

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

Approved Meeting Minutes

Members Present & Date their Term is Up: Susanne Walker Abetti (3/21/25), Robin Adair Logan (3/10/23), Pat Stark (3/7/25) and Chair Jonathan Schechtman (2/10/23).

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: George Abetti.

A hybrid meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, November 9, 2022 in Meeting Room 2 at the Hartford Town Hall. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Jonathan read the hybrid meeting script followed by a roll call.

- 1. Changes to the Agenda:** Jonathan asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none.
- 2. HHPC Minutes:** Jonathan asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of October 19th and October 26th. Susanne Walker Abetti noted a correction with the October 19th minutes. There were no other corrections. Robin Adair Logan made a motion to approve the minutes of October 19th with the noted correction and the October 26th meeting minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Susanne and unanimously approved.
- 3. Railroad Station South Canopy:** Matt Osborn noted that VTrans and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation is waiting for a written response from the HHPC on VTran's recommendation to demolish the canopy. Matt reported that he met with State Architectural Historian Devin Colman to inspect the canopy and get Devin's input. Devin thought the canopy could be rehabilitated.

Jonathan thanked George Abetti for visiting the canopy and providing his thoughts about possible rehabilitation, demolition and rebuilding. Susanne noted that her husband (GeoBarns owner and builder) thought there were serious problems with the canopy and that it would be complicated to repair. Robin Adair stated that if it were repaired, the structure wouldn't last for decades like a new replacement would. She thought that if repairing takes place, there are likely to be more problems encountered than are readily apparent now.

Pat Stark stated that her preference is to rebuild it. If it can't be easily repaired, she would prefer that it be replaced since it has a physical association with the train station. Removing it would be a loss to the character of the train station. George stated that the canopy posts are completely shot. Robin Adair stated that you can't put new materials on old materials. She noted that she thinks the consultant's estimates are extremely high. She suggested taking the canopy down and replacing it with something similar but not exactly the same as the original canopy. In doing so, the canopy would last many decades. The HHPC agreed. Robin Adair made a motion to recommend removing the existing canopy and replacing it with a historically accurate, similar design as the original canopy. The motion was seconded by Pat and unanimously approved. Matt asked if the HHPC would like him to prepare a draft letter on behalf of the HHPC. They responded yes. Jonathan and Robin Adair volunteered to work with Matt on the letter before submitting.

- 4. Murphy Farmhouse Nomination to the State Register of Historic Places:** Matt reported that the HHPC was sent the nomination to review and comment on. He noted that according to the report, there have been too many changes to render the property and its components eligible for listing. The

HHPC agreed. Matt noted that the HHPC doesn't have to comment on the nomination. The HHPC decided not to comment.

5. **2023 CLG Grant Application:** Matt reported that the CLG grant application is due December 12th. However, since the Selectboard agenda for 11/29 is full, we were put on the 11/15 Selectboard agenda and have to make a decision on the grant application this evening. He noted that there was consensus to apply for a CLG grant to do a historic district nomination for one or two of the potential districts identified in the Taft's Flat Intensive Level Survey. Matt reported that staff suggests that rather than the HHPC determine which nominations to pursue at this time, to have the consultant make recommendations based on their review of the National Register criteria. The HHPC agreed. Matt stated that he worked out a draft budget. With staff and HHPC time and \$2,500 in cash, we can leverage a CLG grant of \$11,300. Pat made a motion to apply for the 2023 CLG Grant in the amount of \$11,300 to hire an architectural historian to review the Taft's Flat Intensive Level Survey and based on their review prepare historic district nominations to the National Register. The motion was seconded by Jonathan and approved 4 to 0.
6. **Hartford Performing Arts History Project:** Matt reported that consultant Neil Silberman prepared a posting for the Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce Newsletter to introduce the project to the community. This will be followed up with another posting about seeking volunteers to be interviewed about their experiences attending performing arts in Hartford.

Matt reported that he was contacted by longtime Hartford resident Sharon Cook about her interest in being interviewed as well as providing names of folks to be interviewed including the son of the former drive-in manager.
7. **Hotel Coolidge Site Visit:** Jonathan noted that the October 26th site visit was very informative. He stated that we will have to wait and see when they will be back with a specific proposal.
8. **HHPC Opening:** Jonathan noted that there is still an opening on the Commission. He encouraged HHPC members to try to seek a suitable candidate.
9. **Announcements:** There were no announcements
10. **Next HHPC Meeting:** Jonathan noted that the next HHPC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 21st at 5:00 p.m.
11. **Adjournment:** Pat made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Robin Adair and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.