

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, April 19, 2023
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: Dennis Brown, Rich McKenna and Neil Silberman.

A hybrid meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, April 19, 2023 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 are any changes to the agenda. There were none.
- 2. Public Comments:** There were no public comments.
- 3. HHPC Minutes:** Jonathan asked if there were any corrections to the Minutes of March 15th. There were none. Susanne Walker Abetti made a motion to approve the Minutes of March 15th as written. The motion was seconded by Pat Stark and approved.
- 4. VA Hospital Section 106 Review:** Rich McKenna, project manager and engineer at the VA Hospital was present to discuss the proposed renovation of Building #8 at the VA Hospital. Rich noted that the White River Junction VA Hospital is a second-generation VA facility (1919-1950) with the Administration building being constructed in 1938. Building #8 is a three-story brick building that provides outpatient mental health services and includes a prosthetic lab. Building #8 was constructed in 1939. The proposed exterior renovations include replacement of all windows and doors. The slate roof shingles will be replaced with synthetic slate and there will be roof structural reinforcement. Exterior work also will include brick repair and repointing and replacement of walkways. Interior work will result in new walls, floors and ceilings. Rich stated that replacement of the slate shingles with synthetic slate shingles is due to cost, maintenance and the lack of slate roofing workers. Rich noted that each winter, ice and snow slides off the roof and carries some slate shingles with it. Rich provided photos of the building from 1940 and 1962. He also showed a photo of a house with DaVinci synthetic shingles.

Susanne Walker Abetti stated that she is pleased that the VA is renovating the building instead of demolition and replacement. She applauds the VA for doing so. She noted that the proposed DaVinci shingles are a high quality product. She suggested that the VA take before and after photos. Jonathan noted the variation in color of the example synthetic slate shingles. He asked if Building #8 will have variation in shingle color. Rich responded that it has yet to be determined. Jonathan asked if the slate removed from Building #8 that is in good condition will be retained. Rich responded yes, that a couple of pallets will be retained for use on other VA buildings. Susanne noted that the Preservation Trust of Vermont offers an independent evaluation for historic buildings. Rich stated that he will discuss with the architect on the project. Pat asked if any of the VA buildings are listed on the National Register. Matt responded that he will inquire. Dennis Brown asked if coming before the HHPC is a courtesy. Rich responded that review by the State Historic Preservation Officer is required and the HHPC is part of that review. Jonathan thanked Rich for presenting the renovation plans with the Hartford Historic Preservation Commission and providing them with an opportunity to comment.

5. **Hartford Performing Arts History Project:** Consultant Neil Silberman was present to update the HHPC about the PAH project. Neil stated that he is plugging away on the draft report which is over 70 pages at this point. He shared with the HHPC the table of contents and a status of the oral history interviews. Currently, all but two of the interviews and the transcripts have been completed.

Neil presented a mock-up of a PAH brochure which he proposes as an addition to the scope of work to spend out the remaining amount of the grant award (\$1,440). The brochure may be printed or posted on the Town website. Matt noted that the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation supports the proposal. The change will require an amendment to Neil's contract as well as an amendment to the grant agreement with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Neil noted that once a draft of the brochure is completed, the HHPC will have an opportunity to review and comment on it. Jonathan suggested adding "Town of Hartford" to inform the public that the brochure covers the entire Town. Susanne suggested including all of the villages as well.

The HHPC and Neil agreed to hold the second community presentation on Wednesday, June 14th at 6:30 p.m. Neil suggested incorporating audio and video into the powerpoint presentation. The HHPC liked the idea. Jonathan thanked Neil for attending the meeting and providing an update.

6. **2023 CLG Grant Application:** Matt reported that the grant agreement for the Taft's Flat Historic District nomination was issued to the Town so we are able to start work on the project. Matt noted that he has to incorporate putting together a Request for Proposals into his schedule.
7. **HHPC Openings:** Jonathan noted that there are two openings on the Commission.
8. **Announcements:**
 - a. Town Hall Renovation Ribbon Cutting Ceremony: Susanne presented a piece of ribbon from the 10/13/15 ribbon cutting ceremony for the Town Hall renovation for the Hartford Historical Society. The ribbon and ceremony materials were donated by former Selectboard member F.X. Flynn.
 - b. World War I & II Monument: Dennis reported that the Monument Committee applied for and received a Byrne Foundation grant in the amount of \$25,000 which will jump start the project. The project cost is estimated at \$60,000.
 - c. Village Meet-Up in Strafford: Matt reported that the Preservation Trust of Vermont and the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development are sponsoring a day-long gathering in Strafford of Tuesday, June 6th that "will focus on village revitalization, celebrating successes, identifying challenges, and exploring solutions." Matt noted that there is money in the budget to cover the \$25 registration fee.
9. **Next HHPC Meeting:** Jonathan noted that the next HHPC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 17th at 5:00 p.m.
10. **Adjournment:** Pat Stark made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Jonathan Schechtman and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:22 p.m.