

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
STATE HISTORIC PRESERATION COUNCIL

Historic Preservation Council Meeting
One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor
Hartford, Connecticut
February 1, 2017

Meeting Minutes

Present: Ms. Gilvarg, Dr. Jones, Dr. Faber, Chairwoman Nelson, Dr. Glaser and Dr. Partridge
Absent: Dr. Woodward, Ms. Kane and Ms. Maher
Staff: Mary Dunne, Deborah Gaston, Leigh Johnson, Todd Levine, Elizabeth Rairigh, Jenny Scofield, Alyssa Lozupone and Cathy Labadia
Guest: Mr. Daniel Mackay - CT Trust, Ms. Phyllis Stillman and Mr. Chris Dobbs – CT River Museum, Mr. Ken Johnson – NINA, and Mr. Tom Bombria – City of New London

I. Call to Order

The meeting of the Historic Preservation was called to order at 9:37 am.

II. Review of Public Comment Procedures

Chairwoman Nelson read the public comment procedures.

III. Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest

Chairwoman Nelson asked the members if there were any potential perceived conflicts of interest with any agenda items being brought before the Council.

Chairwoman Nelson recused herself on item Vd:

Historic Restoration Fund Grant: First Church of Christ Woodbridge

The engineer on this project is under contract with her firm on another project.

IV. Review and Approval Minutes

January 4, 2017 Meeting Minutes

On a motion made by Ms. Gilvarg, Second by Dr. Faber, the January 4, 2017 meeting minutes were approved with a correction, Dr. Jones was listed twice as being present. One of the listings will be removed. (Y-5, N-0, Abstaining – Nelson)

V. State Historic Preservation Grants – Action Items

a. Historic Restoration Fund Grant: The First Church of Christ in Hartford – Steeple repair

On a motion made by Dr. Jones, Second by Dr. Partridge, the Historic Preservation Council approved the Partner in Historic Restoration Fund Grant in the amount of \$50,000.00 (Y-5, N-0, Abstaining – Nelson)

Ms. Dunne mentioned the staff recommends this application for funding. Specifications have been reviewed and this property is under an ongoing preservation easement with the SHPO office.

Dr. Faber asked if this was a stand-alone project or a phase of a larger project, and would it be a problem because the grant is for a stand-alone project? Ms. Dunne replied under the new guidelines, SPHO is encouraging maintenance and repair grants. SHPO considers the steeple repair project as a stand-alone project for purposes of this application. This property is under easement as well through 2020.

b. Historic Restoration Grant: The Town of Eastford – 2 Walls

On a motion by Ms. Gilvarg, Second by Dr. Jones, the Historic Preservation Council approved the Partners in Preservation Fund Grant in the amount of \$7,000. (Y-5, N-0, Abstaining – Nelson)

Ms. Dunne mentioned the staff recommends this project for funding. The First Church of Christ is asking for a modest amount right away to stabilize two (2) walls, but does have plans to apply for more funding in the near future. There will be an ongoing review of this project and it is currently under an easement through 2020.

Dr. Jones noted with such a small budget ask – would it be enough to cover the structural work if the building needed to be squared up? Ms. Dunne replied yes for selective repairs that are imperative – there will be an on-going review of this project.

c. Historic Restoration Grant: The City of New London – Lighting fixtures (Tom Bombria – City of New London)

On a motion made by Ms. Maher, Second by Dr. Jones, the Historic Preservation Council approved a Partners in Preservation Fund Grant in the amount of \$41,775.00. (Y-5, N-0, Abstaining – Nelson)

Ms. Dunne mentioned, staff recommends this application for funding. This project covers only actual repairs of the lighting fixtures and Mr. Tom Bombria from the City of New London is present to answers any questions.

d. Historic Restoration Fund Grant: First Church of Christ Woodbridge – Beam structural repair, plaster and paint

Chairwoman Nelson recused herself at 9:56 a.m.

On a motion made by Dr. Partridge, Second by Dr. Jones, the Historic Preservation Council approved a Partners in Preservation Fund Grant in the amount of \$50,000.00. (Y-4, N-0, Abstaining –Gilvarg)

Ms. Dunne mentioned staff recommends this application for funding. There is serious structural damage which needs to be addressed according to the church's report. Plaster repair will fall under the post project work.

Dr. Faber mentioned that the Church could not find their title and would that be a problem. Ms. Dunne replied the Church has submitted paper work from their attorney stating they have a clear title and that should be fine.

Dr. Jones asked during the repair, will the Church have to sacrifice the painting on the ceiling? Ms. Dunne replied this is an original painting from the 1800s and the beam and plaster repair will be done at the same time.

Chairwoman Nelson returned to the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

e. Survey and Planning Grant: Connecticut River Museum - Replacement of underwater bulk heads (Phyllis Stillman & Chris Dobbs)

On a motion made by Dr. Jones, Second by Dr. Faber, the Historic Preservation Council approved a Partners in Preservation Fund Grant in the amount of \$50,000.00. (Y-5, N-0, Abstaining – Nelson)

Ms. Dunne mentioned staff recommends the funding of this project. It was reviewed on behalf of the National Park Service so the Museum could receive a National Maritime Heritage Grant, which they did receive in the amount of \$200,000. The bulkheads are very important to protect the resource.

Dr. Jones asked if there were any archaeological resources in the work area? Ms. Labadia did review the archaeological aspect of this project which is being matched with state funding. Site scans were done and Mr. Dobbs noted the existing bulkheads were driven into the ground about 10 feet deep for stability purposes since the area was previously demolished.

Dr. Faber suggested to change #19 to (YES) and #20 to “The staff Archaeologist has been contacted.” Also on Pg. 6 there are 2 different figures, \$49,899 was rounded to

\$50,000. The change was allowed by unanimous consent by the Council and an amendment to the budget with a follow up to the applicant. Motion will remain as is.

f. Survey and Planning Grant: Town of Old Lyme – Historic Resources Inventory
On a motion made by Dr. Jones, Second by Dr. Glaser, the Historic Preservation Council approved a Partners in Preservation Fund Grant in the amount of \$30,000.00. (Y-5, N-0, Abstaining – Nelson)

Ms. Dunne mentioned staff recommends this application since a survey is due. The last survey was conducted in 1978 and did not covered this area. The town is a certified local government and a survey is one of their requirements.

Chairwoman Nelson asked due to the large geographical area, are there any other sources of funding and would this be enough funding for the entire project. Ms. Dunne noted the amount would cover about 200 properties to be surveyed. If the town had additional funding, it could be matched. DECD/SHPO guidelines do not allow for a larger grant amount. Often with municipalities, SHPO will fund subsequent phases one after the other. This is an information gathering tool for this area, federal/state funding could be applied in this situation.

VI. State Register Nominations

a. 115 and 117 Sigourney Street, Hartford – (Ken Johnson – NINA)

On a motion made by Ms. Gilvarg, Second Dr. Faber, the Historic Preservation Council approved the state register nomination for 115 and 117 Sigourney St., Hartford.
(Y-5, N-0, Abstaining – Nelson)

Ms. Scofield mentioned this is an unusual nomination. The properties are in the Asylum Hill Resource neighborhood, which in 1979 belonged to the downtown National Historical District. This area became very popular and associated with downtown. The buildings represent two different trends of that time and were owned by Aetna in the 1970s. There was less documentation at that time and boundaries can be revisited if there were any questions. The present owner, Mr. Johnson was present and mentioned they were first timers and thanked Mr. Scofield on the wonderful job she did guiding them through this process!

VII. Local Historic District/Property Study report

a. Historic Property Study Report – Kemper Gun House, 35 Elm St., Westport, CT
On a motion made by Dr. Faber, Second Dr. Partridge the Historic Preservation Council approved the local historic district/property study report.
(Y-5, N-0, Abstaining – Nelson)

Ms. Dunne mentioned the staff recommends this property. The property has been moved which does not affect its listing status. Some exterior additions have been made, as well. The town thought the Commission was its best hope to stop the demolition.

Chairwoman Nelson mentioned there were a few reports submitted with different dates and wanted to know which one was the final draft. The first report was on November 22, 2016, final revisions were made on November 30, 2016 and an additional copy was submitted on December 13, 2016. The Council's review is occurring within the 65 day review window. Ms. Scofield mentioned the Kemper Gun House was already on the state register prior to its move.

IX.

Old Business

a. Norwich – Reid and Hughes (update) Todd Levine

The Council agreed to reorder the agenda.

Mr. Levine mentioned this Council asked the Attorney General to investigate a potential Protection Act case. Over the past couple of months SHPO investigated and gathered information for preserving the buildings in questioned. The first time SHPO met with Reid and Hughes, SHPO requested Reid and Hughes to withdraw their demolition application. Since the City Council had already approved their application, the other alternative was to have the SHPO office try and convince the City Council to rescind the permit. SHPO met with the Town of Norwich last week and the town provided SHPO with approximately 50 issues which needed to be resolved. During this meeting SHPO was able to resolve most of the issues. The City Engineer and the Historic Preservation Engineer, James Grant had differences and were not in agreement. Another meeting is scheduled for March 10th to meet and discuss a possible resolution. The demolition delay has expired and the demolition is still in motion. There is still another month to the timeline of the process.

Chairwoman Nelson asked if the solution involves the transfer of ownership from the City to a private entity. Mr. Levine replied, up until about six months ago the NCDC – Planning and Development Corporation had an option on the building. The SHPO office is hoping staff can offer up that option and assist in the transfer. There will be an assessment of the building.

VIII.

State Historic Preservation Office Report – Kristina Newman-Scott

Ms. Newman-Scott introduced two new members of the SHPO team; Alyssa Lozupone, Architectural Preservationist and Elizabeth Rairigh, National Register Specialist and they gave a brief background on themselves to the Council. We have two finalist for the Deputy SHPO/Museum and we have made an offer to one of two, so hopefully we will have this finalized in March just in time for the National Conference. If not, we will not repost this position for a year.

The Preservation Conference is coming up on May 18th, 2016 at the Nathan Hale Inn. Ms. Labadia mentioned the day will begin with a keynote speaker, a national perspective, a state perspective with some of our municipal leaders, and to wrap up the afternoon with some break out topics.

March 2, 2016 CT Arts Day will be held at the Bushnell and The State Capitol concentrating on cross sector and the keynote speaker will be Laura Callan, Special Advisor to the United Nations.

We have been meeting with Legislators sharing our press kits so they can better understand the work we do. Those conversations have been going very well.

We launched our new SHPO newsletter last month which Ms. Carmelich sent to members of the Historic Preservation Council.

The SHPO staff met with consultants from three different firms in reference to strategic planning, Proposals are due February 17th and would like everything to be completed by December 17th.

Our offices are planning a move to 450 Columbus Blvd. this summer. This will be the first time all DECD offices will be together in one building.

Ms. Levine mentioned Elizabeth Rairigh will be handling Environmental Review and the State Register. Ms. Newman-Scott mentioned the Good to Great program as well.

IX. Public and Private Agencies – Daniel McKay

Mr. Mackay mentioned next Wednesday is the release of the Governor's Executive Budget proposal. Preservationist and other groups are very concerned about the potential of further threats to Community Investment Act funds. Additionally, the Trust is concerned about the State Historic Tax Credit having been fully allocated, and therefore the Trust and Connecticut Preservation Action are seeking legislative support for an increased allocation to \$63.4 million annually (a doubling of the current amount). CT Trust, CPA, and developers are organizing to testify at legislative committee hearings to provide details on the program.

In Thompson, the Riverside Mill is proposed for demolition via architectural salvage. We are working with the town of Thompson to develop this property; they have a controlling interest in efforts to forestall demolition via a tax lien on the property. Town has initiated a hard copy petition to get local signatures and support.

The Trust has added a page on their website dedicated to historic preservation petition campaigns, to support such campaign with a regional and statewide audience. CT Trust has started a second page to track demolition applications and delays across the state; Trust is now receiving notices directly from a number of communities. Some

municipalities have been cautious about participation, or have declined to readily provide notice.

The Trust's high-speed rail advocacy has continued; the Trust is appreciative of the survey funding awarded to Old Lyme. Communities in Rhode Island are now actively engaged against the proposed bypass's impacts in SW Rhode Island. The Governor of Rhode Island recently withdrew her support for the NEC Future Plan due to bypass impacts in that state.

The Trust has hired Greg Stroud to assist the Trust on NEC Future and other large-scale transportation projects.

X. Adjournment

A motion was made by Ms. Maher to adjourn the meeting. Hearing no further discussion – meeting was adjourned at 10:53 am. (Y-5, N-0, Abstaining – Nelson)

Respectfully submitted by;
Deborah Gaston, Secretary