Ms. Cate Hewitt, Dr. Daryn Reyman-Lock and Mr. Adam Kliver

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order @ 9:32 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 – November 1, 2023 Meeting

On a motion by Dr. Rhodes, second by Ms. Burgess, the Council voted to approve the November 1, 2023 meeting minutes.

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining-3, Absent-1 Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

B. CEPA meeting brief review - November 8, 2023

On a motion by Ms. Carnell, second by Ms. Nelson, the Council voted to approve the November 8, 2023 vote and directive of meeting.

(Y-6, N-0, Abstaining-4, Absent-1 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, West Haven Historical Society, Geophysical Survey of Human Burials at the Adjutant William Campbell memorial (1891) 20 Prudden Street, West Haven

On a motion by Ms. Burgess, second by Mr. Elmore, 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 applicant below in the amount shown. All grant guidelines and state requirements shall be met by the applicant below 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: West Haven Historical Society
Amount: \$5,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. Several applications have been submitted recently for geophysical surveys on human burials. This application hopes to answer questions on the burial of a British soldier and has been discussed with SHPO's staff Archeologist, Ms. Cathy Labadia. Ms. Beth Sabo of the West Haven Historical Society was not on the call, but Ms. Dunne was available to answer questions or concern the Council had.

Mr. Elmore asked if the geophysical work was specifically for this gentleman and whether it would follow the same procedures (i.e. DNA analysis) as the application presented on last month's agenda for the human remains found in Ridgefield? This survey will be able to find a burial shaft but will not determine the exact identity of the person buried there unless a DNA analysis is conducted on the remains. DNA Analysis is not part of this proposal.

Mr. Elmore added he was impressed by the fact the family was willing to offer DNA samples in the hopes that if a burial shaft is discovered, they can move forward to the next step in the process.

Chairman Butkus asked what is the ideal time of year for conducting these types of surveys? Ms. Dunne replied, the applicant is going to wait until Spring 2024 to continue with this project.

2. Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Enhancement Grant, Town of Fairfield, Update to Historic District Commission Handbook

On a motion by Ms. Nelson, second by Mr. Elmore, 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: Town of Fairfield
Amount: \$15,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. This is federal funding and is part of SHPO’s annual 10% passthrough to CLGs in the form of sub grants. The Town’s current handbook is 12 years old. There have been many changes within the past 12 years with Commissioners facing new issues, materials, and projects. Now is a good time for an update. Dr. Daryn Reyman- Lock and Mr. Adam Kliver were on the call to answer any questions or concerns.

Mr. Elmore commented that when he sees the word “guidelines or handbook guidelines”, he would like to know if they are suggestions, recommendations, or mandates. It makes a big difference. Ms. Dunne replied there are no mandates, but the handbook will help property owners to know what the Commissioners are basing their decisions on. The standards the National Park Services put forth are not mandated, they are recommended for best practices. It is suggested the Commissioner use the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards as a basis for their guidelines. It is a tool for the property owner, so they know what to expect when applying.

Mr. Elmore asked what kind of consultant the applicant expected to be hired. Ms. Dunne responded that in the past, applicants like Norwich have hired a preservation planner for projects of this type, as opposed to an architectural historian. The person must meet the Secretary of Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards for the field of preservation to understand how town planners and Commissioners work.

Dr. Horowitz asked how much of the content is the same across the board for municipalities and how much is specific to the applicant municipality. Is there general information that can be used from previously completed and similar handbooks from other locales? Ms. Dunne suggested using other towns as an example. There is some boiler plate language and that is why the budget of

\$15,000 is adequate. Dr. Horowitz added the information should be shared so time can be spent on what's more important to the specific applicant community.

Vice Chairman Butkus asked if there were any town center village district overlays within the municipality because this gets into the mandate category that Mr. Elmore spoke about earlier. Ms. Dunne was not sure, but Dr. Daryn Reyman-Lock was on the call and added she is one of the Commission members on the HDC in Fairfield. They do not have a central village district overlay. It would be more in the guideline's suggestions category than true mandates.

VI. State Register of Historic Places Nominations

A. Unfinished Action Items

B. New Action Items

VII. Local Historic District/Property Study Report/s

VIII. Archaeological Preserves

IX. Threatened Properties - CEPA Updates

a. Update - 80 Shore Road, Waterford - Todd Levine

Mr. Levine reported that an emergency meeting of the HPC was held on November 8th to vote on referring this matter to the Attorney General's office. The Attorney General's Office, SHPO, Preservation Connecticut, a structural engineer, and a historic architect, went to view the site with the owner's permission last week. The Attorney General's office got the owners to sign a 30-day moratorium. There is a demolition delay until December 23rd, 2023.

The site was reviewed in person last week with several pictures being taken and brought to the State Review Board meeting last Friday. They voted 7 to 1 that the property still contributes to the historic district, which is required for potential CEPA action. Reports should be ready from both the structural engineer and the historic architect on Friday.

This information will be shared with SHPO and then with the property owners and the Attorney General's Office to see if there are feasible alternatives to demolition, and whether the Attorney General's Office will be moving forward with an injunction.

Ms. Nelson shared with the Council that she walked around the neighborhood that same week and noticed there were four residential structures in good condition with demolition notices on them.

Mr. Levine added that the reason this case happened the way it did, so quickly, was because this particular demolition delay ordinance is weak and the municipality has reached out to SHPO about strengthening it and having it be a little longer. The 90-day period works well because generally it gives SHPO an opportunity to have the State Review Board meeting within that period.

X. Preservation Restrictions

XI. Report on State Historic Preservation Office – Jonathan Kinney

Mr. Kinney introduced Mr. Kevin Berger, the new GIS Analyst, to the Council. He will be managing our new ConnCRIS system. The GIS system is in its last stages of completion. Kevin is working on getting licenses and permissions finalized to complete the full launch within the next few weeks.

Mr. Kinney reported on a number of training topics that are being developed for the HPC. The first topic was CEPA training with the Office of the Attorney General. This is scheduled for January and SHPO will make everyone aware of the exact date soon. A Wednesday morning or lunchtime or late morning into lunch are a few options.

The second topic was an overview of SHPO programs for the new Council members. SHPO is also looking forward to putting this together as a lunch time, round-robin type meeting with the SHPO staff to give an overview of their programs. This is also anticipated for January.

The third topic is the ConnCRIS training for the GIS system, which will be starting when the system is fully ready to launch.

Mr. Kinney thanked the Council for the expertise during the 2023 year.

Ms. Nelson asked if a folder could be set up in the One Drive system, similar to the one that had been in the Dropbox system, that contains general HPC related documents, such as the enabling legislation, statewide plan, and other documents that Council Members should be conversant with. Mr. Kinney replied he would create a subfolder of HPC material for enabling legislation any other sort of general, not project specific information as well.

XII. Report on Museum Properties – Elizabeth Shapiro

Mr. Kinney presented the following on behalf of Ms. Shapiro:

1. Museum visitation was about the same or slightly over the numbers in the 2022 season. However, each museum hosted more special events and those had better attendance, even with the very wet weekends that we experienced over the summer.
2. The final two museum events of the year happened on December 1, with Firelight Festival at the Henry Whitfield Museum, and on Saturday December 2, a new event at the Eric Sloane Museum, A mid-winter market and craft sale, with trades demonstrations and the unveiling of a Sloane painting which is new to the museum, and is visiting on a 1-year loan with the possibility of a gift to the museum after that year. It's a winter scene, and although I've only seen photographs of the painting, I've been told that it will be one of the best Sloane paintings on display.

3. The new exhibit interpreting the story behind the Prudence Crandall School is up. We've had some issues with the quality of a few of the panels, so we are having them replaced. I've seen visitor comments, and they really love having the experience of a guided tour with interpretive panels. This new interpretation is all one big experiment, but Joan DiMartino, our curator, would love to welcome you for a visit to see what we're doing.
4. Off-season staff meetings started last week, and we have a full schedule planned, including a joint meeting with our colleagues at the Museum of CT History at the CT State Library, and I'm so pleased to welcome our new colleague, Beth Burgess as curator at our sister museum!

XIII. Old Business

XIV. New Business

XV. Liaison with Public & Private Agencies – Ms. Jane Montanaro

Ms. Montanaro reported that Preservation Connecticut is heading into awards season and the awards nomination portal is open on our website, and award nominations are due by February 2nd, 2024. They would like to see nominations for future young preservationists for the Mimi Finley Award. It would be great to see some of the work that our young people are doing now in the field.

Ms. Montanaro also gave a shout out to our very own Mr. Chris Wigren, who will be honored tomorrow evening at the AIA Connecticut Awards for his work in public service. Congratulations Chris!

XVI. Public Forum

XVII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Elmore, second Ms. Rhodes, the meeting was adjourned at 10:07 a.m.

**Respectfully submitted:
Deborah D. Gaston**

***Next regularly scheduled Council meeting:
Wednesday, January 10, 2024 – Meeting Format TBD***