

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, June 14, 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 and Neil Silberman.

A hybrid meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, June 14, 2023 in Meeting Room 2 at the Hartford Town Hall. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Jonathan read the hybrid meeting script followed by a roll call.

- 1. Changes to the Agenda:** Jonathan suggested changing the agenda to move the Performing Arts History to the top. The HHPC agreed.
- 2. Hartford Performing Arts History (PAH) Project:** Consultant Neil Silberman was present to update the HHPC about the PAH project. Neil reported that yesterday he submitted a rough draft of the project report. It is over 80 pages without photographs, footnotes or bibliography. He noted that this isn't a typical historic preservation report. He stated that the first two sections are polished and the remaining sections are in a rough draft form. He will be working on fine-tuning the remaining sections over the next few weeks. The report has a table of contents and all of the sections have been developed. In July, Neil plans to work on the brochure. He also will submit copies of the twelve oral history interviews as well as the transcripts and oral history report.

Neil reported that he titled the report "Sharing the Stage: A Report on the Performing Arts Heritage of the Town of Hartford, Vermont". Susanne responded that she likes the title. Others agreed. Neil said that he feels comfortable with the story. Neil said Hartford's history of performing arts is a fascinating story. He stated that a common theme throughout the decades has been key people reaching new audiences with different genres. Matt noted that he thinks the polished first two sections read really well. He said the story is really coming together and he is excited about it. The Commission agreed. Matt asked if photos from the first community meeting powerpoint presentation will be incorporated into the report. Neil responded yes. Neil noted that he's had difficulty tracking down photographs of two key people (Mae Gates and Allard Graves). Jonathan suggested looking at St. Johnsbury newspapers for Allard Graves. Susanne stated that she appreciates Neil's hard work conducting extensive research for the project. Matt suggested asking Junction Arts & Media to record the second community meeting. The HHPC agreed. Neil concluded by noting that the project has been a real adventure. Jonathan thanked Neil for updating the HHPC and for his dedication.

3. Public Comments:

- a. World War I & II Monument: Dennis Brown reported that the American Legion Post 84 pledged \$1,000 to the Monument fundraising campaign.

- 4. HHPC Minutes:** Jonathan asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of May 17th. Susanne noted two corrections. Pat Stark made a motion to approve the Minutes of May 17th with the noted corrections. The motion was seconded by Susanne and unanimously approved.

5. **WRJ Railroad Station South Canopy:** Matt reported that the project is going before the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation at their June 22nd meeting. The meeting is accessible remotely. Matt noted that the agenda and packets have not been posted on their website. He will monitor the website and email the HHPC the details about the meeting. He also agreed to contact Chuck Bohi who had expressed an interest in the project in the past.
6. **Historic District Signs:** Matt reported that he has inventoried about half of the historic district signs in Hartford. After fourteen years, the paint on the signposts is flaking and is in need of scraping, sanding, priming and finish painting. He noted that the signs appear to be in decent shape. Matt stated that the HHPC could do the work or pay a contractor. Jonathan suggested contacting the Boy Scouts to see if they could do the work. Dennis said that it was unfortunate that paint was used instead of stain. He stated that it might be more cost-effective to purchase new signposts.

Matt reported that two of the Hartford Village historic district signs on Maple Street are missing. The westbound sign was never recovered from the Maple Street construction project. The contractor said the sign was dropped off at the VTrans District 4 office. VTrans twice looked for it and responded that they did not have it. Matt also checked with the Hartford Department of Public Works and they didn't have it. The eastbound sign went missing during late winter. Matt noted that the maker of the signs (Steve Arkwright of Hartford Signs) has retired. Steve recommended Rule Signs, a sign company in Randolph as an alternative. Matt suggested posting on the Listserv about the missing signs. Susanne agreed and stated that we should emphasize that the signs were paid with taxpayer money. Pat noted that we need historic district signs for the Terraces Historic District.

7. **Taft's Flat Historic District Nomination:** Matt reported that he plans to work on a Request for Proposals for the project later this month. Matt will email the draft RFP to the HHPC for their review.
8. **HHPC Openings:** Jonathan noted that there are two openings on the Commission.
9. **Announcements:**
 - a. Village Meet-Up in Strafford: Susanne reported that on June 6th, she attended the Village Meet-up at the Strafford Meeting House sponsored by the Preservation Trust of Vermont and the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development. There was a great turnout. She stated that it was a really good event that brought folks from all over Vermont. The venue was lovely. She noted that she heard several inspiring stories.
 - b. Donation to Historical Society: Pat reported that Peter Hughes donated the clock from the former Dewey's Mill Post Office in Quechee to the Hartford Historical Society.
 - c. Baseball in Vermont Program: Pat reported that the Hartford Historical Society is working on a program on the history of baseball in Vermont.
10. **Next HHPC Meeting:** Jonathan noted that the next HHPC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 19th at 5:00 p.m. Jonathan requested that the West Hartford Church be put on the agenda.
11. **Adjournment:** Pat made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Susanne and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.
12. **HHPC Member Terms:** Susanne Walker Abetti (3/21/25), Vice-chair Pat Stark (3/7/25) and Chair Jonathan Schechtman (1/9/26).