

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL MEETING
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Wednesday, May 7, 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, Chairman Paul Butkus, Ms. Marguerite Carnell, Mr. Thomas Elmore, Dr. Leah Glaser, Dr. Andy Horowitz, Mr. Kent McCoy, Ms. Deanna Rhodes, and Dr. Sarah Sportman

Absent: Ms. Elizabeth Burgess

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

Guests: Ms. Heather Cochrane, Ms. Priyanka Panjwani, Ms. Christine Haslett, Dr. Daryn Reyman-Lock, Ms. Sara Nelson, Ms. Annah Perch, and Mr. Matt Wingate

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 was one:

Ms. Carnell recused herself from agenda item V.B.3 - Brookside Farm Museum, East Lyme.

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes and Transcripts

A. Minutes – March 5, 2025 Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Carnell, second by Ms. Nelson, the Council voted to approve the March 5, 2025 meeting minutes with corrections.

(Y-6, N-0, Abstaining-3, Absent-2, Recused-0) (Roll call vote)

Chairman Butkus and several other members of Council and staff took the time to acknowledge Ms. Sara Nelson for her 12 years of service on the Historic Preservation Council and wished her well. He also introduced Mr. Kent McCoy as a new member of the Historic Preservation Council.

V. State Historic Preservation Grants – Action Items

A. Unfinished Action Items

B. New Action Items

1. Survey and Planning Grant, First Baptist Church of North Stonington, State Register of Historic Places Nomination for First Baptist Church, North Stonington

On a motion by Ms. Rhodes, second by Mr. Elmore, 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: First Baptist Church of North Stonington

Amount: \$7,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application to the Council. The First Baptist Church of North Stonington initially submitted an application for funding to prepare a conditions assessment only to learn that the church is not listed on the State or National Registers. They were informed that in order to receive funding they had to first list the building. They are now requesting funding in the amount of \$7,000 to prepare a State Register application. Mr. Matt Wingate from the church was on the call to answer any questions or concerns.

Ms. Carnell was concerned whether the schedule in the application (one month) would be enough time to prepare the nomination. Ms. Dunne replied probably not, depending on what the consultant's work schedule would be. They should include more time to allow for preparation and research.

Mr. Elmore had the same concerns about the budget of \$7000 and wondered if an architectural historian has been selected and has committed to the project. Also, if that person is a private consultant or is already working with another entity and therefore carrying their own insurance? Ms. Dunne replied, no consultant has been selected yet as preselecting is not allowed. The applicant gets the grant first, and then they are required to competitively bid it out. This amount was arrived at based on similar pricing for other similar structures. That's why it is reflected in the budget. It is possible that during the RFP process, bids might come in substantially higher. They have also come in lower.

Ms. Wisniewski commented that within the past few months, SHPO has been taking a hard look at our budgets and the type of funding we can offer for State Register nominations. Looking at some of the grants that were successful and the ones that have been written, it really was in a range that was somewhere between \$5000 and \$7000 for a single property. Well, obviously that would not be adequate for a National Register nomination or multiple buildings, or a historic district. That number has been successful and we're also trying to be pretty cognizant about how many projects we can fund. It may mean that a very large firm will not be bidding on these projects, but we have been successful with some independent consultants bidding on these and completing the projects.

2. Survey and Planning Grant, Ridgebury Congregational Church, Condition Assessment for Ridgebury Meeting House, Ridgebury

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

Applicant: The Ridgebury Meetinghouse, Inc.

Amount: \$9,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Ridgebury Meetinghouse, Inc. requested funding in the amount of \$9,000 to prepare a conditions assessment for the Meetinghouse building. The applicant has been dealing with a lot of issues with the property and would like to get an idea on what needs to be addressed and in what order. Ms. Heather Cochran was on the call for any questions or concerns.

Mr. Elmore asked if ADA access would be considered as part of the condition assessment. Is there going to be access from the site into the building? Ms. Dunne replied that there is no design under this project, but the architect can make recommendations based on what is available right now.

Ms. Cochran added, getting in and out of the building is not an issue. Getting around in the building is a problem because there are the pews that have an inch and a half two-inch step to get into and they are very narrow, which, if you have mobility issues, can be difficult to get in and out of.

3. Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Enhancement Grant, Town of East Lyme, Condition Assessment for Brookside Farm Museum, East Lyme

On a motion by Dr. Glaser second by Ms. Rhodes the Historic Preservation Council voted to award a Certified Local Government, Historic Preservation Enhancement Grant, funded by the Historic Preservation Fund of the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, to the below-listed applicant in the amount shown. All federal and state grant guidelines and 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. Carnell – Recused)

Applicant: Town of East Lyme

Amount: \$20,000

Ms. Dunne presented this application. The Town of East Lyme requested funding in the amount of \$20,000 to prepare a conditions assessment for the Brookside Farm Museum. As Ms. Carnell mentioned, SHPO did give them a survey and planning grant for a historic structures report, which involves new primary historic research, noninvasive physical inspection to determine the evolution of the building and maybe updating a significance evaluation. Now, the Town, which is a CLG, is coming in for a more detailed physical inspection with recommendations for treatments on critical structural issues. As Chairman Butkus mentioned, this is a non-matching grant. This is our federal CLG pass through funding. However, the town is prepared to make up any overage that might come up, during the RFP process. No representative from the Town was present on the call, Ms. Dunne answered any questions or concerns the Council had.

Ms. Acly asked if the descriptions within the application narrative are describing concerns with some of the other buildings. She just wanted to make sure the grant was meeting the expectations that they have. Ms. Dunne replied, yes, they do mention the two outbuildings. But, based on discussions with the Town about the budget, Ms. Dunne believes that's what prompted the applicant to say they will make up any difference. The Avery House will be the focus. For the RFP then if they can get pricing for the whole campus or building by building, they will do that.

Chairman Butkus added as long as it's clear in the RFP that everyone is expecting the same thing and bidding on the same scope, that's the main concern.

VI. State Register of Historic Places Nominations

A. Unfinished Action Items

B. New Action Items

1. Nomination for Howard Hall and Alice (Osborn) Bristol Residence, 561 Hillside Avenue, Naugatuck to the State Register of Historic Places.

On a motion by Ms. Carnell, second by Ms. Acly, the Historic Preservation Council voted to list the Howard Hall and Alice (Osborn) Bristol Residence, located at 561 Hillside Avenue, Naugatuck, to the State Register of Historic Places. Staff recommended the property for listing.

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

Ms. Wisniewski presented this application. The Howard Hall and Alice Osborne Bristol residence is located at 561 Hillside Ave in Naugatuck. The property is being nominated to the State Register of Historic Places under Criterion 2 at the local level, for architecture, as an intact and outstanding example of the Colonial Revival style. The house retains most of its integrity, including location, setting materials, and association of a single-family residence built for a prominent, local industrialist. Darren Raymond Locke, author of the nomination, and one owner, Christine Haslett, were on the call for any questions or concerns.

Dr. Horowitz stated that he appreciates and supports this nomination. He also appreciated all the architectural details and would like to channel his inner Leah Glazer and say that there's no social history in this nomination. He was curious who Howard Hall Bristol was. What kind of industrialist was he? How did he make his money? What's the story of the neighborhood? What was he trying to say about himself with these architectural decisions?

Ms. Wisniewski responded that the focus for the nomination was Criterion 2, so it is limited to the discussion of architecture and how that style is prevalent within the local area, including Naugatuck, which Ms. Raymon-Lock did a good job discussing. There was consideration of Howard Hall Bristol and whether or not the property could be listed for its association with him. His significance was in the area of industry if an industrial property associated with him was extant, that might be a more appropriate listing criterion. The scope was quite limited for this nomination, but some background information that addresses these social questions could be added to the document. In some other nominations that were done where the architecture was the primary area of significance, some amount of context about the owner has been added. Ms. Reymon-Lock replied she would be happy to provide the information. She kept it out due to the conversation with Ms. Wisniewski, which focused in on the architecture.

Ms. Carnell added editing comments, which were appreciated.

Ms. Acly had a question about the door, which looks like a Connecticut River Valley doorway, which is interesting in a Colonial Revival structure. She wondered if that's something worth mentioning because it's very much an earlier feature and she thought that it was interesting. Ms. Wisniewski replied, that's a great question and interesting point because we're not within the Connecticut River Valley. We are centered more on the Naugatuck River, a little farther West. As Ms. Reymon-Lock described within the nomination, a lot of the Colonial Revival that's seen in the town is really kind of based off the McKim, Mead and White designs that had become prevalent downtown. Ms. Darren Reymond Locke added she had not seen anything about that but would investigate it. Ms. Acly added she can help provide any resources on the Connecticut River Valley doors if needed.

Ms. Carnell commented there were some interesting features and agreed with Ms. Acly about the door as well as the cornice with triangular-shaped dentils. That's a feature she hasn't seen before. She does not know if it is an Asher Benjamin, or if the details were recreated here. Ms. Wisniewski mentioned Mr. Chris Wiegren at Preservation Connecticut may know the answer or provide able to provide some insight.

Mr. McCoy commented that he looked at the property on Google Earth and the neighborhood appears to be a great opportunity to create a local historic district due to the large, interesting industrialist houses on Hillside. Ms. Wisniewski agreed, it would be great to have a district designation, and this may spark the conversation.

Ms. Carnell wondered why this was a State Register and not a National Register nomination? Ms. Wisniewski replied that the applicant requested SR. Ms. Reymond-Lock mentioned there was a time-line issue. There is a leaky roof of which the homeowner is very conscious and exploring temporary measures, so the situation does not get worse. The basement windows were blown in during the microburst storm in Oxford and the basement was under several feet of water. For the sake of timing, we decided to push to the State Register first, get to the tax credit program, start saving the bits of the home that were a little bit more problematic, then revisit the idea of National Register later.

Chairman Butkus added it would have been interesting to have heard any information on landscaping. One photo showed a fountain and pathways. Ms. Reymond-Lock replied, unfortunately, they did not uncover anything about the landscape architecture whatsoever. They have a couple of aerial photos that show sort of what was there, but unfortunately just like the architect of the home, they did not find any landscape architect that was involved.

Chairman Butkus asked if someone can look into this area becoming a district? Ms. Wisniewski replied she or Ms. Reymond-Lock will get in touch with the Naugatuck Historical Society. They are currently trying to do some rehabilitation work on the Tuttle House, which is their headquarters and an outstanding building.

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

Mr. Levine reported that a New Britain church is in line for demolition. SHPO has changed our internal process for what triggers an investigation. In the past it's been hundreds of signatures on a digital or hard copy petition. We've received some pushback on utilizing petitions because people are signing them to halt the demolition of a historic building all the way from California or Portland. In consultation with the Attorney General's Office, we've shifted it to hard copy letters of support. For New Britain, we have received 7 letters thus far. SHPO usually likes to see 20 or more before we feel that the community outcry is serious enough.

Chairman Butkus asked if there was if there was a private organization that initiated their own action to get an injunction on the demolition.

Mr. Levine replied yes, there is currently a temporary injunction in front of a judge for New Britain. The hearing is scheduled for May 19, 2025. We have submitted a few questions to our own legal department on how that intersects with our process on both a liability question and on a process question. We still do our own process, if there's a demonstrated community outcry. HPC can determine to refer the matter to the OAG, and then they could decide if they're going to get involved or not.

Dr. Glaser asked whose signatures will count, church members or New Britain community members? Anybody who lives in town or has a connection to the property can write a letter. If it's a significant building and people have a tie to it (for example, if they were a church member but have subsequently moved away, they still have a connection). What we're trying to avoid is people that have no connection, that just like historic preservation, to be a factor in whether our office moves forward with an investigation.

Dr. Glaser also wanted to point out that the property is part of a historic district and its loss will leave a big hole in that part of the district. The church needs a champion to speak up for them. Part of New Britain's downtown district has already been demolished, and the rest is disappearing.

Mr. Levine agreed with Dr. Glaser. Anyone from the municipality can write a letter. We just have not seen many letters. There have been articles in the paper and usually when we have those articles, people recognize that there's an opportunity to share their concern. A couple of the articles are now a week or two old, and we really haven't gotten much support for preservation, which is unfortunate. There is a champion, the church organization and non-profit and they have filed suit. They have hired a lawyer to do CEPA which is separate

from SHPO's process. They are in the process of doing that, we'll see what happens on May 19th.

Chairman Butkus asked, for new member Kent McCoy's benefit, if there were any training sessions on CEPA saved online as a recording or something that we can use to bring him up to speed on what these things are?

Mr. Levine replied, yes, we do and welcomed Mr. McCoy to the Council. He will be sending Mr. McCoy a packet and speaking with him offline.

X. Preservation Restrictions

XI. Report on State Historic Preservation Office – Jonathan Kinney

Mr. Kinney stated that this report would be a mix of positive and negative updates. The first is that Connecticut's draft of the Statewide Historic Preservation Plan for the next 10-year period, 2025 to 2035, is completed and has been sent to the National Park Service for their review and hopeful approval. Mr. Kinney is very excited to have that down there under review and thank you to all who participated in the outreach and engagement sessions. SHPO will be sharing that draft with our partner organizations very shortly. The Plan will be revised according to any feedback received from the Park Service and it will be posted as soon as possible.

The second announcement is that Connecticut has just participated in the execution of a landmark Section 106 agreement document for transportation projects. Mr. Kinney asked Deputy SHPO Catherine Labadia to speak about this exciting development.

Ms. Labadia reported that SHPO has been working for two or three years on this programmatic agreement. We have always had one with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Association, but the reason this is a big deal is that we are now working with the Federal Rail Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. It is the first programmatic agreement in the country, to incorporate all of these federal transportation agencies with the SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. It's a big enough deal where in a couple weeks, the Deputy Secretary for USDOT is going to be coming to Connecticut to have an official signing party. Everyone has already signed it, but this is more ceremonial in nature. This is very exciting because it will become a template for the rest of the SHPOs in the country to use. Mr. Kinney expressed a special kudos to Ms. Labadia, who did a lot of the heavy lifting on that document on behalf of SHPO and he couldn't be happier with that result.

Mr. Kinney then reported on SHPO's current funding situation. SHPO receives an annual apportionment of funding from the National Park Service, specifically from the Historic Preservation Fund. We are currently in Federal Fiscal Year 2025, and we still have not received our FFY25 money yet. Typically, the notice of funding opportunity comes out late January, with applications due for that funding by April. That notice of funding has not been sent out yet, and this is affecting SHPOs across the country. As of this month, we have run out of our federal money, which supports half of the staff positions in our office. We are working with our departmental leadership to explore alternatives as sort of a stopgap measure, possibly move some money around, and to explore alternative funding

sources to plug the gap until that Notice of Funding Opportunity appears. We are being told by our federal partners and the National Park Service that funding has not been cancelled, that it is still coming, but we have no definitive timeline as to when that might arrive.

On Friday, we were notified that the President's budget proposal for FFY26, which will start in October, zeros out all the funding to SHPOs across the country from the HPF and essentially eliminates the HPF. This is still only the President's budget proposal, and it will still need to go through Congress to be negotiated, but this is incredibly serious and is a threat to positions in our office and to preservation across the country. We don't have an answer to what this is going to look like in the long run yet and there are still a lot of unknowns. Mr. Kinney will obviously keep the Council posted and up to date as much as he can in this situation. This is serious and SHPO is in a bad spot, so he would encourage you all to reach out to some of our partner organizations and our federal congressional delegation to make them aware of the situation. Any advocacy that can be done on the federal level for this is certainly a good thing.

Dr. Horowitz asked if the media was aware and people need to be made aware of what is going on because it will not only affect SHPO, but people across the board. He is offering a letter from the Council.

Ms. Acly offered her support.

XII. Report on Museum Properties – Liz Shapiro

On behalf of Ms. Shapiro, Mr. Kinney reported that all museums are open and fully staffed for the 2025 season.

XIII. Old Business

XIV. New Business

XV. Liaison with Public & Private Agencies – Jane Montanaro

No report

XVI. Public Forum

XVII. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Horowitz, second Ms. Acly, this meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

*Next regularly scheduled Council meeting:
Wednesday, June 4, 2025 – Meeting Format TBD*