

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL MEETING
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Wednesday, July 2, 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 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: Mr. Tom Baldwin, Ms. Mary Donohue, Pastor Paul Doyle, Mr. Todd Dumais, Ms. Violet Johnson, Ms. Gail MacDonald, Ms. Jorden Sorensen Mr. Andres Verzosa and Ms. Kim Wolf

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. There were none.

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes and Transcripts

A. Minutes – June 4, 2025 Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Acly, second by Ms. Carnell, the Council voted to approve the June 4, 2025 meeting minutes with corrections.

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

V. State Historic Preservation Grants – Action Items

A. Unfinished Action Items

B. New Action Items

1. Local Preservation Partners Grant, New London Landmarks, Funding to support local preservation planning, New London

On a motion by Ms. Burgess, second by Ms. Acly, the Historic Preservation Council voted to award a Local Preservation Partners 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-7, N-0, Abstaining-2, Absent-2, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Applicant: New London Landmarks

Amount: \$50,000

NOTE:

The Local Preservation Partners Grant is a renaming of the Partners-In-Preservation Grant and includes the formerly named Institutional Support for Capacity Building Grant

Ms. Dunne presented this application. New London Landmarks requested funding in the amount of \$50,000 to support the one-year local preservation plan of the organization. SHPO consolidated its Partner-in-Preservation grants and renamed it Local Preservation Partners grants and pulled in the former Institutional support for Capacity Building grants. The grant itself is not substantially different, except for that it focuses more on local preservation activities of the organization rather than their expenses like rent and things like that. Although staff salaries will remain an eligible expense. Ms. Violet Johnson, Executive Director of New London Landmarks, was on the call to answer any questions or concerns.

Ms. Acly asked about the narrative around the collapse of First Congregational Church of New London and if there was any conversation with local community members on preserving the Church's legacy, or any steps toward preventing other issues occurring again?

Ms. Johnson replied that there were major discussions between her predecessor, Mr. Richard Primer, and the developer, to encourage them to reuse what they can of the First Congregational site, specifically the stones. There are large posters around the area, showcasing their plans. They were not super eager to reuse the stones at first, but Richard played a major part in getting them to reuse the stone on

part of the facade of the new building although construction has not started on that new building yet.

Ms. Acly asked if their budget for next year was going to include other opportunities to partner with the city for the 250 Anniversary celebrations in New London?

Ms. Violet Johnson replied yes, there is. The Thames River Heritage Park is working to get different organizations in the area to collaborate on 250th programming. The idea is that groups which have similar goals in their programming, for example, say who want to include Black history as part of their programming. Other organizations that have an emphasis on black history or want to explore that element, will be working together. Ms. Johnson would also like to note that because of the time when this grant runs out, which would be July 2026, there is still half of a year for more 250th programming, where she would like to see more collaborations. Ideally, she will write those into the grant coming around for 2026. As of right now, they need to really secure those partnerships before she feels comfortable putting them in the grant for financial year 2026.

2. Survey and Planning Grant, Calvary Episcopal Church, Stonington, Architectural Plans and Specifications for priority needs, Calvary Episcopal Church, Stonington

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

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

Applicant: Calvary Episcopal Church

Amount: \$20,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. Cavalry Episcopal Church requested funding in the amount of \$20,000 to prepare architectural plans and specifications to address priority needs. Ms. Dunne apologized that the motion stated this was a Local Partners grant, but it is actually a Survey and Planning grant. Chairman Butkus reread the motion adding the fact that this is a Survey and Planning grant. SHPO funded a condition assessment on the church a few years ago. This is a non-matching grant because they do plan to move forward with an HRF grant application. Having worked with the architects for the condition assessment, they are allowed to move forward with the same architect. Ms. Julia Hodges, author of the application, was not on the call, so Ms. Dunne offered to answer any questions or concerns.

Ms. Acly commented on the long-term preservation plan being developed and fully supports the scope of work. The report also mentioned that generally the granite joints are in good condition. They are getting toward the end of their serviceable life, so having that master document to look at is an important tool. She fully supports this application.

3. Survey and Planning Grant, First Congregational Church of Willimantic, Condition Assessment for First Congregational Church of Willimantic, Willimantic

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. Staff recommended this application for funding.

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

Applicant: First Congregational Church of Willimantic
Amount: \$20,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. First Congregational Church of Willimantic requested funding in the amount of \$20,000 to prepare a condition assessment for the church building. Pastor Paul Doyle was on the call for any questions or comments. SHPO has previously worked with Pastor Doyle on a condition assessment for another church. Now that he is in Willimantic, it's nice that he's hitting the ground running with this new church. They are starting from scratch, so they will have to competitively select a qualified architect/engineering team if awarded the grant, but SHPO will work with the applicant on the RFP.

Ms. Acly added that she drives by this church a lot and often wondered about it. In the application, it shows attention to building maintenance, which I think we all appreciate. She fully supports the application.

Chairman Butkus added he was surprised seeing the interior because it wasn't what he was expecting, especially with the rose window tucked away up above. It's just very interesting to see.

4. Survey and Planning Grant, New London Cemetery Association, Conditions Assessment of the Beckwith Administration Building, Cedar Grove Cemetery, New London

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

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

Applicant: New London Cemetery Association
Amount: \$20,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The New London Cemetery Association requested funding on the amount of \$20,000 to develop a condition assessment for the Beckwith Administration Building at Cedra Grove Cemetery. SHPO did give a prior grant to the Cemetery Association to do a National Register nomination for Cedar Grove Cemetery, which they have completed. They want to get started looking at some of the structures in the cemetery, starting with this building, in order to begin preservation planning. Ms. Gail McDonald of the Cemetery Association was on the call for any questions or concerns.

Chairman Butkus was curious if there's been any increase in requests from funeral directors to have an alternate space. Due to ongoing consolidation of funeral homes throughout the states, they're trying to share facilities and was curious if there's any opportunity to increase services at the cemetery instead of in the traditional funeral home settings.

Ms. MacDonald stated that they would like to get the building renovated and to be able to use the Chapel, which is an attached part of this building, and it has not been used for quite a few years because of severe water damage that has made the plaster come down in a big section. They do foresee that there will be a demand to use it for both funeral services and for after funeral services, other events, and as a meeting hall as well. There are also other rooms in the building that could be rented out for small gatherings or a cremation service in a traditional funeral home setting.

Ms. Acly wanted a quick clarification of the final grant product, so it will be a conditions assessment report, which will include existing buildings and site drawings. That means that the delivery would be drawings, building and site drawings, or do you already have those to help with the assessment?

Ms. MacDonald replied, we do currently have building and site drawings and the building was designed by Dudley St. Clair Donnelly, who was noted as a local architect. Landscape plans were made by the Olmsted Brothers firm, so one of the things that we would also like to restore, but we're not even sure if they were ever carried out, is the original landscaping plans. This included the building, the immediate grounds around the building and the current gate to the cemetery, which was designed and constructed right around the same time.

Ms. Acly added when crafting their RFP, the applicant should work with Ms. Dunne to make sure, when asking for pricing, that you are very clear about what they want for drawings or if they will just be provided to the consultant.

Ms. Johnson added a quick comment and support. She has been in this building and thinks it could be a lovely space. She believes that a small, intimate, funeral space is something that people are really looking for these days. She is highly encouraged and thanked the Council's support for Cedar Grove.

5. Survey and Planning Grant, Town of West Hartford, Research to support the Revolutionary War Campsite, West Hartford

On a motion by Mr. Elmore, 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. Staff recommended this application for funding.

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

Applicant: Town of West Hartford

Amount: \$10,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Town of West Hartford requested funding in the amount of \$10,000 to research the Revolutionary War Campsite in town. Ms. Dunne and SHPO's Staff Archaeologist, Ms. Cathy Labadia, met with the town in January 2025 to discuss this project. As stated in the application, this property is listed on the National Register as a contributing resource. The site does not have an archaeological preserved designation. SHPO is protective of archaeological sites and does support this more in-depth research to expand on what is known about the site and its associated figures and activities. Ms. Mary Donahue was on the call to answer any questions or concerns.

Chairman Butkus wanted some clarity on interpretive signage and the site not having maps. In the nomination form they talk about sensitivity and not wanting to disturb things. How do we strike a balance between providing an educational resource with things like interpretive signage and protecting the site?

Ms. Donahue introduced herself as the Historian for the Town of West Hartford and the Chairwoman of the 250th Celebration Committee. She thanked Ms. Dunne and Ms. Labadia for their assistance with the application. This site is obviously an archaeological site; it has a very thin National Register nomination that is over 40 years old and created before she joined the SHPO staff. This site is on public and private lands east of the reservoir that is used for walkers. There's a three-mile walk, so interpretive signage would go, we hope on the paved walking area, not directly on the archaeological site because we are very concerned that

sensitive site stay there. This application is imperative because we don't have good research on the site at all. We need it to tell the story of the town and people's involvement in any Indigenous and Black stories. This scholar will really have to dig into both national, state and local archives and produce research reports which we can use for educational activities, including signage. This actual project is just the archival research. We need somebody who's an 18th century historian who can read that handwriting and produce the report.

Ms. Dunne added that the goal is to strike a balance between protection and learning more about the site. As Ms. Donahue said, it's an old nomination and a lot of the older nominations lack a lot of important information. SHPO would like to educate the public more, but also to protect the site itself. This project is strictly the research and then, hopefully, we will continue to work with the town on the next steps forward.

Dr. Sportman asked, since the archaeological work was done so long ago, has there been any discussion of moving forward with some more contemporary battlefield archaeology strategies, such as metal detector surveys, magnetometry, GPR, that sort of thing to learn more about the campsite and maybe kind of add more to the overall history? It would be a great supplement to historical research.

Ms. Donohue agreed with Dr. Sportman. Upon recommendation from staff, they are starting with the research first to get a strong handle on the maps and the timeline and then we would love to do more reconnaissance archaeology at the site.

Ms. Labadia added part of the information that she was reading about the site is what we know about the obvious ruins of the firebacks. But reading about the entire encampment, it looks like it extends to the other side of the road. It includes a hospital as well, so just be mindful of how the costs can escalate. It is important to get the background research done first to know exactly which landowners should be contacted and how big a field effort might be needed in the future. This is step one of what will be a multi phased approach.

6. Survey and Planning Grant, Farmington Village Green and Library Association, Conditions assessment for Stanley-Whitman House, Farmington

On a motion by Ms. Carnell, second by Dr. Glaser, 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 funding this application.

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

Applicant: Farmington Village Green and Library Association
Amount: \$20,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Farmington Village Green and Library Association requested funding in the amount of \$20,000 to complete a condition assessment of the Stanley Whitman House. The Association came to us for a Stewardship Relief Grant during COVID. That grant program did serve to introduce more organizations to our incentives and SHPO had some new applications as a result. The Stanley Whitman house is a National Historic Landmark. They do have some previous reports written about the house. SHPO would like to support their efforts to move forward with identifying critical needs. Mr. Andrew Berkos, Executive Director, was on the call for any questions or concerns.

Ms. Acly commented that this building is first period and it sounds like it really attracted some heavy hitters in the 1980s based on the list of people that have studied the building. It is exciting to have that base of knowledge. It is interesting to have some of the same consultants reviewing this project. What might be good for your list for this project is to look at how the preservation treatments that were done then might compare to preservation technology now, because it's evolved quite a bit. So that might be a piece of what you ask your consultants to do.

But, the applicant sounds like they have a wonderful body of background information. We also now have dendrochronology available to us. If there's any question of dates, adding dendrochronology to your study, which is basically tree ring dating to identify specific dates of buildings is relatively cost effective.

VI. State Register of Historic Places Nominations

A. Unfinished Action Items

B. New Action Items

1. State Register of Historic Places. St. Joseph's Church, 887 Stafford Road, Mansfield

One a motion by Dr. Horowitz, second by Ms. Carnell, the Historic Preservation Council voted to list St. Joseph's Church, located at 887 Stafford Road, Mansfield, to the State Register of Historic Places. Staff recommended listing of this property.

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

Ms. Wisniewski presented this application. Staff recommended approval of listing of St. Joseph's Church, located at 887 Stafford Road, Mansfield, to the State Register of Historic Places, under Criterion One, at the local level, in the area of social history, as an example of a community church built by and for local

Catholic immigrants. The property is also recommended eligible under Criterion 2, at the local level, in the area of architecture, as a vernacular example of a small Gothic Revival chapel. Alterations have been minimal, and the Chapel retains most of its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association of a small community church. Mr. Ethan McClelland, author of the nomination and owner, is here to help me answer any questions you may have. Ms. Wisniewski thanked Ms. Carnell for her input.

Ms. Acly commented about the mixture of stone and that it's said to be used in other buildings in the area, including the Clara Hall Elliott Memorial Church in South Wellington, just a little bit further up Route 32. She drives through this area, and she always had the sense that it was from a quarry and not from a conglomeration of different places. If there's data and evidence that it is from a conglomeration of places, then maybe just site that or is there some other research to do about a local quarry?

Ms. Wisniewski replied it was her understanding that this stone was quarried from the Bolton Notch during road construction, so it was actually a surplus of stone from road construction, and so that was made available as a local building stone. It is great that we have that other reference to the Elliott Memorial Church in South Willington.

Ms. Wisniewski made a note of this information to add to the nomination. The Mansfield Historical Society also mentioned, prior to the nomination, that the stone was from the road construction of Bolton Notch and that it had been surplus stone and they ended up in ecclesiastical buildings as surplus building material. Ms. Acly added the little monument across the street as well.

The nomination reads that the cement or the mortar uses Portland cement, which is very possible in the 1930s, but it also could be other things. Unless there's documented data, maybe that shouldn't be stated quite as explicitly. Or if there is, then that's great too. Ms. Wisniewski will double-check with Mr. McClelland, the owner who wrote the nomination.

Ms. Acly added she believes the nomination would be enhanced by a historic map to show where the factory was.

Chairman Butkus asked what products were manufactured in the mill. Ms. Wisniewski was not sure, but Mr. McClelland responded it was mostly a textile mill and the Sterling Shoe Fiber Company. For the longest period, it was a textile mill. It would be good to incorporate that into social history as to why a particular group of immigrants settled there. Not just that there's a job, but a specific skill set, adds to the understanding of what's going on at the site.

Ms. Wisniewski replied there was a large population of Irish immigrants migrating there, as well as in Willimantic, where you see the same sort of thing where we have textile mills and that specific skill set.

Dr. Glaser added it takes a while for us to get to the portion of the story. It might make sense to move this to the top of the initial statement of significance and

mention labor as the reason they're there, not just settlement. Ms. Wisniewski replied this will be added to the first paragraph. Dr. Glaser also noticed some inconsistencies with the superscripts with the footnotes. Ms. Wisniewski acknowledged some formatting issues with Adobe, which was recently updated on the State computers.

2. State Register of Historic Places Nomination, Griswoldville Chapel, 178 Griswold Road, Wethersfield

On a motion by Dr. Glaser, second by Ms. Acly, the Historic Preservation Council voted to list the Griswoldville Chapel, located at 178 Griswold Road, Wethersfield, to the State Register of Historic Places. Staff recommended listing of this property.

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

Ms. Wisniewski presented this nomination. Staff recommended approval of the listing of the Griswoldville Chapel, located at 178 Griswold Griswold Road, Wethersfield, to the State Register of Historic Places, under Criterion 2, at the local level, as an intact example of a Carpenter Gothic ecclesiastical building. Alterations have been minimal, mostly as part of the 1917 addition and the Chapel retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Ms. Jordan Sorenson and Mr. Tom Baldwin, the authors of the nomination, are here to help answer any questions. They also received a positive reaction to the nomination from the HDC liaison at the town.

Ms. Acly added she worked on The Citizens Block in Vernon, which is one of Seneca Lincoln's projects, and it is the most interesting construction. Brick veneer with a timber frame back up and it's three stories.

Dr. Glaser commented that she appreciated some of the historical context despite the property not being nominated under Criteria One, but she was wondering if the nomination should talk about how it's unusual as a non-denominational Chapel. Maybe just reference what would be a typical denominational Chapel and to highlight why this is so unusual?

Mr. Tom Baldwin from the Chapel added that most of the residents of Bristolville were congregational and thought was given to making it a congregational church, but in recognition of the diversity of the population of the village, it was only right to make it non-denominational.

Ms. Carnell commented she very much supported this nomination. She did offer some comments and minor suggestions to Ms. Wisniewski. The only other comment she would make was that the Gothic Revival was popular on college campuses and it would be good to add a sentence stating that for further context.

Ms. Wisniewski added, this is a great example of Carpenter Gothic, which here in Connecticut, to Ms. Carnell's point, when we see the Gothic Revival, we often

see it expressed in stone or masonry. Here is a great example of this kind of Carpenter Gothic in a rural community. She is happy to have this listed and really appreciates Mr. Baldwin's and Ms. Sorenson's efforts.

Mr. Butkus asked about the entrance, which is not centrally located, but is off to the side. Ms. Wisniewski responded that this is mid-19th century Picturesque which focused on the sort of naturalistic and fitting in with our environment. She would also agree that you typically would expect to see some sort of central entrance, like a double set of doors, but this is moved to the side. It may be because this is a vernacular example that this is just for practicality's sake. She doesn't think there was anything within the historical information at the Wethersfield Historical Society. Mr. Baldwin noted that Connecticut Yankees are very practical in their design but saw nothing in the description. There's a longhand description by Southwest Disher, who was a contractor, and he made no reference that I could see to why there was no front entrance.

VII. Local Historic District/Property Study Report/s

A. Unfinished Action Items

B. New Action Items

VIII. Archaeological Preserves

IX. Threatened Properties - CEPA Updates - Todd Levine

98 Franklin Street, New Britain – Mr. Levine reported on Saint Peter's Church in New Britain, which is currently threatened with demolition. Cirrus Structural Engineering has been out once, and, according to Phillip Walker, they are going to be going on a second visit to finish their analysis. For SHPO's own process, we are usually looking for an outcry from the community, which will trigger our investigation. That threshold has not yet been met. We've only got about 15 letters, mostly from the same household. We have not received 20 letters of support outside of a couple of people. We will wait for the additional evaluation of the structural integrity of the building.

X. Preservation Restrictions

XI. Report on State Historic Preservation Office – Jonathan Kinney

Mr. Kinney reported that SHPO has finally received some positive news about their funding situation. SHPO was notified yesterday that the NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity) for federal fiscal year 2025 HPF funding was released. SHPOs can now apply for that funding (which we should have had months ago), which is obviously a positive development. This gives the office a little bit of breathing room. But Mr. Kinney wanted to be clear that this does not solve the long-term issue. We're not completely out of the woods yet as HPF funding is still zeroed out for the federal fiscal year 2026 budget.

Advocacy efforts continue at the federal level and our national partners will continue to update us on how that moves forward as the federal budget process shakes out over the

next few weeks. Hopefully, we will have more information to share with you at the next meeting, and we'll get some additional good news. Today we have our federal 2025 money, but again, that effort continues to ensure the long-term sustainability of that funding.

In addition, we are starting a fun summer campaign where people or organizations can share their historic preservation stories. Some of you may have seen the e-blast go out right before the meeting. We are encouraging folks to share their success stories that highlight the importance of preservation in Connecticut, and we've created a simple submission form that will allow you to share your text as well as photos. We're encouraging folks to submit all types of projects, big and small, that can help raise awareness of historic preservation and inspire others, and we'll be sharing those stories on social media throughout the summer. We hope that others will re-share them. We're using the hashtag #CThistoricpreservation.

XII. Report on Museum Properties – Liz Shapiro

Ms. Shapiro reported on the State's museum properties.

General Items:

Staffing: The museums hired ten seasonal staff for this season

IT Upgrades: The goal is to have high speed internet at all sites, by the end of this calendar year

Collections:

The museums received the following donations:

1. Paintings (Miller)
 1. Framed Painting, "Connecticut Morning" (19 ¾" x 27 ½" unframed)
 2. Framed Painting, "Autumn Flight"
2. Iron Furnace items (Hollinger) – Ledgers related to the Kent Iron Furnace and the creation of the Eric Sloane Museum, and three "slices" of pig iron, made at the Furnace, and stamped for the Bicentennial and given out by the Stanley Works
3. Archival and library materials (Bozicek)
4. Signed Sloane books (Jameson)

Thank you to the donors who continue to be so generous. Staff are working on display and interpretation of these donated items. The new Eric Sloane paintings are amazing supplements to our already impressive collection, and the recovery of records from the Kent Iron Company is giving us a new understanding of the company even after the closing of the furnace.

Purchases: The museum has purchased, with some donated funds matched by some state funds, four books previously owned by Prudence Crandall. All four contain her signature, two also contain dates under her name as well. The museum has purchased an exhibit case and is developing plans for display and collaborative programming over the coming year into America 250.

Our collections are also being seen in new and exciting ways, such as a loan of Anti-Slavery materials from the Prudence Crandall Museum collections at the Otis Library for Harris Sisters Month this past April. We are also slowly placing more of the collections onto the Public Portal at www.ctcollections.org. As we continue to inventory and catalog the collections, we select items to highlight and tag them for inclusion. Each week, we try to get a few more online. We encourage everyone to check it out.

Other Collections updates:

- Reinstallation of fragile Whitfield collections to the Whitfield House this spring.
- Loans of paintings and prints to the Eric Sloane Museum
- Preparation for the purchase and arrival of the Prudence Crandall Books, including display cases and archival materials to store the books
- The inventory of the “Rare Book” collection at the Prudence Crandall Museum
- The ongoing inventory of the collection at New-Gate.
- The loan of the Prince Mortimer portrait to New-Gate by the Alex Brianne Corporation.
- in June, Prudence Crandall’s sampler was safely delivered to the Textile Conservation Workshop in South Salem, NY for evaluation and to prepare a treatment proposal for conservation. This is something that has been on the staff’s wish list for many years, and we are excited to see what the conservators recommend.

Henry Whitfield Museum:

Visitors

- 343 visitors in May
- School group – entire 5th grade from Walsh Intermediate School (Branford, CT) over the course of 3 days in June – 172 students & 40 adults

Special Programs

- May 17 – installation ceremony for the Witness Stone honoring Cuff who was enslaved at the Whitfield House from 1772 to 1775 by Sarah (Ruggles) Pynchon. Cuff was a gardener, a teamster, and he may have served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. Cuff was researched and remembered this year by students at Guilford’s Elizabeth C. Adams Middle School as part of a Witness Stones Project program. The Witness Stone Project’s mission is to restore history and honor the humanity of the enslaved individuals who helped build our communities. Speakers at the installation ceremony included Pat Wilson Pheanious, Executive Director of the Witness Stones Project and former Connecticut state representative. Her ancestors were among the first to be memorialized with Witness Stones in Guilford. Dennis Culliton, Co-Founder and Director of Education and Special Projects of the Witness Stones Project, shared Cuff’s story and the research involved in uncovering it.

- June 14 – free admission for CT Open House Day
- June 22 – Trades Day – all ages can try antique and modern-day woodworking hand tools and watch skilled craftsmen at work. Partners include TradesUp, the Eric Sloane Museum, prominent Connecticut woodworker Rick Liegl and his apprentice Lara Miller.
- July 8-August 11 (Wednesday-Friday) – visitors can observe an archaeology dig during Southern Connecticut State University's 7th field school season at the museum

Capital Projects

- The National Park Service approved the architect's plans and specs at 80% completion for the Whitfield House Rehabilitation Semiquincentennial Grant project, so the architect is now completing those documents and then the project will go out to bid for a contractor
- DAS Construction Services is administering a proof-of-concept study to replace the heating system at the Whitfield House and Visitor Center and the report is expected by the end of June

Eric Sloane Museum

- June 4 and 5th – over 200 visitors as part of the Freedom Road Auto Club
- Meeting with Springfield NPS Superintendent and Staff re. their America 250 event in September. Their focus is on the tradespeople who worked in the armory/labs during the war. Discussed doing some outreach as Sloane, like what we do at Minuteman, and hands on activities partnering with TradesUp, Mason also attended.
- Worked with Morgan on reenactor safety protocol
- Saturday June 28, 5-7, “A Night at the Museum” with behind-the-scenes tour and special art talk with Jim Mauck in effort to reignite support for the Friends.
- There will be a Kids Plumbing Workshop on site in July as well as an adult blacksmithing course.

Old New-Gate Prison and Copper Mine:

We currently have six fantastic seasonal guides, who have all worked for us in previous seasons. Consistent staffing over the past 3 years has allowed for further training opportunities and advanced interpretation. To date (mid-June) we have surpassed over 1,000 visitors- tracking well with previous seasons. We continue to host school groups, particularly homeschool co-ops. In addition to our general operations, we will welcome visitors to our monthly special events; Historic Reenactment on June 29th and Gem & Mineral Show on July 27th.

Our Capital Projects are gaining traction, particularly those that are funded by the National Park Service. The Save America's Treasures grant to stabilize the 4-story Cell Block and Retaining wall was recently approved by NPS, which means we can now proceed with an archaeological review and RFP for a contractor. This

project will ultimately remove all vegetation from the Cell Block and dismantle/rebuild the west retaining wall behind the Guardhouse.

The Semiquin Grant for the Viets Rehabilitation is also progressing, and we recently reviewed the Schematic Designs and Building Assessment with our architect (Chris William Architects). Moisture control seems to be the top priority for stabilizing the structure, which will likely include drainage and HVAC system.

Finally, we are currently working on our grant funded, Museum Makeover project to install a new interactive exhibit in the museum Guardhouse, which will focus on the incarcerated individuals at New-Gate from 1773-1827.

Prudence Crandall Museum:

Visitation & Staffing

- The museum opened to the public on Friday, May 9th for the official season. The museum had already welcomed 140 visitors over the winter Sunday openings.
- We provided professional courtesy tours to the Florence Griswold Museum docents and the volunteers and staff of Roseland Cottage, the latter of which we provide a reciprocal half-off-price admission for visiting both sites.
- The museum committed to participating in the Educator Passport summer program for LEARN staff and confirmed our third year participating in the state's DOE Digital Backpack program for all school system employees.
- We are once again participating in the Blue Star Museums program for military service members and their families and have added Museums for All as well.
- We have two college classes scheduled for upcoming visits and are seeing an increase in adult student visitors and adults using library passes to visit the museum.

Professional Development

- Both staff members attended the CT League of Museums one-day annual conference in early June at CCSU. Joanie DiMartino participated in the panel "Even You Can Tell Stories from the Black Perspective," as part of the Black Narratives Committee of the CT Freedom Trail.
- Joanie DiMartino was also contacted to submit a proposal as part of a panel on material culture for the History of Education Society's annual meeting, held in Providence, RI this year. The session proposal, titled "History from the Collection Out: Material Culture and the History of Education," was accepted.

- DiMartino also participated in a focus group for the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum.

Special Programs

- The Museum collaborated with the Otis Library in Norwich and the Public Library of New London to feature the author, illustrator, and publisher of the English edition of the graphic novel, *Surrounded: America's First School for Black Girls, 1832*. Link to view: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJkEmvUF_AM
- CT Open House Day brought in 15 visitors over a 4-hour period interested in a self-guided experience.
- Joanie DiMartino spoke on the grant funds received by Last Green Valley to their annual meeting membership, 115 people.

Capital Projects

- Approval for exterior security cameras is in process with SHPO.
- The museum now has WIFI. Better connections and a new Guest option.

Collections

- Prudence Crandall's sampler was delivered to the Textile Conservation Workshop in South Salem, NY for review and conservation recommendation and quote.
- The museum has purchased four books previously owned by Prudence Crandall. All four contain her signature, two also contain dates under her name as well. The museum has purchased an exhibit case and is developing plans for display and collaborative programming over the coming year into America 250.

XIII. Old Business

XIV. New Business

XV. Liaison with Public & Private Agencies

XVI. Public Forum

XVII. Adjournment

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

***Next regularly scheduled Council meeting:
Wednesday, August 6, 2025 – Meeting Format TBD***