

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL MEETING
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Wednesday, June 2, 2021 @ 9:30 am**

MEETING

Council: Ms. Elizabeth Acly, Ms. Elizabeth Burgess, Chairman Thomas Elmore, Dr. Margaret Faber, Dr. Leah Glaser, Ms. Kathy Maher, Ms. Christine Nelson, Ms. Sara Nelson (joined meeting at 10:15 a.m.), Dr. Sarah Sportman, Dr. Walter Woodward, and Ms. Ellen Zoppo-Sassu

Absent: Ms. Marguerite Carnell

Staff: 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 Wiesnewski

Guests: Ms. Gwen George-Bruno
Ms. Mary Falvey
Ms. Kristin Keegen
Mr. Aaron Marcavitch
Mr. Jim Miller
Ms. Jane Montanaro

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:34 a.m.

II. Review of Public Comment Procedures

Chairman Elmore read aloud the Public Comments Procedures.

III. Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest

Chairman Elmore read aloud the Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest and asked if any Council members had any conflicts of interest.

1. Ms. Beth Acly recused herself from agenda item V.B.2. Congregational Church of Plainville, Assessment of Church Steeple and agenda item V.B.4. Windham Preservation, Inc., Feasibility Study for Windham Inn.
2. Dr. Sarah Sportman recused herself from agenda item V.B.3. Nomination for Archaeological Preserve Designation, Brian D. Jones Paleoindian Site.

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes and Transcripts

a. Minutes – April 7, 2021 Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Maher, Second Ms. C Nelson, the Council voted to approve the April minutes with corrections.

(Y-7, N-0, Abstaining-3, Absent-2, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

b. Minutes – May 5, 2021 – Part I of Meeting

On a motion by Dr. Faber, Second Ms. Maher, the Council voted to approve the May minutes with corrections.

(Y-9, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-2, Recused-0,) (Roll call vote)

c. Transcript - May 5, 2021 – Part II of Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Maher, Second by Dr. Woodward, the Council voted to approve the transcript of Part II of the May 5, 2021 meeting.

(Y-9, N-0, Abstaining-1, 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, Town of North Stonington, Architectural Plans and Specifications for the John Dean Gallup House, North Stonington

On a motion by Ms. C. Nelson, Second by Ms. Maher, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend the award of 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-9, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-2, Recused-0,) (Roll call vote)

Applicant: Town of North Stonington

Amount: \$15,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Town of North Stonington requested funding in the amount of \$15,000 to develop architectural plans and specifications to support the restoration of the John Dean Gallup House, located on Hewitt Road in North Stonington. Staff recommends the application for funding. The applicant received a previous Survey and Planning grant in August 2020 for a condition assessment. The project was competitively bid and was considered the first phase of the larger project. The budget and scope are solid and the Town intends to continue working with the same architect. There was no representative from North Stonington on the line and Ms. Dunne answered any questions the Council had.

Ms. Acly stated that she did not see a list of projects in the condition's assessment and asked Ms. Dunne if she has a sense of what the town's plans are for subsequent work on the building.

Ms. Dunne replied that the town plans to apply for a Historic Restoration Fund grant once their vision was clearer and they have a caretaker/tenant on board.

Ms. Acly also asked about a long-term preservation plan and indicated that the condition assessment has great information with which to begin creating one.

Ms. Maher added that there is a general list of proposed work on page 7. Ms. Dunne added that this is their informal list and their condition's assessment should include that.

Ms. Maher stated that the history was very broad in the narrative. Ms. Dunne replied that the property was listed with information based on the 1966 survey and that she can recommend updating the listing with additional information. Ms. Maher also added that Mary's name should be included in the historical narrative. She was the second wife and even though they had no children, she was listed as living in the house.

Ms. Dunne agreed the listing should be updated.

Dr. Woodward agreed with Ms. Maher that the history of the house could be expanded. He could not tell if the limitations were in what they could find or how they presented it. One more pass editing this section might help.

Ms. Maher added that the discussion of feasibility was also all over the place. The applicant needs to take a deep dive into feasibility. A bubble diagram was presented which she is not a fan of because they are confusing and obsolete. More information on the demographics of their intended audience is needed to determine what is best to benefit the community.

Ms. Dunne mentioned the grant that was given last year was non-matching and that the applicant can always apply for another grant to do more research.

Ms. Scofield added that we should never back down from a suggestion to do a nomination update. The CT Historic Commission predates the National Historic Preservation Act and CT has an incredible number of early designations. While it is not reasonable to update all of these early nominations, it does seem reasonable to ask applicants as they apply for funding to consider updates. However, we do not want this to limit access to our programs. Chairman Elmore added that federal listing really got the ball rolling for this site.

Ms. C. Nelson added that she enjoyed reading the application, that this is the logical next step for the property, and that she is all in favor of it.

Ms. Acly asked how the applicant is made aware of the Council's recommendations. Ms. Dunne replied that after the grant is awarded, she will share the recommendations for a nomination update and increased public involvement in the feasibility analysis with the applicant.

Ms. Acly stated that she supports the application with the condition that these recommendations are relayed.

2. Survey and Planning Grant, Congregational Church of Plainville, UCC, Assessment of Church Steeple, Plainville

(Ms. Acly recused herself at 10:05 a.m.)

On a motion by Ms. Burgess, Second by Dr. Faber, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend the award of 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-1,) (Roll call vote)

Applicant: Congregational Church of Plainville, UCC
Amount: \$9,000.00

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Congregational Church of Plainville, UCC requested funding in the amount of \$9,000 to obtain the consulting Services of a 36 CFR-qualified architect and appropriate team to prepare a condition assessment for the church's steeple. Staff recommended the application for funding. The applicant received a Historic Preservation's Technical Assistance Grant from Preservation Connecticut to have some assessments done on the building and they are working on their priority needs, but they have recently discovered that the church steeple has become unsafe. The church plans to hire an architect to determine the extent of the damage and to plan for the stabilization and repair. A representative from the Church is not present but Ms. Dunne offered to answer any questions or concerns.

Ms. Maher stated that either a drone or a bucket would be needed to properly inspect the steeple. She is concerned that the budget will not be sufficient to cover the cost of this inspection. Also, is the clock included in the restoration?

Ms. Dunne replied that she was also concerned about access initially. The applicant has indicated that they are able to get people up into the steeple from the interior. She also does not know but will find out if the clock is included. The applicant did consult with several professionals, and this was the scope and price they received.

Ms. Burgess stated that the narrative is very light and could use additional information about the church itself and its role in the community. The project need is adequately described. Information from the Connecticut Trust application could have also been included. Ms. Dunne replied that she should have asked the applicant for more information.

Chairman Elmore asked why the steeple was not included in the earlier assessment. Ms. Dunne replied that maybe it was due to access. The earlier reports were not funded or managed by SHPO.

Dr. Faber asked if Ms. Dunne has conducted a site visit and whether Ms. Dunne knew how serious the condition is? Ms. Dunne replied that Ms. Fink has completed a site visit.

Ms. Fink stated that the church is in her neighborhood and the steeple is very visibly tilting away from the building. The architect that worked on the original assessment passed away during the work; that may be why the steeple was left unaddressed. This work is definitely urgent.

Chairman Elmore added that Ms. Acly's expertise would be very helpful, but she was recused from this agenda item.

(Ms. Acly returned to the meeting at 10:13 a.m.)

3. Survey and Planning Grant, Town of Avon, Nomination for Archaeological Preserve Designation, Brian D. Jones Paleoindian site, Avon

(Ms. Sportman recused herself at 10:13 a.m.)

On a motion by Dr. Woodward, Second by Dr. Faber, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend the award of 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-10, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-1, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

(Ms. S. Nelson joined the meeting at 10:15 a.m.)

Applicant: Town of Avon
Amount: \$10,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Town of Avon is requesting funding in the amount of \$10,000 to prepare a nomination for Archaeological Preserve designation for the Brian D. Jones Paleoindian Site. Staff recommended this application for funding.

The Department of Transportation was in the middle of a project and unearthed what has been determined to be the oldest contact site in New England which needs to be preserved and protected. This archeological site has been named after former State Archeologist and Council member Mr. Brian D. Jones. Archaeological Preserve status will provide the site with statutory protections.

Dr. Woodward mentioned that there is so much emphasis on inclusion of tribal representatives and he wanted to make sure that a lack of inclusion did not lead to any problems down the road.

Ms. Dunne replied that this is not her expertise and that she would defer to Ms. Labadia, SHPO staff archeologist, regarding these matters.

Ms. Labadia clarified that because the project that identified the site went through such a through federal review process, the tribes have been engaged in consultation pertaining to the site. There is over five years of carefully recorded and documented consultation that was done for Section 106.

Ms. C. Nelson asked if there was a difference between pursuing a State Register of Historic Places Nomination and a State Archeological Preserve designation and are there two different processes. Ms. Labadia clarified that she has been treating this as a two-step process. Ideally, a State Register nomination is prepared and then the Archeological Preserve designation is put in place. The State Register nomination serves as technical document that captures much of the critically important information about the site that can then be used to inform the Preserve designation. Some of the older Preserves have very limited information associated with them. Ms. Labadia instituted this process to avoid similar situations.

Ms. C. Nelson also asked if the boundary is defined at the Town's discretion. Ms. Labadia replied that even though the town owns most of the land, some of the site does exist on adjacent private property. The Town may decide at some point to do seek additional funding to do additional testing to confirm this, but they would need to work with the private property owners. Ms. Nelson indicated that there is language stating that the Town would be able to define the boundary within their own land. Ms. Labadia added that GPR survey can likely determine the extent of the landform associated with the site. They could also do geoprobe cores. As the land is active recreational space including soccer fields, the discretion was more about timing.

Chairman Elmore asked if Part 1 is completed and Part 2 is not completed, will that leave the project hanging? Ms. Labadia replied no, it will not leave the project hanging. Part 1 is the State Register nomination and Part 2 is the Archeological Preserve designation. The town is more interested in the Archeological Preserve nomination. The Town could skip the nomination if they ultimately chose to.

Chairman Elmore also asked will landscape be a component? Ms. Labadia replied yes, it must be.

Ms. Maher asked if there were different protections. Ms. Labadia replied yes, there are criminal penalties including jail time and substantial fines for harming a preserve.

Dr. Glaser asked, in terms of content on what goes into each nomination, is there a difference in what information is added? Ms. Labadia replied, no there is not a really a content difference. She has been using the state nomination form as the structure of a technical document.

(Ms. Sportman rejoined the meeting at 10:27 a.m.)

4. Survey and Planning Grant, Windham Preservation, Inc., Feasibility Study for Windham Inn, Windham

(Ms. Acly recused herself at 10: 27 a.m.)

On a motion by Ms. S. Nelson, Second by Ms. Maher, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend the award of 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-9, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-1, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Applicant: Windham Preservation, Inc.
Amount: \$20,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. Windham Preservation, Inc. requested funding in the amount of \$20,000 to develop a feasibility study for the reuse of the Windham Inn, located at 4 Scotland Road in Windham. Staff recommended the application for funding. Windham Preservation, Inc. is a relatively new but energetic group, and they are very excited to restore this vacant house. A structural assessment was originally conducted to support the demolition of the property. Fortunately, the demolition did not take pace. The applicant does have funding for a restoration and a feasibility study is a good place to begin this project as it is always good to have a use in mind. Ms. Gwen George-Bruno is on the call for any questions or concerns.

Ms. Kathy Maher stated that it is wonderful that there is such community love and passion for this place and asked if Ms. George-Bruno had an idea how the bid documents would be crafted and what the expectations of the deliverables are? There are many directions a feasibility study can go and input from Windham Preservation and the community will be critical. Does the organization have consultants in mind that will meet their needs?

Ms. George-Bruno replied that she is currently working on the RFI. Both the mayor and their State Rep are both members of the organization.

They are both fully on board with restoring the inn. There a lot of ideas and competing voices on what to do with this building.

The building is a gem to the community, and everyone wants it to be restored. It was a multi-family building for a long period of time. The building was condemned due to a bulging exterior wall.

To make the most of all the work and funds that have gone into this, they want the study to give them the best option for a sustainable future for the building. Ms. Maher added that it sounds like they need a charrette to explore all the options. Ms. Maher asked if Windham Preservation is a non-profit, would the building really go back on the tax rolls? Ms. George -Bruno replied that it may. The organization obtained non-profit status for several reasons. The applicant received the building as a donation from the previous owner and they were able to take a tax write off. The building does need a lot of work. They are currently separating the work that needs to be done immediately regardless of the use, the roof and bulging wall for example.

They were asked to get quotes on work to be done as part of the 2022 Small City Block grant, specifically for the building wall and the roof. They would prefer to get a full plan for the restoration instead of piece meal projects. They have a list of bidders they have invited to participate in a formal RFP process. This restoration will take place over several years. Ms. George-Bruno believes the feasibility study will chart a path that will be economically best for the property.

Ms. Sara Nelson added that she, as a consultant, agreed with Ms. Maher on defining expectations for the project because it will help consultants respond and better understand the goals. A feasibility study is such a broad term. Perhaps pro-forma would be something to look at. It is important to be very specific about the scope of work.

Ms. George-Bruno commented that this has certainly been a learning experience. They are targeting the most economically feasible options, those that would have the best chance for sustainable success.

Ms. Christine Nelson asked if Ms. Dunne will have a say in the RFP. Ms. Dunne replied yes, she will assist in the process for finding the best consultant for the project. Ms. C. Nelson also asked if Preservation Connecticut can give any technical advice on this project. Ms. Dunne replied yes, the Circuit Rider program is there for that purpose, and they are already on board.

Ms. George-Bruno mentioned she had just sent an email thanking the Circuit Riders for their assistance and was glad to know she is on the right path.

Chairman Elmore recommended that the applicant complete a feasibility study first then get the budget numbers, so they are project and result specific, due to the current high cost of materials.

(Ms. Acly returned to the meeting at 10:45 a.m.)

5. Partners In Preservation Grant, Connecticut Landmarks, Digital Tour Experience for Five of CTL’s Ten Sites, Statewide

(Y-10, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-1, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

On a motion by Ms. Maher, Second Ms. S. Nelson, the Historic Preservation Council voted to recommend the award of a Partners In Preservation 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: Connecticut Landmarks
Amount: \$18,701.00

Ms. Dunne presented this application. Connecticut Landmarks requested funding in the amount of \$18,701 to develop a digital tour experience for five of the organization’s ten sites. Staff recommended this application for funding. SHPO has used similar technology at Old New Gate Prison. Mr. Aaron Marcavitch from Connecticut Landmarks was on the call for any question or concerns.

Ms. Maher commented she was familiar with Matterport virtual tools and enjoys it, but there are many other digital platforms that are more robust. Getting into a virtual tour experience where you can integrate content from each institution, Matterport really does not allow much. Is Landmarks locked into this firm or are they open to looking into others that might work better? Flipgrid comes to mind.

Mr. Marcavitch commented that he is new to the staff and thanked the Council for having him on the call. He is used to Flipgrid working from home with his son. He is open into looking into other platforms and open to suggestions.

Ms. Maher added ownership of the IP is very important.

Dr. Faber asked although it is not a predevelopment plan, why there was no long-term preservation plan required for this project?

Anything we fund with public funds should have a long-term plan in place. Ms. Dunne mention it is a Partners and Preservation plan and it is important to have a long-term preservation plan for the length of the on-going project.

Dr. Woodward welcomed Mr. Marcavitch and enjoyed walking through the links he provided. He shared Ms. Maher's enthusiasm for the possibilities.

The walking tour stimulates the appetite, but more content could certainly be provided.

Dr. Woodward also asked Mr. Marcavitch how the five properties were chosen. The goal was to get the non-active properties more active to drum up visitation. A gentleman from Nebraska said do not look at them as sites but as content development centers bring out the stories.

Ms. Sara Nelson added she also enjoyed looking at the links Mr. Marcavitch provided. Ms. Nelson also asked if the budget is large enough because it looks to be about \$3,600 per property. Mr. Marcavitch replied that a digital laser scan is different from high end photography scan, which this is. We have had conversations with people in this field and made cost comparisons.

Ms. Maher added that a digital specialist and a digital educator on staff needs to be factored in, this is just the product.

Ms. Acly added this is a wonderful way to share resources. When integrating the drone footage in with the Matterport interior scan, how does Mr. Marcavitch envision that happening. This will be done in 2 phases. The Matterport will do the interior, the 360 footage is the exterior. That is part 1. The drone footage is separate for marketing aspects and is part 2. Not intended to be intense, it is just basic flyovers.

Chairman Elmore added that he was intrigued with Ms. Maher said about the Flipgrid. Is the Council being asked to fund a means to an end or do you foresee this as just a start to entering the digital world for the organization as this technology is changing so fast. Mr. Marcavitch replied this should not be the start for the digital world, but for them it is. They have been working our revamping websites and getting the social media current. They hope it does not take five years to get more intensive digital work done and this is why they are having conversations with other such as the Mark Twain House because people were excited about what they saw there, and Connecticut Landmarks wanted some pointers. An example made was the Phelps house with the details right down to the wallpaper can be captured. Chairman Elmore added when Mr. Marcavitch get to the Phelps House, please do not exclude the barn. Mr. Marcavitch added this is why they included outbuildings.

VI. State Register of Historic Places Nominations

A. Unfinished Action Items

B. New Action Items

1. State Register Nomination, First Congregational Church of Middletown, 190 Court Street, Middletown

On a motion by Ms. C. Nelson, Second by Ms. Maher, the Historic Preservation Council voted to list the First Congregational Church of Middletown, located at 190 Court Street, Middletown, on the State Register of Historic Places.

(Y-10, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-1, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Ms. Wisniewski presented this application. This nomination was the result of an earlier Survey and Planning Grant. Ms. Wisniewski gave a brief description of the property. The church is being listed under Criterion 2, at the local level, as a well-preserved example of gothic revival ecclesiastical architecture and the building retains much of its integrity. Staff recommended the application for approval and the congregation is eager to see the church listed. Mr. Jim Miller and Dr. Kristen Keegan, author of the nomination, were on the call for any questions or concerns.

Ms. Maher was fascinated that the original specs exist in the archive and that they were able to document a time capsule in the wall. She asked Ms. Wisniewski if there were historic photos of the North elevation. Dr. Keegan did not recall seeing any in what the church had. Ms. Maher also asked about the fire in 1968. Dr. Keegan replied that she believes it started as an electric fire in the ceiling.

Mr. Miller commented that in 1968, the church renovated the sanctuary and installed a new pipe organ. The fire was associated with those renovations. The south facing stained glass windows were destroyed and replaced with more modern imagery. Dr. Keegan looked up an article about the fire and read a portion of it. The fire caused \$75,000 in damages. Ms. Wisniewski thanked both Mr. Miller and Dr. Keegan for a wonderful job on this application.

Dr. Glaser asked what IQT stood for, which is mentioned in the nomination. Dr. Keegan replied that she believes it is a building systems firm in Florida.

Ms. C. Nelson commented that she learned a lot for this nomination and would never walk into a church and look at it the same again.

VII. Local Historic District/Property Study Report/s

VIII. Archaeological Preserves

IX. Threatened Properties - CEPA Updates – Todd Levine

a. Stamford

Mr. Levine commented they are still in negotiations with the Attorney General's office. He expects a conclusion as early as this week. The EPA has ruled that the remediation is an undertaking for the purposes of Section 106 and they will be meeting this afternoon for the permitting required for the cleanup. Chairman Elmore asked what that meant. Mr. Levine replied that the SHPO conducts environmental reviews under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. When every there is permitting, the SHPO reviews it for compliance to make sure it meets the Secretary of the Interior's standards. If not, SHPO will try to resolve the adverse effect through several measures. EPA was asked months ago if it would trigger the Section 106 review and it was unclear at that time. As of right now, it looks like the first five bays of the Blickensderfer building will be demolished as part of the cleanup and then the site will be retested to see if additional work is needed. In turn for the loss, they will be putting in writing that the building will be put back in service within 24 months.

b. Norwalk

This case was referred to the Attorney General's office last month. The owner withdrew the demolition permit application and most of the house will be saved.

c. Clinton

This case was submitted a few months ago to the Council. The demo application was withdrawn, and the owner agreed not to demolish the building.

Ms. Sara Nelson asked if both buildings were saved? Mr. Levine replied yes. The 19th century corncrib, which is not original to that site, will be moved to another historic site and rehabbed.

Chairman Elmore asked if they will now reevaluate the approach for entering the site in order to save and renovate the house? Mr. Levine replied yes.

They are going to examine the current market and determine if they are going to move forward with the project. If they do move forward, they are going to determine if they are going to rehab the building and incorporate it into their development or close it up for future use or sell of the parcel. This illustrates the strength and weakness of CEPA.

It does not require that they rehab the building, only that they do not destroy the building. They do plan on keeping the building.

X. Preservation Restrictions

XI. Report on State Historic Preservation Office – Jonathan Kinney

Mr. Kinney began by reminding the members of Council that the Historic Restoration Fund (HRF) Grant Program has shifted from a rolling application schedule to a semi-annual application. For the newer members of Council, the HRF grants are SHPO's capital construction grants, which are capped at \$100,000. The July HPC meeting will focus on all the HRF applications that were received by the May deadline.

During the month of May, the Historic Rehab Tax Credit program issued two vouchers for buildings in New Britain: The Porter Block building on Main Street (TC voucher = \$2,191,957.50) and the Hatch Building on Washington Street (TC voucher = \$629,457.00).

Mr. Kinney also asked that if anyone had any upcoming events, they would like highlighted in the SHPO's June newsletter, they can contact Ms. Julie Carmelich.

Mr. Kinney sent one additional name of a potential appointee to the HPC to the Governor's office last week. Mr. Kinney mentioned that they still need two additional candidates and asked Council members to let him know if they had any recommendations.

SHPO is also working with Mr. Jack Dougherty at Trinity College to develop an interactive map that will be hosted on the SHPO website, illustrating the historic preservation grants awarded in the past fiscal years, many by the Council. SHPO just gave the green light to begin the project last week and it should be completed this summer. Users will be able to sort by grant program, location, fiscal year, etc. Several of SHPO staff will also be trained in how to add additional data to the map as additional awards are made or to go back further and add in legacy data. Clicking on a specific project will bring up additional information about the property, the scope of work, grant type, award amount, dollars leveraged. It will be a wonderful, easy to use tool for advocacy and hopefully to generate additional interest in our programs.

XII. Report on Museum Properties – Liz Shapiro

Museums

The museums have a new Point of Sales System, which is operational now at Henry Whitfield, Eric Sloane and Old New-Gate Prison. This was a real effort on the part of DECD IT staff, and like most things, came down to a race against time – would the POS system be operational in time for the museums to open, and thanks to Tom Marciniak and Sidney Young, mission accomplished.

The museums were able to hire five seasonal staff members. Returning this year, the museum staff welcomed back Mr. Brandon Lisi (stationed at the Eric Sloane Museum) and Ms. Abigail Demke and Mr. Robert Ravens-Seger (stationed at Old New Gate). The museum staff also welcomed new staff members Mr. Chris Pentore and Elena Peters, as well as Mr. Cole Peterson.

Ms. Shapiro also liked to report with regret that Mr. Mike McBride, who many of you will know as the long-time curator at the Henry Whitfield State Museum, will retire as of August 1, 2021. We are working on a position replacement authorization now.

What is happening at the Museums –

Work continues at the Prudence Crandall Museum. The museum staff is thrilled to have David George and his team from Heritage Consultants onsite to do the necessary archaeology work prior to having the new ramp installed. Heritage Consultants will not only be processing the items found during this dig but will be processing the items that Dr. Sarah Sportman and her team found during their work on-site. The processing of these artifacts will add to a more complete historic picture of the site, and the museum staff is indebted to the work that Dr. Sportman did for them earlier in the season. In the meantime, museum staff is working with DAS to deal with issues regarding the paint contractor but hope these are resolved shortly. A substantial completion date is expected in August.

Both the Eric Sloane Museum and Old New-Gate Prison & Copper Mine have been open to visitors for the last month. This is particularly exciting for staff at the Sloane Museum, since that museum has been closed for nearly three years (the first two years due to delays to the construction project, the last to COVID.) Eric Sloane's studio space has a guided tour portion, where visitors learn more about Eric Sloane as a person. Visitation is still limited, but visitors have been delighted with the experience. The museum will be hosting the annual July 4 Bell Ringing at the site this year. The new restrooms have also been getting rave reviews!

While visitation at Old New-Gate is also still limited, attendance is nearly up to 2019 levels. The next exciting event will take place on the weekend of the 11/12, and that is the debut of the of Hartford Ballet’s filmed performance of Snow White, portions of which were filmed at the museum, specifically, the Evil Queen’s Lair. <https://www.dancebtc.org/snow-white> Other sections of the performance were filmed at locations throughout the state. We expect about 100 people each evening over the course of the two-day film debut.

The Henry Whitfield Museum will open to the public this weekend. Their first big event will be a live music performance that will take place on Sunday June 20, the “Eve” of Make Music Day, which falls on Monday June 21. In honor of Father’s Day, the musicians will be Craig Edwards and Geoff Kaufman from the Mystic Seaport Sea Shanty staff, who will perform a variety of sea shanties and other music.

Currently, the museum staff is keeping mask restrictions indoors at all the museums. Visitor limitations will be lifted in June. The museum staff will reevaluate indoor mask restrictions mid-month for a possible change in July.

XIII. Old Business

XIV. New Business

a. Discussion of Grant Funding Caps

Ms. Dunne wished to revisit this conversation from a prior Council meeting. The concern is that the grant amounts that are being awarded may not be enough to cover the types of products that we are assisting our applicants with.

This is especially important due to the substantial rise in the cost of building materials and construction costs. Specifically, Ms. Dunne wished to get input from the Council on the caps for Survey and Planning and HRF grants. If the cap is raised that could mean fewer grants to be awarded, however it may increase the quality of the deliverables received.

Chairman Elmore added it is a catch 22 because the pot of money is not growing, this is a discussion about raising the cap on individual projects.

Ms. Fink added that one of her applicants had to reimagine their scope of work, due higher costs after they saw a single sheet of plywood was \$90.

Ms. Maher commented that Chairwoman S. Nelson recently conducted a presentation on the high cost of building materials. There is no corresponding increase in revenue for these organizations that are applying so there is going to be a huge gap. With these increased project costs, not being able to make a match may prevent some applications from being submitted. Years ago, applicants had to take a class before they could apply for an HRF grant.

Ms. S. Nelson asked Ms. Dunne if DECD has addressed the issue of cost escalation in any of their programs. Ms. Dunne replied that they may have, but she would have to check with our partners in the department.

Ms. Acly asked, understanding that the rise in construction costs is happening now and there is a sense of urgency surrounding it, whether it made sense to do some data gathering to assess the effectiveness of the current funding levels. That could be used to restructure the HRF program if needed and perhaps add a middle tier of funding for smaller projects. There is such a variety of grant projects that Ms. Acly felt additional data would be useful. Ms. Maher added that a middle tier of funding would be helpful for the smaller organizations that simply need a new roof on their building.

Ms. Labadia added that perhaps creating a separate grant program altogether for the smaller projects could make sense so that the two groups are not competing against each other. Ms. Wisniewski commented that Ms. Labadia's comment was a good idea and that a mandatory video on the whole grant process would also assist grantees.

Ms. Dunne stated that the match requirement being reinstated starting this month will double the amount of funding available for S&P grant projects.

Ms. Burgess asked about the time frame in which the cap increases may be applied since HRF applications have already been received. Ms. Fink replied that the Survey and Planning grants are awarded monthly so they could be done at any time. HRF would have to wait until November. Mary Dunne added that whatever is decided, it would not have to be across the board for all grant programs.

Ms. Acly asked how much education SHPO staff currently gives applicants during the grant process. Ms. Fink responded that currently a Preservation Connecticut Circuit Rider typically visits with the applicant, then SHPO has a call with the applicant to walk through the project to determine whether they are starting with a planning grant or can apply for HRF. Many of the applicants are new to the world of grants and procurement.

Chairman Elmore stated that this has been an ongoing conversation since he joined the Council several years back. He also stated that it will be important going into the July meeting to ensure that the funding requests from each HRF applicant appear to be adequate for the work proposed. Chairman Elmore asked Ms. Fink how the \$100,000 cap will impact the current round of HRF applications. Ms. Fink replied that only two of the current applicants requested the full \$100,000. Most of the applicants were smaller organizations with smaller funding requests this round.

Ms. Sara Nelson stated that when talking to applicants about escalating costs, it will be important not to think about the costs at the time of award, but to look forward 4-6 months when they are gearing up to start the work. currently required Escalating the budget 4 to 6 months ahead due to time it takes to get up to speed.

Ms. Fink inquired as to whether or not HPC has ever granted additional funds to a project if the original award amount was not sufficient. Ms. Dunne replied once before that she is aware of.

Dr. Woodward left the meeting at 11:27 a.m.

Ms. Maher left the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu left the meeting at 12noon.

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

Ms. Montanaro announced that Preservation Connecticut has signed a contract with the consultant, the Red Bridge Group, for the Olmsted Survey Project. An internal kick off meeting is scheduled for this week.

Preservation Connecticut’s virtual program Talking About Preservation series will focus on the project and announce the project team next week, 6/9, at noon. Ms. Scofield added that this is a joint program between SHPO and Preservation Connecticut. Red Bridge Group is headed by Ms. Elisha Luba, former New England Field Director for the National Trust. The team will also include folks from Heritage Tourism, and Lucy Lawless of the NAOP, a former Park Service employee who helped develop the Cultural Landscape Program. There will be more information coming soon through social media.

XVI. Public Forum – Ms. Mary Falvey

Ms. Falvey stated that she is hopeful this will be the first time since Governor Rell’s administration that the Community Investment Act will not be touched as part of the State budget negotiations.

Ms. Falvey also spoke about two preservation-related bills that are working their way through the legislature. House Bill 6606, which deals with establishing a task force to study impediments to the renovation of mixed-use buildings in the State was passed by the House on May 18, 2021 and is ready for action on the senate calendar.

House Bill 6547 requires the Commissioner of the Department of Economic Development to convene a working group to develop a plan to support and facilitate historic preservation efforts by municipalities, historical societies, and other nonprofit entities passed the house yesterday, June 1, 2021 and is not on the senate calendar yet.

On the national scene, Mr. Bill Krauss is working with Mr. Bill Crosskey and Ms. Nina Laruso to build support for the federal HTC GO legislation, which will make positive changes to the federal rehabilitation tax credit program. Mr. Kraus is hoping to get Senator Larson to be a cosponsor of that bill.

XVII. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Faber, Second Ms. S. Nelson the Council adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Ms. Deborah D. Gaston

*Next regularly scheduled Council meeting:
Wednesday July 7, 2021 – Meeting format to be determined*