

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL MEETING
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Wednesday, February 5, 2025 @ 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. 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. Vincencia Adusei, and Ms. Sara Nelson

Staff: Mr. Cory Atkinson, 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. Garret Daigle, Mr. Paul Dickerson, Ms. Helen Dimos, Ms. Jane Montanaro, Mr. Stephen Varga and Pastor Ellen Willert

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 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 none.

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes and Transcripts

A. Minutes – January 8, 2025 Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Acly, second by Ms. Carnell, the Council voted to approve the January 8, 2025 meeting minutes.

(Y-6, N-0, Abstaining-3, Absent-2, 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, South Congregational First Baptist Church, Condition Assessment for sanctuary and surrounding area, South Church, New Britain

On a motion by Dr. Glaser, 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.

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

Applicant: South Congregational-First Baptist Church, New Britain

Amount: \$15,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. Ms. Dunne was glad to see the Church submit this application after Circuit Rider Dr. Mike Forino recommended that they conduct a comprehensive assessment of the building to identify critical needs. Mr. Steven Varga was on the call to answer any questions or concerns.

Ms. Acly applauded the applicant's efforts to get a consultant to look at the project holistically. Getting to the root cause of the moisture infiltration is most important. The applicant should make sure the consultant or architect has building envelope and mechanical experience. She fully supports this application.

Dr. Glaser mentioned the building is listed as a singular property which is on the National Register, but it's also part of the Downtown New Britain National Register District. She was the author of the Nation Register nomination. Dr. Glaser wanted to make sure it is known how many properties from that district were able to benefit from the designation.

Ms. Dunne apologized for forgetting to add the National Register nominations to the meeting material for this application and the next.

2. Survey and Planning Grant, New Preston Congregational Church, Structural Engineering Study for steeple, New Preston Congregational Church, New Preston

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.

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

Applicant: New Preston Congregational Church
Amount: \$10,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The focus of the study will be a structural assessment of the church steeple to obtain more information on needed repairs. Paster Ellen Willert was on the call for any questions or concerns.

Ms. Acly asked what the safely concerns are. Pastor Willert replied there are cracks in the historic plaster in the sanctuary and pieces of plaster are falling off. The space is still being used on Sunday mornings and these issues need to be addressed before they become safety hazards.

3. Survey and Planning Grant, Town of Newington, Historic Resources Inventory, Newington

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

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

Applicant: Town of Newington
Amount: \$20,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. This is an update to the survey conducted in 1979. It is commendable that the Town is taking historic preservation into consideration in its planning, which SHPO encourages all our municipalities to do. The HRI is a data gathering tool to assist in the planning process. Mr. Paul Dickerson, Newington Planning Office, was on the call to answer and questions or concerns.

Chairman Butkus asked if the long-term intention is to add to existing districts or to create new ones?

Mr. Dickson replied that there are development pressures in all of our community for specific areas. The Newington Junction Historic District, has three listed properties for sale. There's pressure there. The study will look at these areas and will help to plan what they can do to maintain the historic significance with some type of zoning regulation that supports keeping, refurbishing, and supporting

those assets. It would be looking at potential new properties for listing and part of it is there's kind of been a good groundswell in the community right now about historic preservation and Town Council is very concerned. They met with Ms. Dunne and Preservation CT who gave a presentation, and the Council members were all on board with this process. This combined with the public notification, the outreach and working with the owners could potentially bring those new properties in once those owners realize what they have because, again, they'll have to be key partners in any listing.

Mr. Elmore added he supports the application.

Dr. Glaser reminded the applicant that the old inventory was very colonial focused. It is important to get the broader history of Newington, beyond just the owners in terms of historical significance, as well as architectural, but historical significance, so we can really tell that broader story of Newington and make it representative of the population through history and today.

Ms. Burgess asked if there's a Historic District Commission in town and how they're going to be working on this or if they'll be involved with the demolition delay ordinance. Mr. Dickerson replied that there is no Historic District Commission in Newington. There is a historic society. Mr. Jim Lay, who is going to be working on this project as well, is with that organization. There was a public information meeting last night where we had 30 people in attendance, 20 people online via zoom, and it was about a two hour and 10-minute meeting just to discuss that. People are coming out who are concerned because people do have concerns. Once the word District is mentioned, people want to know what are you doing to my property? There were a lot of questions. The educational component of this, just to have people understand, is going to be important to that because without that component, people will not want to come to the table. Ms. Burgess completely agreed and is glad these conversations are being had.

Chairman Butkus added just because a building is listed in the inventory, does not mean they are protected. It is very encouraging to hear of the Town's willingness to have conversations and move forward.

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**

1. Local Historic District Study Report, Farmington Historic District expansion, Farmington

Pursuant to CGS §7-147 c, on a motion by Ms. Acly, second by Dr. Glaser, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance and boundary for the proposed Farmington Historic District expansion as presented in the study report transmitted by the Town of Farmington on January 28, 2025.

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

Ms. Dunne presented this application. This application was presented for the Council to approve the ordinance and boundaries mentioned in the report. Mr. Garret Daigle from the Town of Farmington was on the call to answer any questions or concerns.

Mr. Elmore commented it would have been nice to have a paragraph or two, as a preamble before the first house, just to set the stage for what was to come. Ms. Dunne replied, that's a good point, especially since this is a district expansion. The applicant was asked for a map of the existing district and how the two properties fit in. It is good to either do an overview of the existing district or how the properties are connected, that is a great point.

2. Local Historic Property Study Report, 11 Barlow Mountain Rd., Ridgefield

Pursuant to CGS §7-147 q (c), on a motion by Dr. Horowitz, second by Ms. Acly, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance and boundary for the proposed 11 Barlow Mountain Rd., Ridgefield, CT as presented in the study report transmitted by the Town of Ridgefield on December 18, 2024.

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

Ms. Dunne presented this application. This is for a single property designation. Ms. Dunne wanted to note that there are interior photos included, which are not necessary. Interiors are not regulated by the Historic Properties Commission or Historic District Commission. It is okay that they're in the report, but they won't really have any bearing on the work of the Commission and the COA process. Mr. Dan O'Brien from the Town of Richfield was present, as well as the owner, Ms. Helen Demas, for any questions or concerns.

Ms. Acly noticed that the marriage status of the original inhabitant, Thomas Hyatt, was never mentioned, but later owners were. Was Mr. Hyatt married or was that just in the inconsistency? Mr. O'Brien replied he did have several descendants on the property and maintained ownership for 100 years. The research did not reveal the name of his spouse. He was married with children. Ms. Acly added it would be a nice piece to add the name of his spouse or spouses if they can be identified and included.

VIII. Archaeological Preserves

IX. Threatened Properties - CEPA Updates - Todd Levine

X. Preservation Restrictions

XI. Report on State Historic Preservation Office – Jonathan Kinney

Mr. Kinney reported at the last meeting that Staff were beginning to put together the various pieces of our statewide plan. They have begun drafting those various sections and look forward to sharing with the Council.

SHPO is also working on putting together a series of training opportunities for this year, which will be for the public. A flyer will be put in the chat. The sessions will be:

- * Understanding the Standards for Rehabilitation on March 26th, that will be at the State Office building, 450 Columbus Blvd.

- *Masonry Restoration hands on workshop. Details on location and date are forthcoming

- *An Introduction to Section 106, which is planned to be held at the DOT Training Center in June. Details and date are forthcoming

- *Writing a Competitive Grant Application for September 15th and will be virtual. Details are forthcoming.

- *ConnCRIS System overview in November will be a guided tour of Connecticut's historic context data.

Mr. Kinney also reached out to DECD's legal department about doing a brief lunch and learn for HPC about the public meeting recusal process. He is waiting on a response on a date for late February or March.

The legislative session is in full swing. SHPO is working very closely with our legislative liaison here at DECD to track proposed legislation that we think may impact our work. About a dozen bills are being tracked right now. Some of them are simply proposals. But as things move forward and those bills get fleshed out with more detail, the Council will be apprised of any that we are following closely to see if any of those move forward.

SHPO is watching the federal freeze situation closely. It has been rescinded but we will be watching out for future developments.

XII. Report on Museum Properties – Liz Shapiro

Off Season Updates:

Ms. Shapiro reported that the museum seasonal job listing has been posted and SHPO has been sharing, thanks to Julie who sent an eblast to the SHPO email lists. Please consider doing anything you can to promote this job opportunity. The posting closes on 2/21 at midnight. We are looking to hire up to a dozen people for these positions.

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience has been impacted by the government's freeze on foreign assistance. They may significantly cut back on operations and perhaps pause them completely.

There was a very successful book launch at the Prudence Crandall Museum on January 12, celebrating the launch of "Schooling the Nation" by Dr. Jennifer Rycenga. Over 45 people were in attendance, and there was a long line waiting for books to be signed by the author.

There is lots of planning going on for activities at the museum for next season, I'll have a better idea of what is happening at our next meeting.

- Museum staff, led by Jodi Polsgrove, are diving deeply into completing our emergency planning activities at the museums. At our March museum staff meeting we will be having a presentation on best practices for care of collections during emergencies and disasters.
- Staff is also currently working on a plan of object conservation for items in the collection that are both highly significant objects that tell the history of our sites. These include a sampler made by Prudence Crandall, and a banner that was used to advertise Old New-Gate Prison as a tourist destination in the early 20th century.

XIII. Old Business

XIV. New Business

XV. Liaison with Public & Private Agencies – Jane Montanaro Preservation Connecticut

Ms. Montanaro reported that on Thursday, February 20th, Preservation Connecticut will be celebrating its 's 50th anniversary at the LOB. Space will be reserved at the atrium, the 2nd floor starting at noon. A meet and greet will take place and we're hoping you'll all stop by and visit us to celebrate our anniversary. But then to also talk with legislators about the importance of the Community Investment Act. There is a Senate bill concept that is out there, Senate Bill 956, and that is the redo of last year's effort to increase the fee by \$6 to the Community Investment Act fund and so that has direct implications on preservation and all of the state grants from the Council and SHPO. Come on over to the Capitol and have a cupcake. Celebrate with us and talk with your legislators.

Chairman Butkus asked for an update of the 2025 HRF process. Mr. Kinney responded that Ms. Fink has just had all the one-on-one meetings with the potential applicants that have expressed an interest in applying. The next step would be letters of intent due in March.

XVI. Public Forum

XVII. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Elmore, second Ms. Acly, this meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Deborah D. Gaston

***Next regularly scheduled Council meeting:
Wednesday, March 5, 2025 – Meeting Format TBD***