

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL MEETING  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
Wednesday, January 7, 2026 @ 9:30 am**

**MINUTES**

*Meeting will be conducted in two (2) parts, each part conducted on a separate online platform.*

**Part 1: 9:30am – 10:45am – Microsoft Teams**

**Council:** Ms. Elizabeth Acly, Ms. Vincencia Adusei, Ms. Elizabeth Burgess, Chairman Paul Butkus, Ms. Marguerite Carnell, Dr. Leah Glaser, Dr. Andy Horowitz, Ms. Deanna Rhodes and Dr. Sarah Sportman

**Absent:** Mr. Thomas Elmore, Mr. Kent McCoy

**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:** Ms. Jane Montanaro

**I. Call to Order for Part 1 of Meeting**

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 none.

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

**1. Minutes – December 10, 2025 Meeting**

*On a motion by Ms. Adusei, second by Dr. Horowitz, the Council voted to approve the December 10, 2025 meeting minutes.*

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

## **V. State Historic Preservation Grants – Action Items**

### **A. Unfinished Action Items**

#### **1. Certified Local Government – Historic Preservation Enhancement Grant, Town of Roxbury, National Register Nomination Update, Roxbury (Approved in December 2025 as a Survey and Planning Grant)**

On a motion by Ms. Acly, second 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. Staff recommended this application for funding.

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

Applicant: The Town of Roxbury

Amount: \$20,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application again. She requested this change due to available state funding being limited, as was shared last month with Council. The Town of Roxbury was certainly allowed to apply for a Survey and Planning grant, but as a Certified Local Government, they also have access to a non-matching federal funding. In order to save state funds and to ensure that SHPO meets its obligation to pass through 10% of our federal funding to CLG's Ms. Dunne asked if the Town wouldn't mind having the funding source switched to federal and they did not. For auditing purposes, she wanted to ask the Council to vote to award the grant as a Certified Local Government grant, as opposed to the original Survey and Planning, to make everything clear for future reference.

Chairman Butkus asked if there were any other changes involved or was this really just an accounting change. Ms. Dunne replied it was just a change in the funding source, no other changes to the project were proposed.

### **B. New Action Items**

## **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**

## **X. Preservation Restrictions**

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

Mr. Kinney wished everyone a Happy New Year.

The 2026 legislative session is right around the corner, and he will provide an update at next month's meeting.

Mr. Kinney apologized for any confusion caused by the last-minute change in the HRF agenda. The agenda will be presented at the February meeting. The materials are already posted to prepare for the February discussions.

SHPO is working on scheduling a webinar for both the Historic Preservation Council and State Review Board for training on ConnCRIS. A date for everyone is coming soon.

Just a reminder that the second portion of the meeting will be held at 11:00 today on the Zoom platform, where the CPA item for 956 Main Street in Willimantic will be heard.

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

### **Henry Whitfield Museum**

- 4,112 visitors, May and June are the busiest months, which follow past trends, with a lovely spike in late August through October, probably due to the special events at the museum.
- Admission revenue of \$17,174
- Gift shop sales of \$5166.15

This year's calendar of events included:

- The Exhibit, Witness to History – Slavery in Guilford which was part of an initiative by the Guilford Preservation Alliance; Trades Day, in partnership with the Eric Sloane museum and TradesUp, the exhibit Digging Guilford at the Guilford Town Hall, our Archaeology Dig in conjunction with Dr. Bill Farley and students from Southern CT State University Dept of Anthropology; Nature Stewards Day in August, Guilford Porchfest in September; WelcomeFest the following weekend (9/14), a Meet and Greet with Gilmore Girls actor and dialogue coach George Bell in conjunction with Gilmore Girls weekend in Guilford, Chocolate the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Way on 10/19, and concluding on 12/5 with Firelight Festival.
- \* The heating system replacement project “the decarbonization project” continues to move forward with the initiation meeting with DAS Construction Services and the architectural engineer held Dec. 3. Currently putting together, the MOU with DEEP as the project will be funded via GreenerGov initiative.
- \* The Semiquin Grant Whitfield House Rehabilitation Project is moving forward with the PSA requests for construction services and National Register nomination update submitted to OFA and the corresponding RFPs being prepared.

## **Old New-Gate**

- Visitors: 13,089
- Total Revenue: \$148,000
- School kids: 400
- Profit from Jack O'Lantern Profit - \$68,000, of the 13,000 visitors, over 6000 of them visited in October during the event

This year's Calendar of Events:

- Hall of Change Unveiling, Friends of Old New-Gate Scavenger Hunt, Escape from New-Gate, Gem and Mineral Show, New-Gate hosted the DECD Summer Employee Park, Trades Day in conjunction with the Eric Sloane Museum and TradesUp, Josh Carter Lecture on the indigenous presence in East Granby, Bat Appreciation Day in conjunction with DEEP, "Light into the Dungeon, A Jack-O-Lantern Experience" (month of October, East Granby Halloween Party in conjunction with the East Granby Parks and Recreation's annual municipal Halloween party. Plus, Plays in Place has had a first private reading of the new play that will be performed onsite in 2026 as our main semi quincentennial project
- Exhibits: Prince Mortimer Portrait in conjunction with John Mills and the Alex Breanne Corporation, Old New-Gate Art Museum, in partnership with Community Partners in Action. All pieces on display in the Visitor's Center created by people while they served in a CT prison; Straight Out of the Box Installation, documentary by Daryl McGraw and Formerly Inc., Halloween at New-Gate, a special exhibition displayed during October, created in 2022, discussing the unique relationship between New-Gate and Halloween, with panels written by our own Nick Bellantoni, and Marena Wisniewski, and New-Gate Through the Ages, an installation of the 4 large murals depicting the various stages of New-Gate's history, painted by David Wagner. A CT artist who passed away in 2025.
- Capital Projects:
  - Guardhouse Window Replacement, \$48,000
  - The Bathroom floors and new partition work is underway!
- Museum Makeover Grant, from CT Humanities and Conservation ConneCTion, \$5600 to develop and install an interactive display of all the individuals incarcerated at New-Gate, opening in May 2026.

## **Prudence Crandall Museum:**

- Total Visitation: 640 visitors
- Total Tours Given: 131 tours
- Most Popular Day: Fridays (31 tours total)
- Most Popular Time: 11:30 (49 tours)
- Standard Length of Tour: 1.5 hrs. (43 tours; 2<sup>nd</sup> by 1.15 at 38 tours)

- How People Signed Up: Eventbrite: 55 / Walk-ins: 44 / Other: 16 *Note: this is the first-year technology was preferred to walk-in for visitor tickets.*

Not including self-guided tour or special event days:

- 396 visitors were adults (269) / seniors (127)
- 39 visitors were youth (33) / child (6)

A few fiscal notes:

- Admission + Eventbrite checks: \$3,442.94
  - Library Pass: 6 visitors used this pass.
  - Blue Star Museums: 3 active-duty military families used the pass.
  - Museums for All: 10 visitors used this form of access.
- Donations: \$354.14
- Honorariums: \$431.74
- Gift Shop Sales: \$1,880.52 (total for all items)
  - \$978.25 *Schooling the Nation*
  - \$524.79 *Surrounded*
- New Partnership with the state Judicial Branch
- New teacher experience, where teachers can come to the museum and reserve space to teach a class or two in the actual school rooms

### **Eric Sloane Museum:**

- Sales: \$25,529.11
- Visitation total (Includes CAMA's Festivals) 11,243
- 28 special programs, includes workshops and outreach
- Continuation of renewed furnace interpretation. Gearing up for 200<sup>th</sup> in 2026
- Record number of onsite and outreach programs. Busiest year to date
- Continuation and expansion of workshop series for kids and adults.
- New acquisitions of original Sloane works. Nearing 30 new pieces
- Continuation and expansion of Trades Education Programs. Museum and partnership with Trades up being recognized as high impact organization and forerunners of the "movement".

### **Museum Collections, Jodi Polsgrove**

We continue to work to enhance our holdings, acquiring new items through donations, with several new items currently being considered, including:

- Several original Eric Sloane pen and ink drawings
- A set of enamelware cookware made by the Delano Studios in the 1970s with Eric Sloane (licensed) Americana imagery.
- Commemorative / souvenir items from the Henry Whitfield Museum and Old New-Gate Prison from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (c. 1900)

New acquisitions require cataloging in our Collections Management database. Eventually these items will be available online at the Public Portal of [www.ctcollections.org](http://www.ctcollections.org).

Besides receiving new collections, we've been working on:

- Providing accurate inventories for the Risk Management staff at DAS to ensure our collections are insured.
- Working with individuals and other museums on loan agreements, both incoming and outgoing
- Working with staff to provide more secure and stable environments for our collections
- Inquiring about conservation of our more fragile items (such as the Prudence Crandall Sampler)
- And when not doing all those things, assisting site staff with tours, special events, etc.

We also continue to inventory and evaluate the collections at the Prudence Crandall Museum and Old New-Gate Prison to better fulfill their missions.

And finally, the big success of the year was the conservation of the Prudence Crandall Sampler, done at the Textile Conservation Workshop in South Salem NY.

This has been an "on the list" project for 20 years, and we're very proud to announce that the mission has been accomplished!

### **XIII. Old Business**

### **XIV. New Business**

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

Ms. Montanaro reported for both Connecticut Preservation Action and Preservation Connecticut. They are gearing up for a legislative session, both organizations are meeting with their boards to develop legislative priorities and strategies. Perennially, it's the number one priority for both organizations to defend and protect the Community Investment Act, which they will be doing again this year.

With state budget pressures rising, it's going to need to be defended. We will give more information as strategies are developed going forward. She invites all to reach out to Preservation Action and Preservation Connecticut for any questions on legislative actions, suggestions for legislative actions, or anything happening in your community that you want us to look at.

### **XVI. Public Forum**

### **XVII. Adjournment of Part 1 of Meeting**

*On a motion by Ms. Achy, second, Dr. Horowitz, this meeting was adjourned at 10:07 a.m.*

**Respectfully submitted by:**  
**Deborah D. Gaston**

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL MEETING  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
Wednesday, January 10, 2026 @ 11:00 am**

**MINUTES**

**Council:** Ms. Elizabeth Acly, Ms. Vincencia Adusei, Ms. Elizabeth Burgess, Chairman Paul Butkus, Ms. Marguerite Carnell, Dr. Leah Glaser, Dr. Andy Horowitz, Ms. Deanna Rhodes and Dr. Sarah Sportman

**Absent:** Mr. Thomas Elmore, Mr. Kent McCoy

**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:** Ms. Jane Montanaro, Ms. Stacey Vairo, Ms. Jean de Smet, Mr. Peter Brill, Mr. Lawrence Schwartz

**Part 2: 11am – 12:30pm – Zoom**

**I. Call to Order for Part 2 of Meeting**

Part II of the meeting was called to order at 11:04am.

**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.

Vice-Chairman Butkus clarified that the role of the HPC in this matter is not to determine the historical merit of the building(s) in question but to determine if the proposed demolition in the National Register Historic District is unreasonable and whether feasible alternatives to demolition exist. After hearing the presentations, the Council will vote on whether or not the matter should be referred to the Office of the Attorney General.

**IX. Threatened Properties**

A. 956 Main Street, Willimantic - Todd Levine

On a motion by Ms. Carnell, second by Ms. Adusei, this item was brought to the table for discussion.

Mr. Todd Levine presented a summary of SHPO's involvement in this matter going back to November 2025, when the office was notified that a new development in Willimantic would require the demolition of 956 Main Street, a contributing resource to the Main Street Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

Ms. Stacey Vairo of Preservation Connecticut made a presentation to Council that outlined the architectural and historical significance of the property and requested that the historic building somehow be incorporated into the proposed project. It was acknowledged that the structural condition of the building is an unknown as access has not yet been granted for an inspection. Council members asked several questions of Ms. Vairo.

The property co-owner and attorney, Mr. Peter Brill, made a presentation on the proposed hotel project and shared his concerns about the deteriorating condition of the structure. Council members asked several questions of Mr. Brill.

One member of the public addressed the Council:

- Jean de Smet – Windham resident (In favor of referral to OAG)

Following deliberation amongst the members, the Council voted to refer the matter to the Office of the Attorney General. A letter will be sent from SHPO to the OAG regarding next steps.

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

## **XVII. Adjournment of Part 2 of Meeting**

On a motion by Dr. Horowitz, second by Dr. Glaser, the meeting was adjourned at 12:14 p.m.

***Next regularly scheduled Council meeting:  
Wednesday, February 4, 2026 – Meeting format to be determined***