

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL MEETING
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Wednesday, March 5, 2025 @ 9:30 am**

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Meeting will be held virtually on Microsoft Teams (see code for meeting in your email or contact Jonathan. Kinney@ct.gov for the code)

MINUTES

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

Absent: Ms. Deanna Rhodes

Staff: Mr. Cory Atkinson, Kevin Berger, Ms. Julie Carmelich, Ms. Mary Dunne, Ms. Erin Fink, Ms. Deborah Gaston, Ms. Catherine Labadia, Mr. Todd Levine, Ms. Elizabeth Shapiro, and Ms. Marena Wisniewski

Guests: Mr. Jose Alvarez, Mr. Bob Garlick, Mr. Patrick McKenna, Ms. Jane Montanaro Ms. Bea White, and Mr. Stephen White

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

II. Review of Public Comment Procedures

Chairman Butkus read aloud the Review of Public Comment Procedures.

III. Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest

Chairman Butkus read aloud the Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest and asked if there were any conflicts with staff members or Council. There were two conflicts:

Ms. Acly stated that she planned to recuse from agenda item V.B.1. Northeast Partners, Inc. and V.B.3. Hicks-Stearn Family Museum.

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes and Transcripts

A. Minutes – February 5, 2025 Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Carnell, second by Dr. Horowitz, the Council voted to approve the February 5, 2025 meeting minutes.

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

V. State Historic Preservation Grants – Action Items

A. Unfinished Action Items

B. New Action Items

1. Survey and Planning Grant, Northeast Neighborhood Partners, Inc., State Register nominations for 34 Pliny, 243 Capen and 33 Bethel, Hartford

On a motion by Ms. Nelson, 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-1, Recused-1) (Roll call vote) (Ms. Acly recused)

Applicant: Northeast Neighborhood Partners, Inc.
Amount: \$15,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. Northeast Neighborhood Partners, Inc. requested funding in the amount of \$15,000 to complete a State Register of Historic Places listing for three properties in Hartford. The State Register listing is important for nonprofits, municipalities, and housing development corporations so that they can apply for and obtain incentives for historic rehabilitation projects. Mr. Patrick McKenna was on the call for any questions or concerns.

Chairman Butkus asked if all three properties included on the map and in the photos were proposed for listing. Ms. Dunne replied yes, all three structures were included. Chairman Butkus also asked, since the properties are adjacent, but not contiguous to other historic districts, are they eligible to be added to those or can they not be added to the existing National Register districts because this is only a State Register nomination? Ms. Dunne added that some of these are one property away from the district and are very close, so they could very well have been included in the original district nomination, and we're taken out due to owner objection.

These three properties, it was determined by staff don't rise individually to the level of National Register eligibility, so the State Register is more practical and more logical than trying to expand the entire district.

Ms. Wisniewski added, last July, we saw a similar situation for a property that was proposed to be rehabbed by an affordable housing organization. And it was a property that was not within a National Register district, but directly adjacent. Typically, in these cases, because otherwise a National Register nomination would have to be opened, the entirety of it, we have done State Register nominations that borrow heavily from the significance of the district while making sure that the building itself is documented, so we do have an example of that last July, with the organization NINA.

Ms. Carnell asked if these were three individual nominations or a mini district of noncontiguous properties? Ms. Dunne replied there will be three separate nominations. They are the same type, and we expect they will piggyback off each other, but they are not going to be a district. There will be three individually listed State Register nominations.

Ms. Carnell asked which criteria were being used, because while the architecture may be similar, the houses may have been owned by different families and there may be a different social history aspect, but that won't be an issue if it's just for architecture.

Ms. Dunne replied that the properties are primarily being recognized as perfect sixes. The architectural description and significance will probably be prioritized, but with many different residents over the years, they'll each have a different social history or a different history so that will need to be explored.

Dr. Glaser added, the properties are basically the product of labor history. There's the affordable housing piece that seems to go hand in hand. If not, the historical context of labor really needs to contextualize those properties.

Ms. Dunne replied, these properties might serve as a model for future State Register nominations, and they might also serve as a future context statement for perfect sixes like a Multiple Property Documentation Form. She believes it will be beneficial beyond just these three state register nominations and obviously that would include the social history and labor history.

Chairman Butkus suggested that Ms. Dunne pass along the following comment to their partners at Hartford Preservation Alliance. Since these houses or apartment buildings are falling into a doughnut hole between other districts in the area, it might be nice, in the long term, to complete the neighborhoods and to broaden out the eligibility for all building falling in those missing places.

2. Survey and Planning Grant, Emanuel Lutheran Church, Condition Assessment, Hartford

On a motion by Ms. Acly, second by Ms. Nelson, 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-9, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-1, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Applicant: Emanuel Lutheran Church

Amount: \$20,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. Emanuel Lutheran Church requested funding in the amount of \$20,000 to complete a condition assessment of the church building. The church has done some capital work in the past. They would like to do a full assessment of what repairs are needed and any existing issues to develop a long-range plan for fundraising as well. Mr. Bob Garlick was on the call for any questions or concerns.

Ms. Acly asked if there was a consultant on board already that could evaluate any safety or stability concerns. Ms. Dunne replied this was the reason for the application, to make sure an engineer was on board to oversee the project.

Chairman Butkus asked if this grant was a 50/50 match? Ms. Dunne responded yes, based on the information presented.

3. Survey and Planning Grant, Hicks-Stearns Family Museum, plans and specifications for Hicks-Stearns House, Tolland

On a motion by Dr. Horowitz, second by Dr. Sportman, 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-1, Recused-1) (Roll call vote) (Ms. Acly recused)

Applicant: Hicks-Stearns Family Museum

Amount: \$20,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Hicks-Stearns Family Museum requested funding in the amount of \$20,000 to develop plans and specifications. The museum just went through the condition assessment process, and this grant application is for plans and specs for some of the priority needs identified in the assessment.

The applicant does plan to move forward with an HRF application, and they are hoping to submit a letter of intent in March if the grant is awarded. Ms. B. White Ramirez is on the call from the Hicks-Stearns Museum to answer any questions or concerns.

Chairman Butkus asked for clarification on the total project amount and the grant amount. Ms. Dunne stated that Council previously agreed that we would offer non-matching grants for organizations that had been through the bidding process for a condition assessment. The architect has already been competitively selected, and the applicant plans on moving on to the Historic Restoration Fund program. At one time, SHPO had more funding available, but now, there is a cap of \$20,000. \$20,000 will be funded, but the applicant must make up the rest of it. If this had been a \$20,000 project, they would have received the entire amount without having to come up with a match.

Mr. Elmore asked Ms. Dunne to speak about the period of the restoration of the building and how they came up with that decision. Ms. Ramirez from the museum replied that they prioritized issues found on all three levels. The volunteer Board of Trustees met with the architect and chose several items that seemed to be the most immediate. These include repointing the interior and exterior foundation because there are gaping holes and there's water problems that are causing other issues in the house. As part of the condition assessment, there was a structural engineer that came on site, and he recommended several issues again in the basement that really should be addressed to maintain the structural integrity of the house. The assessment also recommended painting the entire exterior, as there is biological growth that is damaging the exterior. So those are the issues that were chosen by the board, and APS submitted a quote for the \$27,500. The board of Trustees has voted to cover the \$7500 overage to get this report, so we can, as Ms. Dunne said, go on to the HRF grant to get some of this work done.

The property is interpreted as a transitional house with a beautiful fireplace from the 1750s and a cast iron wood stove from the Victorian period.

Ms. Burgess wanted to verify that the work being done is listed in section 1.11.3. Is that right about the stone foundation, terrace and garden walls, the repointing of the interior and exterior foundation? The foundation is a great place to start. There is a nice long list of projects, so it makes sense that they are starting there and with the building envelope specifically. This will act as your long-range preservation plan moving forward. Is that correct?

Ms. Ramirez replied, it will be an ongoing road map to guide the trustees. They have 6 volunteer board of trustees. She is a part-time employee and professional assistance and guidance is needed.

4. Survey and Planning Grant, Town of Hamden, plans and specs for restoration of Brooksvale Barn, Hamden

On a motion by Dr. Glaser, 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-9, N-0, Abstaining-1, Absent-1, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Applicant: Town of Hamden

Amount: \$16,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Town of Hamden requested funding in the amount of \$16,000 to develop plans and specifications for the restoration of the Brooksvale Barn. There is an HRF application in the works that will be based on these plans and specs. Mr. Jose Alvarez and Mr. Stephen White were on the call for any questions or concerns.

Chairman Butkus asked if this would be the first round of review for the HRF grants that were issued in January eligibility? Ms. Dunne replied that letters of intent are anticipated for March 2025 to apply for the next round of grants in October 2025.

Dr. Glaser added that she is excited to see this and as a Hampden resident, Brookvale Park was a godsend when she had little children in terms of free and accessible entertainment. She is happy to see this and supports restoration of this property.

Ms. Nelson had a question on the use of space and wanted clarity on the fee.

Chairman Butkus replied the total fee was \$31,550. Ms. Nelson was wondering if there was a predesign investigation due to the wording in the application. Ms. Dunne will seek clarification from Mr. Alvarez and Mr. White.

Mr. Elmore added, if the programming or some programming is not taken into consideration now, some of the engineering and design will have to be redone to accommodate a larger program or a more intensive program.

Ms. Burgess added there was a paragraph included in the application and for predevelopment, she would expect a little bit more. So, if they come back to us for HRF at some point they will need something more than that.

Ms. Acly added, looking at the 2014 drawings, they mostly have to do with the foundation stabilization and some wind bracing. They're not necessarily doing anything on the structural side with reinforcing the floor structure, yet at this point.

That could potentially be standalone if there was an upgrade in the future. To Ms. Nelson's point about trying to use the space 2 months a year and part of the scope is siding, that that certainly ties in. But the floor framing is more of a repair and relatively independent of programming.

Dr. Glaser added, in the bigger space there are larger programs like the birds of prey. The other spaces have animals in them and people just walk through. The

one uphill there is kind of their programming space. I guess it would be helpful to see what the plans are, but they've always actually had animals in them.

Dr. Horowitz brought things back to where Dr. Glaser started and said that both as a child and then as a parent, this was a very important space to him and he's happy they are attending to it because it really is a great community resource.

VI. State Register of Historic Places Nominations

- A. Unfinished Action Items**
- B. New Action Items**

VII. Local Historic District/Property Study Report/s

- A. Unfinished Action Items**
- B. New Action Items**

VIII. Archaeological Preserves

IX. Threatened Properties - CEPA Updates - Todd Levine

X. Preservation Restrictions

XI. Report on State Historic Preservation Office – Jonathan Kinney

Ms. Labadia filled in for Mr. Kinney who was in Washington, D.C. attending Advocacy Week. At that moment he was standing outside Senator Chris Murphy's office waiting for a meeting. This was organized by Preservation Action and the National Council of State Historic Preservations Officers and is mostly tied to our federal responsibilities.

There was an in-person and virtual forum on Monday, which included presentations by lobbyists, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Park Service, and the National Historic Preservation Trust, and they all gave their perspectives on what the important topics for advocacy week are and where we may be headed.

The big takeaway is that the administration does not seem to have an appetite for repealing major acts or laws. The National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, we think that they are safe and will remain intact as they are written into law by Congress. However, what may be targeted is the implementation of any acts, we saw this the last time with this administration in terms of setting page counts and time limits on how the National Environmental Policy Act would be handled. We think that there's going to be similar questions with regard to how the National Historic Preservation Act is implemented. We believe that the target for the Act will probably be within those implementing regulations of Section 106.

The Advisory Council, which is kind of the parent agency for Section 106 of the federal government, has received several letters of inquiry from the White House. Those letters of inquiry have mostly related to whether the regulations are a burden to the American public. The ACHP responded to that and said no, they are not a burden and provided evidence to support their statements. They also made the clarification that they are not technically a

regulatory agency. They are considered a federal agency of the US government. Whether that will hinder or help them, is to be seen. But they do anticipate questions to come regarding timelines within the review process of section 106.

The other thing that we've heard is that right now, Historic Preservation is not a target. The lobbyist that gave that presentation said it is rarely that he gives the advice to continue to stay under the radar, but that was sort of the advice he gave and that if we want to talk about Historic Preservation, what really should be the talking points are the unanticipated consequences of any changes. And he seemed to think that specifically for this administration, the things that spoke to them are information related to how the unintended consequences would result in more job cuts, contractors being dismissed or failed economic opportunities.

We are already working under one executive order, which is an emergency declaration for energy within the Section 106 process. There is a process for dealing with emergency declarations in Section 106. In her 30 years of experience, those have always been for natural disasters. This one appears to be one based on policy; she believes a lot of agencies are struggling with how you implement an energy emergency process in which all energy projects need to move forward within a seven-day review timeline. We were given that guidance for anything that is electrical transmission corridors, gas pipelines, oil pipelines, liquid natural gas facilities, solar, wind, hydroelectric. We have now been told that it doesn't include green energy, so it really is focused on fossil fuels. It is not the regular Section 106 process with opportunities for the public to be involved, and those comments do not have to be taken with the same amount of consideration that we would if we were going through the normal process of identify, evaluate, resolve.

I do not want to create panic because in Connecticut, we do have other mechanisms for review. And I will say there are federal agencies who are really struggling with this seven-day decree because it's not something that they're used to dealing with. We found work arounds for what constitutes our 30-day review timeframe for NEPA. And I think similar things are going to develop for this as well. In Connecticut, we do have the Siting Council, so a lot of our energy projects do have to go through there. We are given a different opportunity to comment. There's a lot of duplication of efforts, which turns out to be a good thing.

The other thing that was said, by the National Trust, is that every time we must do advocacy with a new administration, we have to start over because of differences in priorities. And they said, you know, they're starting over again, and this one is a little bit more of an extreme situation, but it's what we do and so I think you know, trying to stay true to what our fundamental values and concerns are what is key currently.

XII. Report on Museum Properties – Liz Shapiro

Ms. Shapiro reported that interviews will start for the Museum seasonal staff next week, on schedule. 50 applications were received from across.

Henry Whitfield Museum

There is an issue with the heating, which has resulted in turning off the heat to the Whitfield House, which necessitated the removal of any collection items that would be at risk in fluctuating temperatures and the humidity fluctuations they produce.

Staff have spoken to several conservators and people who are experts in historic museum properties, and we have determined that shutting the heat will not affect the house to a significant extent.

Ms. Shapiro is working with David Barkin, our CT State Architect, to investigate a program that is administered by DEEP and called GreenerGov, which has funding set aside (from bond funds) for environmentally friendly improvements in government buildings. He believes that we could get funds for the design and installation of geothermal heat in both the Whitfield house and the Visitors Center (currently there is steam heat, and the boiler is in the basement of the Visitor's Center and piped to the Whitfield House.) Staff has a meeting about that application next week. This project has been approved by our staff archaeologists, and they will be very involved.

Sloane Museum

The museum has been approached by a donor who is interested in making a gift of two Sloane paintings to the museum. They are great attempts by Sloane to reach new markets in the post WWII era and are indicative of his work once he moved to CT – so they are earlier works. “Autumn Flight” and “Connecticut Morning”.

The museum will be hosting a TradesUp event “night at the Museum” in May, where they will have people demonstrating historic trades and doing some teaching. This is designed to improve the partnership between the museum and TradesUp non-profit to advance understanding of historic trades and train a new generation.

Andrew Rowand will be the Keynote speaker at Campaign for History Trades Summit in May in Providence.

Old New Gate

Work is continuing work on both the four-story cell block project and the 250th grant for the restoration of Viet's Tavern. Our architect, Chris Williams, has a staff member who is scanning the entirety of Viets, waiting for the snow to melt away from the foundation, to get complete images. In addition, Tavern last week.

The bat count was completed by DEEP in February, results were: 3 tri-colored, 4 big browns, and 2 unknown (potentially little brown).

The Re-Entry Hall of Change unveiling for the new awardees will take place on Saturday April 26 at New-Gate in the visitor's center.

Prudence Crandall Museum

Volunteers are back working in the collections on Wednesdays, which is very exciting. This is really helping in efforts to deaccession the contents of the museum's library. The Prudence Crandall Sampler (done by Crandall when she was a child) is also being conserved.

There may be some interesting news about a potential acquisition by the museum by next month.

Chairman Butkus commented, it's typically best coupled with solar to kind of offset those costs. It sounds great for doing carbon free. But, sometimes, it ends up getting put on commercial electric rates. Since Connecticut doesn't have cheap electric rates, just be aware of that half of the equation. You can get a free system, but if it's going to cost you three times as much as you were paying previously, you know you don't need that surprise.

Ms. Shapiro agreed with Mr. Butkus. We are upgrading the electrical in both Henry Whitfield and in the visitor center because the electrical systems are old and need to be upgraded. Chairman Butkus' point was well taken and has been a point of discussion.

Dr. Glaser added, there is an Andrew Rowan article in this upcoming edition of Park Stewardship Forum, which is an online publication about the Iron Furnace demonstration. She announced that it was supposed to come out in the May issue, but it may get delayed due to issues with parks, they're having some issues with publishing some of the works of federal employees. Shout out to Andrew again.

XIII. Old Business

XIV. New Business

XV. Liaison with Public & Private Agencies – Jane Montanaro

Friday, March 14th will be at the James Merrill House in Stonington.

Ms. Montanaro reported that there will be a member event there from 3:00 to 4:00, so if you're available to come by and have a private tour of the house and enjoy a reception afterwards.

On Thursday, April 10th, Preservation Action is hosting a conference at the Augustus Curtis Cultural Center in Meriden. New Tools for Old Buildings: Historic Preservation Incentive Zoning will be looking at some zoning in Stamford, New Canaan and Norwalk that help incentivize historic preservation. CPA hopes you can join us for the morning out there and see what's going on in those communities.

Dr. Glaser mentioned her book "Public History of Trees" is hot off the UMass Press. Will have some on sale at the CLM conference in June 2025.

XVI. Public Forum

XVII. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Glaser, second Ms. Adusei, this meeting adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

***Next regularly scheduled Council meeting:
Wednesday, April 2, 2025 – Meeting Format TBD***