

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Draft Meeting Minutes

Members Present & Date their Term is Up: Dennis Brown, Pat Stark and chair Jonathan Schechtman.

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Erik Krauss.

A hybrid meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, May 21, 2025 in Room 2 at the Hartford Town Hall. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

1. **Public Comments:** Jonathan asked if there were any public comments. There were none.
2. **Approval of the April 30th HHPC Meeting Minutes:** Jonathan asked if there were any comments regarding the meeting minutes of April 30th. Dennis Brown made a motion to approve the minutes of April 30th as written. Pat Stark seconded the motion. The motion was approved 3-0.
3. **Historical District Signs and the Wilder Historic Sign:** Matt Osborn noted that the HHPC has indicated an interest in developing additional historic district signs and replacing stolen signs. He noted that signs are not eligible for CLG funding. Matt noted that when the signs were first established in the late 2000s, sign maker Steve Arkwright charged \$400 a sign and it included installation. Steve has since retired. Matt received a quote from a Randolph sign maker and the price was \$1,500. Matt noted that he reached out to Wilder sign maker Bonnie Arnold for a quote. He is waiting for a response. Matt noted that Wilder residents Harry Kendrick and Phil Sargent have requested funding assistance for the Wilder Village/Paper Mill history sign. They also talked about establishing historic signs in other Hartford villages. The HHPC agreed that they would like to help with funding. Pat made a motion to pledge \$500 for the Wilder sign. The motion was seconded by Jonathan and approved 3 to 0. Matt agreed to work with Planning and Development Director Lori Hirshfield on accounting of HHPC funds.
4. **Demers Avenue and Victory Circle/Highland Park Historic District Nomination:** Matt reported that the Demers Avenue Historic District Nomination and the Victory Circle Historic District Nomination have been scheduled to go before the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on Thursday, June 19th. at 9:00 a.m.
5. **Railroad Row Kiosk Certified Local Government Grant Request:** Matt reported that the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation has still not received funding from the National Park Service for the for the current CLG grant round of which Hartford was awarded a \$4,500 grant pending receipt of federal funds. Matt reported that he received an email stating that CLG's have to wait for clearance before beginning work on the project.
6. **Railroad Station Weathervane:** Matt reported that VTrans Historic Preservation Officer Judith Ehrlich contacted the Shelburne Museum to see if the pedestal that they used for their weathervane exhibit might be available for us to use in Hartford.
7. **West Hartford Meetinghouse:** Matt reported that he received a call from a staff member from the Preservation Trust of Vermont who was seeking contact information on the property owner of the West Hartford Meetinghouse (former church). Matt stated that the property has many challenges, and he hopes the Preservation Trust of Vermont can help. He noted that the Meetinghouse is in default of

payment of property taxes. Jonathan asked about the transfer from the Church to the Meetinghouse. Matt agreed to inquire. The HHPC agreed that they would like to see the property restored.

- 8. School District Building at 71 Highland Avenue:** Matt reported that he received notification from the Hartford School District that they are considering demolition of the former farmhouse at 71 Highland Avenue. Jonathan noted that the property was acquired by the School District in 2019. He wondered how the building is being used. Dennis asked what are the HHPC options? Matt noted that the HHPC worked with the Planning Commission on a Demolition Ordinance a few years ago. The project did not gain traction due to the Planning Commission's concern about government overreach. Matt noted that he did request that the School District provide the HHPC with an opportunity to photo document the building prior to demolition. Jonathan asked if there is any historic documentation on the property. Matt responded that he will check the Historic Sites and Structures Survey. Erik Krauss suggested that the HHPC write a letter to the School District to request that they consider an alternative to demolition such as selling the building noting that the building is part of the aesthetics of the neighborhood. The HHPC agreed.
- 9. US 250th Anniversary Commemoration Committee:** Dennis reported that next 250th meeting is Wednesday, May 28th. He noted that there are plans for a Memorial Day event at Veterans Park. Pat reported that Gwen Tuson is conducting research on older Hartford homes that will be included in a driving tour. Jonathan reported that he has confronted some challenges regarding planning an event at the Theron Boyd House in Quechee.
- 10. Monument Committee:** Dennis reported that the Committee has had difficulty finding information on Hartford residents who served in wars more recent than the Vietnam War. He speculates that it is due to privacy issues. As a result, the monument will likely cover wars up to and including the Vietnam War.
- 11. HHPC Openings:** Jonathan stated that he was sad to hear that Susanne Abetti did not seek reappointment. He noted that there are currently two openings. Matt suggested that the HHPC needs to do some recruitment. Erik reported that he announced the openings at Selectboard meetings and will continue to do so.
- 12. Announcements:**

 - a. Hartford Woolen Mill Bell: Pat reported that the Hartford Historical Society has the bell from the Hartford Woolen Mill.
 - b. Hartford Historical Society Annual Meeting: Pat reported that the HHS Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 7th at 2:00 p.m. and will include a video of the 1961 Hartford Alumni Parade and an ice cream social.
- 13. Next HHPC Meeting:** Jonathan noted that the next HHPC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 18th at 5:15 p.m.
- 14. Adjournment:** Pat made a motion to adjourn. Dennis seconded the motion which was approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.
- 15. HHPC Member Terms:** Dennis Brown (3/11/27), Vice-chair Pat Stark (3/17/28) and Chair Jonathan Schechtman (1/9/26).