

MINUTES

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

September 13, 2006

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Robert E. Cusack

Mr. Robert Goff

Mr. John Grosvenor, AIA

Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board

Mr. Karst Hoogeboom

Mr. George Johnson, Statewide Planning

Dr. Patrick Malone

Dr. E. Pierre Morenon

Dr. Ronald Onorato

Mr. Jean Rondeau

Mr. Frederick C. Williamson, Chairman & SHPO

STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Jeffrey Emidy, National Register Assistant

Ms. Pamela Kennedy, Deputy Director

Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director

Ms. Sarah Zurier, Special Projects Coordinator

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Joseph Dias, representing Dr. Michael Sullivan, Director DEM

Dr. James Garman, NR Review Board

Mr. Saul Kaplan, Executive Director, EDC

Ms. Patrice O'Malley Hagan

Dr. Patricia Rubertone

State Building Commissioner

GUESTS

Clark Schoettle

Jennifer Fields

Edward Connors

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 A.M., Mr. Williamson, presiding.

2. Minutes of June 14, 2006, meeting

On a motion by Mr. Hoogeboom, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission

VOTED unanimously to approve the Minutes of June 14, 2006.

3. Executive Director's Report

a) Mr. Sanderson welcomed Commissioner Jean Rondeau who has recently been appointed. Mr. Rondeau replaces Dr. Snyder.

b) Mr. Sanderson reported that Commissioners Grosvenor, Hoozeboom, Goff, and Cusack have been reappointed and confirmed. Mr. Cusack described the Senate confirmation hearing.

c) Mr. Sanderson presented final fiscal reports for State Fiscal Year 2006.

d) Mr. Sanderson reported that he and staff are currently preparing the Commission's SFY 2008 Budget Request. Each year, the Budget Office sets budget targets for each agency. This year two targets were provided: a 15% reduction target and a 3% growth target. Under ground rules set by the Budget Office, each agency must submit budget proposals that meet the targets, even though the target may be less than the amount of funding needed to run the agency and provide essential services. During the fall, the Budget Office meets with agency heads to discuss budget recommendations that may be included in the Governor's budget recommendation.

e) Mr. Sanderson has received a White House appointment as an expert participant at the Preserve America Summit on the future of the national historic preservation program scheduled for October 18 – 20 in New Orleans.

f) The U. S. House of Representatives Government Reform Committee has invited Mr. Sanderson to testify at a September 20 hearing on Historic Preservation and Community Development. The Committee is interested in hearing about the success of the RI Historic Preservation Investment Tax Credit.

g) Ms. Zurier reported on the 2006 State Preservation Grants application process and the work of the grants selection committee.

4. National Register Review Board

Preliminary State Preservation Grant consideration

Border Farm, 31 North Road, Foster

Ms. Zurier presented information about this early 19th-century farm that includes a 1840s farmhouse with a Federal style entrance, early 20th-century barn, possible cellar-hole of an earlier house, and 200 acres of pasture and woodland crossed by stone walls. The property is owned by Borders Farm Preservation, Inc. Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval for nomination.

Woody Hill School, Woody Hill Road, Exeter

Ms. Zurier presented information about the 1832 one-room school. The school was closed in 1942, and it remains remarkably intact, including an early stove, desks, chalkboards, and simple trim. Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval for nomination.

Belknap School, 509 Greenville Avenue, Johnston

Ms. Zurier presented information about the c. 1892 one-room school that closed in the 1930s. The exterior has been restored, while the interior retains some woodwork elements. Following discussion, on a motion by Mr. Grosvenor, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval for nomination.

Bay Spring Community Center, 170 Narragansett Avenue, Barrington

Ms. Zurier presented information about this 1912 fire station that has a community room on the second floor. 800 people attended the opening of the fire station in 1912. The community room was renovated in 1937. This architecturally modest building recalls the

early history of Barrington's development as a community. Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Dr. Malone, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval for nomination.

Final National Register Approvals

Rosedale Apartments, 1180 Narragansett Blvd., Cranston

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the property, a 1939 apartment building designed in the Art Moderne style, overlooking Narragansett Bay. Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission unanimously

VOTED final approval of the nomination.

Earnscliffe Woolen Mill, 25 & 39 Manton Avenue, Providence

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the property, a late 19th – early 20th-century mill for spinning, weaving, and finishing woolen and worsted goods. Paragon Company of Woonsocket acquired the mill early in the 20th century. Dr. Malone noted that the property is a

good example of integrated operations within an important Rhode Island industry. Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission unanimously

VOTED final approval of the nomination.

Preliminary National Register Approvals

General Ice Cream Company, 485 Plainfield Street, Providence

Mr. Emidy presented information about this property, an ice cream factory from 1915 to 1967. It was the largest ice cream manufacturer in Rhode Island, and it was one of four ice cream factories in Plainfield Street area. The building is architecturally modest, and windows have been replaced or bricked-in. On the interior, floors that slope to central drains and some distinction between production areas and storage areas reflect the ice cream manufacturing process. Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Malone, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously

VOTED that the property might meet National Register criteria if research connected it to significant aspects of the dairy industry or the ice cream industry in Rhode Island.

Discussion of National Register nomination process for individual houses

Ms. Kennedy reported that the cost of preparing National Register nominations has risen significantly in the last few years. RIHPHC staff prepare some nominations, but usually they work on district nominations which list many buildings. For developers of large projects, the cost of engaging a professional consultant is not prohibitive. However, individual property owners who want to have their houses registered find the cost unmanageable.

RIHPHC staff proposes to offer these homeowners an alternative: a simplified nomination process which will rely on the property owner to supply needed information about the property. The process will be available to owners of single-family houses which have been identified in a community survey as potentially eligible for the National Register for the quality of their architecture. The property owner will supply the information needed to document and evaluate the property, including description of the interior and exterior, digital photographs, available historical information, plat & lot, maps, floor plans, and the like. If RIHPHC staff review concludes that the house is indeed eligible for the National Register, a staff member will spend one day working on the nomination (to include a brief site visit, a summary of the description and significance statements, and additional photographs as necessary) in order to prepare a nomination which minimally documents the property.

These owner-prepared nominations will be considered by the Review

Board at a single meeting each year, probably in July. The nominations will be evaluated by the Review Board using a prepared context statement for the consideration of single-family houses which are eligible as good examples of a period, type, or style of construction.

For the purposes of this program, a house will be nominated for a single area of significance (architecture), under a single criterion (C), with a single period of significance (usually the date of construction), even when it is likely that other areas, criteria, and periods are also relevant. It is unlikely that such minimal nominations will display the substantial historical research which has characterized RIHPHC nominations in the past, but in evaluating these nominations the Review Board and staff will insure that the properties meet the National Register eligibility criteria and that they are clearly individually eligible.

The expected result is a series of simplified nominations which will allow for the listing of individual houses, prepared by the property owners and RIHPHC staff, requiring substantially less time, effort, and expense than a usual nomination. It is possible that these simplified nominations may be altered in the future as additional information becomes available. It is hoped that these nominations will assist homeowners to appreciate the historical and architectural value of their property and encourage good preservation work by homeowners.

5. Report of the Loan Committee

Mr. Goff distributed a report showing the status of Loan funds and current loans. He reported that He and Ms. Allison will meet with a prospective borrower in Pawtucket's Quality Hill neighborhood to review financial aspects of the proposed loan.

6. Other business: There was no other business.

7. Next meeting date: The next meeting of the Commission will be Wednesday, September 13, 2006.

8. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:35 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,

**Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer**