

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

Draft Meeting Minutes

Members Present & Date their Term is Up: Dennis Brown (3/11/27), Pat Stark (3/7/25) and Chair Jonathan Schechtman (1/9/26).

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Lannie Collins.

A hybrid meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, October 16, 2024 in Meeting Room 2 at the Hartford Town Hall. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He proceeded to read the hybrid meeting script which was followed by roll call.

1. **Public Comments:** Jonathan asked if there are any public comments. There were none.
2. **HHPC Minutes:** Jonathan asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of September 11th. There were no corrections. Pat made a motion to approve the HHPC Minutes of September 11, 2024 as written. The motion was seconded by Dennis Brown and approved 3-0.
3. **Taft's Flat Historic District Nomination Update:** Matt reported that consultant Brian Knight made the changes requested by the HHPC on the Demers Avenue and Victory Circle nominations. The next step is to schedule a community meeting. He presented several dates that Brian Knight is available. There was discussion and agreement that if Brian Knight is available to schedule the meeting for Wednesday, November 20th, immediately after the regular HHPC meeting. Matt will be working on letters to the property owners and post the draft nominations on the Town website.
4. **Performing Arts History (PAH) Project:** Matt reported that the proposal from consultant Neil Silberman to interview Bill Bittinger about the origins of the Indie Film Festival, record and transcribe the interview and update the PAH report was accepted by the Town administration. Matt will prepare a basic contract.
5. **Historic District Signs:** Matt reported that he hasn't heard back from the Jericho Community Association about repainting the Jericho Historic District signs. Matt said that he will paint the Hartford Village Historic District sign and the two West Hartford Historic District signs and if necessary, the Jericho signs.

Matt reported that he obtained nine security screws and a drill bit at LaValley's for the historic district signs. He will obtain additional security screws once the item is restocked.

Matt reported that he reached out to Rule Signs in Randolph about obtaining a quote for the additional historic district signs. Jonathan suggested contacting the Preservation Trust of Vermont to see if they could recommend sign makers.

6. **US 250th Anniversary:** Matt reported that the State Committee on the US 250th anniversary is sponsoring a webinar for municipalities on Wednesday, October 30th. Pat reported that the Hartford Historical Society (HHS) is contacting organizations to recruit folks interested in serving on a townwide committee on the US 250th anniversary (Semiquincentennial). Pat also reported that a resolution for the Selectboard is ready to go to them. She noted that a website for the anniversary is being developed by the HHS and they are developing a timeline for 250th events over the next two years. Pat reported that the HHS received a grant for the celebration and has a budget of \$6,000.

7. **CLG Grant Application:** Matt reported that he received the announcement that the CLG grant applications are due Monday, December 16th. He noted that the HHPC doesn't have a specific project in mind. A discussion ensued. Matt noted that the Selectboard suggested doing a project that focuses on the indigenous community. Matt offered to contact John Moody. Pat suggested an update of the Quechee Historic Mill District since it was established in the mid-1990s. Matt added that the Hartford Village and Wilder Village historic districts were established shortly after Quechee. Matt added that the Worcester Avenue neighborhood is well-suited as the next historic district. It was agreed to continue discussion at the next HHPC meeting.
8. **HHPC Opening:** Matt reported that no applications have been submitted for the remaining opening.
9. **Announcements:**
 - a. White River Junction Railroad Station Weathervane: Jonathan reported that last night, the Selectboard discussed the possibility of forming a committee to recommend what to do with the former WRJ Railroad Station weathervane that has been recovered after being missing for several decades. The weathervane is the property of VTrans, the owner of the Train Station. It is currently being housed at the Shelburne Museum. Jonathan suggested that the HHPC should lead the discussion. He noted that Town Manager John Haverstock talked to David Briggs and Judy Barwood about the weathervane. Both are interested in helping decide what to do with it. Jonathan agreed to contact State Curator David Schutz.
 - b. Hartford Historical Society Next Program: Pat reported that the Hartford Historical Society is featuring a program on electrification by Steve Taylor.
 - c. HHPC Presentation to the Selectboard: Jonathan reported that he appeared before the Selectboard last night to update them on the work of the HHPC. He noted that Matt prepared a powerpoint presentation for the meeting. Matt thought that Jonathan did a great job given that there was an issue with the display screen and the powerpoint presentation could not be shared. Lannie responded that he was very disappointed that the public could not view the powerpoint.
 - d. New CLG Coordinator: Matt reported that Elizabeth Peebles will be replacing Devin Colman as the CLG Coordinator. He noted that he has worked with Elizabeth and is pleased with her appointment.
 - e. Monument Committee: Dennis reported that the Monument Committee decided to pursue a monument in Veterans Park honoring veterans of post-World War II conflicts.
 - f. 444 Sykes Mountain Avenue Demolition: Dennis expressed concern about the demolition of the house at 444 Sykes Mountain Avenue. Matt responded that two houses were proposed for demolition as part of the plans for the 240-unit housing development approved by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission required that the applicant contact the HHPC to allow photo documentation. On September 26th, Pat and Matt met with Earl Simpson and photographed both residences prior to demolition. Matt noted that the Planning Commission and the HHPC worked together on a demolition ordinance a few years ago but the Planning Commission was hesitant to require anything more than photo documentation.
10. **Next HHPC Meeting:** Jonathan noted that the next HHPC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 20th at 5:15 p.m.
11. **Adjournment:** Pat made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Dennis and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.
12. **HHPC Member Terms:** Susanne Walker Abetti (3/21/25), Dennis Brown (3/11/27), Vice-chair Pat Stark (3/7/25) and Chair Jonathan Schechtman (1/9/26).