

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
Wednesday, July 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.

A hybrid meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, July 19, 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 asked if there are any changes to the agenda. There were none.
- 2. HHPC Minutes:** Jonathan asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of June 14<sup>th</sup>. There were none. Pat Stark made a motion to approve the Minutes of June 14<sup>th</sup> as written. The motion was seconded by Susanne Walker Abetti and unanimously approved.
- 3. Public Comments:** There were no public comments.
- 4. Hartford Performing Arts History (PAH) Project:** Matt Osborn reported that consultant Neil Silberman is plugging along on the report as well as editing the transcripts of the oral history interviews. Neil expects to have a refined draft report for the HHPC to review by mid-August. Matt noted that the second community meeting will be scheduled for some time in September.
- 5. WRJ Railroad Station South Canopy:** Matt reported that the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (VACHP) reviewed VTrans' proposal to demolish the railroad station south canopy at their June 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. VTrans proposes demolition since the canopy isn't being used. The HHPC recommended replacing the canopy since its removal would take away from the historic character of the station. At the meeting, the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP) announced that they found the original construction plans and stated that if the canopy was constructed according to the plans, VDHP would consider it a contributing building to the White River Junction Historic District. VDHP recommended rehabilitation or replacement according to the original plans. The VACHP voted unanimously to rehabilitate or replace the south canopy. Matt noted that since the VACHP is only advisory, he is not sure what VTrans will do with the canopy. He inquired with VTrans about the project status but has not heard back which is likely due to last week's flood. Matt agreed to follow-up.
- 6. Taft's Flat Historic District Nomination:** Matt distributed a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a consultant to prepare historic district nominations for the Taft's Flat. He noted that we are asking the consultant to prioritize Taft's Flat neighborhoods to determine which historic district nominations to proceed with at this time. He also stated that we are asking the consultant to examine the list of individual nominations. Matt stated that he would like to release the RFP on Friday, 7/28 and requested comments from the HHPC by Tuesday, 7/25.
- 7. West Hartford Church:** Matt reported that the Church is presently owned by the West Hartford Meetinghouse Corporation. Since the building is no longer used as a church, the property was put back on the tax rolls. The property currently has been assessed taxes for the past few years and have

not been paid. Matt noted that the property does not have heat, a well or septic system and there is limited parking on site. If the property goes to tax sale, it may not have any interested buyers. The HHPC noted the challenges posed for the property. Susanne suggested contacting the Preservation Trust of Vermont to get their input. Others agreed. Dennis Brown noted that he was in Grafton, New Hampshire recently and noticed that the Grafton Church which had been damaged by fire was being repaired. There was a sign identifying funding from the Byrne Foundation.

- 8. World War 1 & II Monument:** Jonathan reported that the proposal to restore the monument and locate it at the Veterans Park on Railroad Row went before the White River Junction Design Review Committee recently. He was impressed with the plans. The Design Review Committee recommended approval to the Hartford Planning Commission which will review the application at their July 31<sup>st</sup> public hearing. Dennis noted that to date, \$31,000 has been raised for the restoration.
- 9. HHPC Openings:** Jonathan noted that there are two openings on the Commission.
- 10. Announcements:**
  - a. Hartford Historical Society September Program: Pat reported that the Hartford Historical Society will be sponsoring a program on county fairs which is scheduled for Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>.
- 11. Next HHPC Meeting:** Jonathan noted that the next HHPC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.
- 12. Adjournment:** Pat made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Susanne and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.
- 13. HHPC Member Terms:** Susanne Walker Abetti (3/21/25), Vice-chair Pat Stark (3/7/25) and Chair Jonathan Schechtman (1/9/26).