

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
STATE HISTORIC PRESERATION COUNCIL**

Wednesday, February 5, 2020, 9:30 am

450 Columbus Boulevard, Fourth Floor

Hartford, CT 06103

Conference Call Dial in: (866) 453-0290, Code: 207-626-51#

Meeting Minutes

Called in: Ms. Marguerite Carnell, Mr. Tom Elmore, Dr. Margaret Faber, Ms. Karyn Gilvarg, Dr. Leah Glaser, Ms. Kathy Maher, Chairwoman Sara Nelson, Ms. Christine Nelson (9:41 a.m.) and Dr. Fiona Vernal

Staff: Ms. Mary Dunne, Ms. Deborah Gaston, Ms. Liz Shapiro and Ms. Marena Wisniewski

Guest: Mr. Carl and Mrs. Rose Rothbart, Architectural Preservation Studio, Vb. The Gores, New Canaan
Ms. Denise Manzari, VI.a. - David and Hannah Beecher House, Bethany
Ms. Jane Montanaro, Preservation Connecticut
Ms. Jane Falvey, Connecticut Preservation Action

I. Call to Order

The meeting of the Historic Preservation was called to order at 9:32 a.m.

II. Review of Public Comment Procedures

Chairwoman Nelson reviewed public comment procedures.

III. Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest

Chairwoman Nelson reviewed the Code of Conflict and Conflict of Interest statements. No conflicts were noted.

IV. Review and Approval Minutes

January 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Minutes approved with corrections.

On a motion by Ms. Maher, Second by Ms. Carnell

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

V. State Historic Preservation Grants – Action Items

a. Historic Restoration Fund Grant, Woodstock Academy, Woodstock

On a motion by Ms. Maher, Second by Dr. Glaser, the Historic Preservation Council votes to recommend the award of a Historic Restoration Fund Grant, funded by the Community Investment Act of the State of Connecticut, to the below-listed applicant in the amount of \$100,000.000.

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 – S. Nelson) (Roll call vote)

Ms. Fink presented this application to the Council as approved by staff. She and Ms. Dunne conducted a site visit to the campus with consultant Greg Farmer. The work covers structural repairs to the belfry and clock tower which were deemed most critical to start stabilization of the belfry. This was based on a comprehensive capital needs assessments completed in 2019 by Juster Pope Fraizer Architects. The tower is very visible and represents the school's history dating back to 1873. There are no easements on this property, but the applicant has received grants in the past from the Connecticut Historical Commission.

Ms. Carnell wanted clarity on the budget cost noted as \$400,000, while the budget is actually \$465,000. Ms. Fink replied that the applicant does have the \$400,000, but are fundraising the additional \$65,000.

Ms. Maher noticed there was no figure or line item for scaffolding listed on the application and asked if it was included under the general conditions expense line. Ms. Fink will confirm with the applicant whether the scaffolding is included in the original figure.

b. Historic Restoration Fund Grant, Gores Pavilion, New Canaan

On a motion by Ms. Maher, Second, Dr. Faber, the Historic Preservation Council votes to recommend the award of a Historic Restoration Fund Grant, funded by the Community Investment Act of the State of Connecticut, to the below-listed applicant in the amount of \$59,700.00. 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 – S. Nelson)

Ms. Fink presented this application to the Council as recommended by staff. Mr. Carl and Mrs. Rose Rothbart of Architectural Preservation Studio were on the call. This property has an easement expiring in 2031 as a result of a Historic Restoration Fund grant in 2011. Ms. Carmelich and Ms. Dunne performed an easement inspection on December 30, 2019 and recommended the proposed work based on interior water damage and flooding caused by failures in the roof and gutters. Work was done prior on the interior gallery to repair the central mass and on the exterior but did not include the roof. Architectural Preservation Studio did reach out to qualified contractors with experience in Secretary of Interior standards.

Ms. Maher noted that she had trouble opening the large document and would have liked to have seen photos of the property. Ms. Fink replied she can separate the photos and send them to Ms. Maher.

Chairwoman Nelson requested a point of clarification regarding the line item for contingency in the budget. In the past, SHPO has allowed a contingency to be included in the budget, has that policy been changed? Ms. Dunne replied it was previously pulled out of the budget, but currently, SHPO's guidelines allow for contingency.

Chairwoman Nelson complimented Mr. and Mrs. Rothbart on a well done application and asked if they will integrate the grant requirements into their contract document, the A101. Mr. Rothbart replied yes, they plan to intergrate the grant requirements. The attached example was just a sample.

Mr. Elmore asked for clarification from the architects on Page 6, question 17, regarding ground disturbance. Mr. Rothbart replied that this has to do with the need for dry wells, explaining that once they see how the drainage system operates, they can then see where drywells will be located and minimize the impact on the site.

Ms. Maher asked if this is why the application notes that archeology was involved. Mr. Rothbart replied yes.

Ms. Dunne added our staff archeologist has completed a preliminary review and did not see any adverse effects as a result of any ground disturbance that may occur.

VI. State Register of Historic Places Nominations

a. Nomination to the State Register of Historic Places, 545 Amity Road, Bethany

On a motion by Ms. Gilvarg, Second by Ms. Maher, the Historic Preservation Council votes to list the David and Hanna Beecher House, located at 545 Amity Road, Bethany, to the State Register of Historic Places.

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining – S. Nelson)

Ms. Wisniewski presented this nomination as approved by SHPO staff. Ms. Wisniewski gave a detailed description of the property. The current owner, Ms. Denise Manzari, was on the call to answer any questions or concerns. Ms. Jordan Sorenson, author of the nomination was on the call as well.

Dr. Glaser asked if the Beecher's from the New Haven area were related to the Harriet Beecher Stowe in Hartford. Ms. Sorenson replied she did not discover anything in her research; therefore, she did not mention it.

Ms. Denise Manzari mentioned Captain David Beecher led the charge in New Haven in July of 1799 when the British invaded the area. She wanted to know if this will have any effect on the citation.

Ms. Wisniewski responded, even though Ms. Sorenson's research is interesting, it is not relevant to Criterion 2 for architecture. This information can be added to the nomination as a historical footnote.

Dr. Glaser agreed this information should be added or it might otherwise be lost.

Ms. Wisniewski suggested that Ms. Sorenson share her research with the Bethany Historical Society. Ms. Sorenson agreed.

VII. Local Historic District/Property Study Report(s)

VIII. Archaeological Preserves

IX. Threatened Properties

X. Preservation Restrictions

XI. Report on State Historic Preservation Office/Museum Activities – Ms. Liz Shapiro

SHPO:

The position for the deputy SHPO, or director of Operations for Preservation, will close on 2/14. She anticipates that we will have two rounds of interviews for the position, but hopes it will be filled by mid-June.

There were (at final count) 140 applicants to the Museum Assistant position at the Eric Sloane museum. She has chosen 11 to have first interviews. Ms. Shapiro anticipates that we will hold those in the next ten days, and then whittle the candidates down to two or three to bring to interviews at the museum. Morgan Bengel and Marena Wisniewski will join Ms. Shapiro for the interviews.

There were over 200 registrants – plus a wait list – to the conference *Historic and Green: A New Climate Agenda*, presented by the Thomas F. Gallivan, Jr. Memorial Fund at the UCONN Law School and supported by SHPO and Preservation Connecticut on January 24th. Thanks to Sara Bronin and her team of law students for doing the heavy lifting for the event, and for including the SHPO team as advisors. The day was productive, and conversation was interesting. There are recommendations that have come from the convening, some of which SHPO could support, some not as much. The conference brought a diverse group of attendees to the table and was a successful spark to further conversation and advocacy efforts.

Happy to say that Commissioner David Lehman has been spending time getting to know SHPO programs. Earlier in January, he joined Julie Carmelich, Jenny Scofield and Liz Shapiro for a meeting on a tax credit project in Bridgeport. This week he will join Todd Levine for a meeting in Stamford. Commissioner Lehman has been very supportive of SHPO work, and is interested and thoughtful in regard to the intersection of preservation and economic development, especially in our cities.

Museums

There has been an ongoing discussion between our office of Finance at DECD and staff, and the overarching auditors for the state regarding systems for managing our collections.

As many of you know, best practice for museums indicates creating greater means of access to public and private museum collections for our audiences. To that end, the SHPO museums have a collections management system called Connecticut Collections (CTCo, also used by the Barnum Museum). This is an open-source, cloud-based system that allows for the creation of a simple interface so that members of the public can access our collections. There is some discussion that the museums should manage their collections within the state's CORE platform. Ms. Shapiro is sharing this with the Council in their stewardship role for the museums, she may need to come to Council to ask to adopt a statement that supports the best practices of the American Alliance of Museums, and the American Association for State and Local History for collections access.

Sloane Museum:

Barbara Russ has officially retired after 25 plus years of service at the museum. She was faithfully stewarding the transition, and has offered to answer questions and be at the ready in case we need her expertise. She was very sorry to leave prior to the conclusion of the construction project, which has a substantial completion date of February 29. The outdoor work will be put on hold and will resume in late March or early April. Morgan Bengel has accepted the role of interim facility manager during the transition. We hope to have the position filled by mid-March, if not before. The grand reopening of the museum will be on June 27.

New-Gate Prison & Copper Mine

When Morgan Bengel isn't wearing her Eric Sloane hat, she continues to put the finishing touches on the text for the permanent outdoor interpretive panels. She has planned a full series of events for the museum season, with each month themed around a topic that is pivotal to the historic site, including "bats", "geology", and more. She is also working to resolve ongoing water quality issues at the site, and is organizing the maintenance work that must be done in the spring, as well as adding new items to the gift shop, and working with the Friends of Old New-Gate as they reinvent themselves.

Prudence Crandall Museum:

Joanie DiMartino has been working with Erica Cialla (our former seasonal employee) to pack and move the contents of the museum prior to the restoration project. The project has been approved to go out to bid, and we expect to have the pre-bid meeting scheduled for later this month. The contents of the library have been moved, storage pods are being delivered, and Joanie has been ensuring that the Carter House, which will be temporary home to the museum staff, is ready for habitation with operating bathrooms, running water and reliable heat.

Henry Whitfield State Museum:

The Henry Whitfield Museum will be applying for a Conservation Assessment Program, or CAP, grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services. This grant will bring both a buildings expert and a collections expert to the site for two days. The consultants will prepare a report with recommendations for improving the care of the collections and the care of the property.

This will dovetail nicely with our buildings assessment that was completed in 2017, and include up-to-date information that will incorporate into the repairs and restoration of the site which could start as early as 2021.

XII. **Report on Properties**

XIII. **Old Business**

a. **CEPA Updates** - Ms. Liz Shapiro for Mr. Todd Levine **Colchester**

Ms. Shapiro reported that the process is moving forward with the developers. They are trying to decide how many units could be accommodated at the site.

Bridgewater Grange

There has been no new developments in this case. We may know more after the 17th of this month. Chairwoman Nelson asked if there was any danger in the structure. Ms. Shapiro replied no.

State Archaeologist candidate update – Ms. Cathy Labadia

- b. Ms. Labadia reported that Dr. Sarah Sportman has accepted the position of State Archeologist. She will start in two weeks. Dr. Nick Bellontoni, interim State Archeologist, will be working with her for approximately two months. Dr. Bellontoni and Dr. Sportman will be attending the next HPC Council meeting in March.

Ridgefield

Ms. Labadia presented an update to the Council on the Ridgefield burial site. She noted that the last time she spoke about Ridgefield, there had been three individuals found at this site. Since then, two more individuals have been discovered by Dr. Bellontoni along with an extra femur and a coat with 28 brass buttons on it. The buttons are currently being processed at a lab. Four individuals seem to be in the same trench. The fifth individual has to remain unearthened, due to possible damage to the foundation of the property. Dr. Bellontoni is now working with the current property owner to document this information in a land deed for possible future owners. SHPO partnered with Ridgefield Historical Society to draft a Battlefield Protection Grant for future preservation of the battlefield.

XIV. **New Business**

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

Ms. Montanaro reported The Connecticut Preservation Awards nominations are open. Please visit the website, Preservationct.org to cast your nominations. They are due Friday, March 6th. The awards ceremony will be held May 6th, 2020 at the New Haven Country Club in Hamden.

Ms. Mary Falvey – CT Preservation Action

Ms. Falvey reported on CPA's legislative agenda. CPA is also working on education pieces for the legislators on the Environmental Protection Act.

They will keep this as a reoccurring agenda item. Community Investment Act Lobby Day will be held on March 5th, 2020 at the State Capitol. They are having a planning meeting this Friday, with more information forthcoming in the CPA newsletter.

CPA will be meeting with ranking members of the Finance Committee to discuss a bill asking for an increase in the historic rehabilitation tax credits. There was a negative New York Times article discussing education and preservation posted recently. There will be a conference call this afternoon on this topic. CPA will be having a media blitz in May to discuss the benefits of preservation.

XVI. Public Forum

XVII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Ms. Maher second Ms. C. Nelson to adjourn the meeting. Hearing no further discussion – meeting was adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

(Y-8, N-0, Abstaining – S. Nelson)

Respectfully submitted by:
Deborah Gaston, Secretary

*Next meeting in-office meeting:
Wednesday, March 4, 2020, 9:30 a.m.
2 South, Room H*