

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

Approved Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Dennis Brown, Pat Stark and chair Jonathan Schechtman.

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: John Moody of the Winter Center for Indigenous Traditions and Selectboard Liaison Erik Krauss.

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

- 1. Discussion of Indigenous Archaeological Resources:** Jonathan welcomed guest John Moody of the Winter Center for Indigenous Traditions to talk about a possible CLG grant project documenting indigenous communities in Hartford. Jonathan provided an overview of the CLG Program to John.

John noted that Hartford is in the middle of the Western Abenaki region and our location on the three rivers and with 45 square miles of land in Hartford, there is a high likelihood that Indigenous communities resided here before European settlement. He stated that besides location on rivers, lakes and ponds, sandy soil and south facing orientation are key indicators of indigenous settlements. He also noted that there also is a high likelihood of burial grounds scattered throughout Hartford. John stated that during the 1840s excavation for the railroad in White River Junction, Indigenous burial grounds were exhumed and relocated to the South Main Street Cemetery. He also noted that during the expansion of the White River Junction Sewage Treatment Plant, Indigenous archaeological items were discovered and it was decided to leave the site alone. He will provide the HHPC with a copy of the report. John stated that it is preferred to leave Indigenous artifacts intact in the ground. He noted that when excavation for development occurs, he walks the site to see if there are Indigenous artifacts. He noted that several years ago, Vermont passed legislation that makes it illegal to knowingly disturb Indigenous burial grounds. John would like to see burial grounds protected. He noted that it is very expensive to do archaeological excavations. He suggested that if an archaeological site is discovered, to avoid it. John stated that if we hire an Archaeologist, he recommends Robert Goodby of Monadnock Archaeological Consulting in Dublin, New Hampshire. Jonathan thanked John for attending the meeting and sharing his knowledge. John offered his assistance to work with an archaeologist and weave in history. Dennis thanked John and commented that he learned a lot.

- 2. Public Comments:** Jonathan asked if there were any public comments. There were none.
- 3. Approval of the June 18th & September 17th HHPC Meeting Minutes:** Jonathan asked if there were any comments regarding the meeting minutes of June 18th and the September 17th. Dennis asked about clarification about an item. There was discussion and consensus that the minutes did not need to be changed. Dennis made a motion to approve the minutes of June 18th and September 17th as written. Pat Stark seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.
- 4. HHPC Annual Update to the Selectboard:** Jonathan reported that he went before the Selectboard on September 30th to provide an update on the work of the HHPC. He noted that he thought the discussion went well. Selectboard Liaison Erik Krauss agreed. Jonathan reported that the Selectboard encouraged the HHPC to apply for a CLG grant documenting indigenous communities that existed in Hartford.

5. **Demers Avenue and Victory Circle/Highland Park Historic District Nomination:** Matt reported that Architectural Historian Brian Knight is currently working on research in response to the National Park Service returning the nominations for additional documentation.
6. **Railroad Station Weathervane:** Jonathan reported that he heard from State Archivist David Schutz that David is working on finding a stand and protective enclosure for the weathervane and VTrans Architectural Historian Judith Ehrlich is working on a written agreement between the State and the Town regarding the loaning of the weathervane to the Town.
7. **Railroad Station Improvements:** Matt reported that he received an update from Dan Delabrier of VTrans on the project. Dan said the railroad station improvements that include a new platform are progressing. The cupola was repaired and the south canopy was removed. At this point, Dan noted that there are no plans for the south canopy to be replaced. Matt noted that the HHPC had requested that the south canopy be replaced. The east canopy is also planned to be removed.
8. **Historical District Signs:** Matt reported that sign maker Bonnie Arnold is completing work on the repair of historic district signs. Matt noted that Bonnie is currently working on an estimate for new historic district signs.
9. **Railroad Row Kiosk Certified Local Government Grant:** Matt reported that he is waiting for the grant agreement to be issued by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Once the grant agreement is executed, work may begin on the project.
10. **CLG Coordinator's Meeting:** Matt reported that he will be attending the fall CLG Coordinator's Meeting on October 29th in Montpelier. He said that it will be good to hear what the other 18 Vermont CLG communities are doing.
11. **US 250th Anniversary Commemoration Committee:** Dennis reported that the October 3rd dance at the Wilder Club sponsored by the 250th Committee was well attended and a really fun event. He noted that the 250th banners have been ordered and should arrive any day.
12. **Monument Committee:** Dennis reported that the deadline for names to be submitted is approaching. He noted that many local businesses have agreed to donate their services for the monument. The monument is planned to be completed for the Memorial Day 2026 dedication.
13. **HHPC Openings:** Jonathan noted that we still have two openings.
14. **Announcements:** There were no announcements.
15. **Next HHPC Meeting:** Jonathan noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 19th at 5:15 p.m.
16. **Adjournment:** Pat made a motion to adjourn. Dennis seconded the motion which was approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.
17. **HHPC Member Terms:** Dennis Brown (3/11/27), Vice-chair Pat Stark (3/17/28) and Chair Jonathan Schechtman (1/9/26).