

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, January 17, 2024

Approved Meeting Minutes

Members Present & Date their Term is Up: Susanne Walker Abetti (3/21/25), Pat Stark (3/7/25) and Chair Jonathan Schechtman (1/9/26).

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Architectural Historian Brian Knight.

A hybrid meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 in Meeting Room 2 at the Hartford Town Hall. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. Jonathan read the hybrid meeting script followed by a roll call.

1. **Changes to the Agenda:** Jonathan asked if there are any changes to the agenda. There were none.
2. **HHPC Minutes:** Jonathan asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of December 20th. Susanne Walker Abetti noted several corrections. Pat Stark made a motion to approve the Minutes of December 20th with the noted corrections. The motion was seconded by Susanne and unanimously approved.
3. **Public Comments:** There were no public comments.
4. **Taft's Flat Historic District Nomination Kick-off Meeting:** Jonathan welcomed Architectural Historian Brian Knight. Brian noted that the Hartgen Archeological Associates proposal included preparation of two historic district nominations, starting with the Demers Avenue and then deciding between one of the other Taft's Flat neighborhoods included in the Taft's Flat Intensive Level Survey:
 - Victory Circle/Highland Avenue
 - Watson Plaza (Worcester Avenue)
 - Highland Park (Saunders Avenue)
 - Manning Park (Hanover and Wilder Street)
 - Manning Park Extension (Gifford Road)

Brian talked about the pros and cons of each potential district. For the second historic district, he thinks the strongest candidates are between Watson Plaza (Worcester Avenue) and Victory Circle/Highland Avenue. The HHPC agreed. He will reach out and seek input from State Architectural Historian Devin Colman. Matt stated that he values Devin's opinion and thinks it makes sense to get his opinion early on in the project. The HHPC agreed. Matt noted that once the two historic districts are confirmed, he will prepare a letter to notify residents of the historic district nomination process.

5. **Hartford Performing Arts History (PAH) Project:** Matt Osborn reported that he has been working on closing out of the CLG grant project. He stated that he realized that Bill Bittinger was inadvertently left out of the oral history component of the project. Bill was a co-founder of the White River Junction Indie Film Festival. Matt inquired with consultant Neil Silberman about interviewing Bill, editing a full transcription, and amending the oral history report and the final report to include Bill's interview and information on the Indie Film Festival. Matt asked the HHPC if they would like to pursue funding to complete the additional work. The HHPC agreed. Matt will discuss with Lori Hirshfield about funding the work. Matt noted that Susanne agreed to do a final proof reading of the report.

6. **World War 1 & II Monument:** Pat reported that the Monument Group is working on the language for the fundraising bricks. She added that the Memorial Day dedication ceremony is planned.
7. **HHPC Openings:** Jonathan noted that there are currently two openings on the Commission. Matt stated that he will work on a draft description of the HHPC's work and send it to the HHPC to review before posting on the Town List Serv.
8. **Announcements:**
 - a. 60 Gates Street: Matt reported that the property located at 60 Gates Street across from the Hotel Coolidge sold on November 30th.
 - b. Vermont's 250th Anniversary Stakeholder Listening Sessions: Matt reported that he received an email last week from State Architectural Historian Devin Colman seeking volunteers to attend listening sessions and provide input on plans for the 250th anniversary in 2026. The HHPC discussed it. There were no volunteers.
9. **Next HHPC Meeting:** Jonathan noted that the next HHPC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 21st at 5:15 p.m.
10. **Adjournment:** Pat made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Susanne and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.
11. **HHPC Member Terms:** Susanne Walker Abetti (3/21/25), Vice-chair Pat Stark (3/7/25) and Chair Jonathan Schechtman (1/9/26).