



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION  
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MINUTES

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION  
November 14, 2007

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Robert E. Cusack  
Mr. John Grosvenor, AIA  
Ms. Patrice O'Malley Hagan  
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board  
Mr. Karst Hooeboom  
Dr. Ronald Onorato  
Mr. George Johnson representing, Kevin Flynn, Asso. Dir for State Planning  
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson representing Frederick C. Williamson, Chairman & SHPO

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Pamela Kennedy, Deputy Director  
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director  
Ms. Sarah Zurier, Sr. Special Projects Coordinator

GUESTS

Mr. Michael Hogan, House Policy Office  
Edward Connors, National Register Consultant  
Robert Medeiros, Norman Bird Sanctuary  
Ms. Virginia Sindelar, Grace Note Farm

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Joseph Dias, representing Dr. Michael Sullivan, Director DEM  
Dr. James Garman, NR Review Board  
Mr. Robert Goff  
Mr. Saul Kaplan, Executive Director, EDC  
John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner  
Dr. Patrick Malone  
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon  
Mr. Jean Rondeau  
Dr. Patricia Rubertone

## II. AGENDA

### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 A.M.

### 2. Minutes of October 10, 2007 meeting

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

VOTED unanimously to approve the Minutes of October 10, 2007.

### 3. Executive Director's Report

a) The Budget Office has accepted the Commission's budget request for State Fiscal Year 2009. In order to meet the mandated budget target set by the Budget Office, with reluctance RIHPHC had proposed closing Eisenhower House. That proposal was not accepted and the Budget Office is recommending including Eisenhower House operation in the SFY 2009 appropriation. The Budget Office is not recommending funding for the currently vacant position of National Register Assistant. That position was vacated in September with the promotion of Jeff Emidy to the Senior Project Review Coordinator position vacated with Rick Greenwood's resignation. National Register Assistant processes national Register nominations and reviews requests for historic certification for tax credits; RIHPHC needs to continue efforts to obtain approval for filling this position.

b) Mr. Sanderson testified at the November State Revenue Estimating Conference to report on historic preservation tax credit estimates. In calendar year 2007, estimated tax credits total \$61.9 million, and in calendar year 2008 and 2009, estimated tax credits total \$95.9 million and \$95.4 million. The cumulative total of all completed and all active tax credits projects is \$450.5 million in income tax credits. This cumulative total is \$4 million less than the total estimated six months ago, and it may reflect at "plateauing" in the growth of the program since 2002.

c) Dr. Robinson and Mr. Sanderson met with the Narragansett Indian Tribal Council on October 25 to report on the Salt Ponds Archaeological Site. The Tribal Council expressed strong concern for preservation of the site and will vote on a resolution of support for preservation at its next meeting.

d) Mr. Sanderson was a speaker at a recent Washington, DC conference on historic rehabilitation tax credits and affordable housing tax credits.

#### 4. Approval of 2007 State Preservation Grants

Ms. Zurier reported that the State Preservation Grants (SPG) program is now in its fifth year. The program was created by the RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) as a result of a successful bond issue in 2002 and was extended with a second bond issue in 2004. The bond issues provided \$6 million for the RIHPHC to distribute through a competitive grant program. Regulations for the program were adopted in June 2003 and revised in May 2005.

In 2003, 46 grant applications were received from museums and cultural arts centers, and 26 of them received a combined total of \$1.5 million. In 2004, 50 grant applications were received from museums and cultural arts centers, and 24 of them received a combined total of \$1.5 million. Changes made to the program in 2005 invited applications from public historic sites, like town halls and public libraries; also the amount of available funds was reduced to \$1 million per year for three years. The 2005 grant round yielded 36 applications, and 21 of them received a combined total of \$1 million. The 2006 grant round yielded 40 applications, and 20 received a combined total of \$1 million.

The past 91 grant awards have ranged from \$5000 to \$200,000, have reached every region of the state, and include projects in 21 cities and towns. To date, 44 projects are complete, and the remaining projects are more or less underway.

In 2007, RIHPHC received 36 applications from 19 cities and towns. Requests for assistance with capital preservation projects totaled \$2,126,629. Of these requests, 10 were for small projects that cost \$45,000 or less, and 26 were for large projects that cost up to \$3.9 million.

Once the applications were checked for completeness, RIHPHC staff members and SPG Review Panel members received at least 20 applications each to review and score. Everyone was asked to identify potential conflicts-of-interest, and not to read or comment on those applications. Staff members discussed their individual scores, and consolidated their scores to reflect staff consensus (to be included as Pam's scores in Review Panel deliberations).

The SPG Review Panel met for the first time on September 28, and Ron Onorato was elected Chairman. Within the pool of Small Project applications, the panel arrived on a consensus score and asked staff to collect additional information about specific applications. They repeated the process for Large Project applications. The panel's assignment for the next meeting was to rank applications within the Small and Large Project pools and within separate geographical regions. One application (Westerly Public Library) was eliminated because the bulk of the proposed work consisted of ineligible activities—repairs and improvements to furnishings.

In the weeks following the meeting, staff collected additional information that was distributed to staff and review panel members in mid-October. Staff members met to discuss and consolidate their ranks to reflect staff consensus (to be included as Pam's ranks in Review Panel deliberations).

The SPG Review Panel met for the second time on November 7. The Review Panel recommended two projects for full funding in the Blackstone Valley (\$162,317); six in the East Bay (\$296,288); three in Providence (\$116,136); and one in the North/West (\$11,880). In the other regions, the Reviewers recommended full or partial funding for individual projects. The panel recommended five projects in South County (\$212,549) and three in Newport (\$245,011). Partial funding reflected an intent to make substantial commitments to large projects while not overlooking the many other excellent projects.

There was only one property recommended for SPG funding which is not already listed on the National Register. The Sherman Windmill at Prescott Farm in Middletown has previously been recommended for listing. The Newport Restoration Foundation will go ahead with nominating the windmill and/or the farm to the Register.

It was recommended that the grant to Franklin Farm be made contingent on instigation of a Preservation Plan, as partially funded by the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

The recommendations include nine Small Project Grants (\$159,082) and eleven Large Project Grants (\$885,099); \$1885 reserved for purchasing construction signs; and \$4000 reserved for bond fees) for a total of \$1,050,066. Of the 20 State Preservation Grant projects in 2007, eight applied for the first time in 2007, five had applied for funds before but had not received a grant, and seven had received a grant before. Thirteen cities and towns are represented among the awardees.

Ms. Zurier briefly summarized the recommendations of the State Preservation Grants Review Panel illustrated with a power-point presentation.

**REVIEW PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR 2007 STATE PRESERVATION GRANTS**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>Request\$</b>	<b>Grant\$</b>	<b>Total proj.\$</b>
Franklin Farm Barn	Blackstone	Cumberland	\$69,000	\$69,000	\$138,000
<b>Looff Carousel</b>	Blackstone	Pawtucket	\$93,317	\$93,317	\$203,317
<b>Bristol Naval Armory</b>	East Bay	Bristol	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,475
<b>Blithewold</b>	East Bay	Bristol	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$1,078,500
<b>Wilbor House Museum</b>	East Bay	Little Compton	\$29,773	\$29,773	\$44,660
<b>Sherman Windmill</b>	East Bay	Middletown	\$15,950	\$15,950	\$23,925
<b>Witherbee School</b>	East Bay	Middletown	\$22,330	\$22,330	\$33,495
<b>Maxwell House</b>	East Bay	Warren	\$28,235	\$28,235	\$42,352
<b>Kingscote</b>	Newport	Newport	\$95,011	\$95,011	\$331,727
<b>Cushing Art Gallery</b>	Newport	Newport	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$485,516
<b>Great Friends Meeting House</b>	Newport	Newport	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$265,430
<b>Foster Town House</b>	North/West	Foster	\$11,880	\$11,880	\$22,860
<b>John Brown House</b>	Providence	Providence	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$248,750
<b>Museum of Natural History</b>	Providence	Providence	\$9,166	\$9,166	\$13,750
<b>Ladd Observatory</b>	Providence	Providence	\$46,970	\$46,970	\$101,290
<b>Beavertail Light</b>	South County	Jamestown	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$709,055
<b>Block Island Historical Soc.</b>	South County	New Shoreham	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$230,450
<b>Smith's Castle</b>	South County	North Kingstown	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$45,000
<b>Hale House</b>	South County	South Kingstown	\$70,801	\$70,801	\$323,134
<b>Reynolds House</b>	South County	South Kingstown	\$11,748	\$11,748	\$17,622
			<b>PROJECTS</b>	<b>\$1,044,181</b>	<b>\$4,559,308</b>
			<b>SIGNS</b>	<b>\$1,885</b>	
			<b>BOND COSTS</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>	
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,050,066</b>	

**2007 SPG REVIEW PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS DISTRIBUTION**

	<b>requested</b>	<b>requests</b>	<b>awarded</b>	<b>awards</b>	<b>total spent</b>
<b>SMALL</b>	\$182,793	10	\$159,082	8	15.1%
<b>LARGE</b>	\$1,943,836	26	\$885,099	12	84.3%
<b>SIGNS</b>			\$1,885		.2%
<b>BOND FEE</b>			\$4,000		.4%
<b>ALL</b>	<b>\$2,126,629</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>\$1,050,066</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>BLACKSTONE VALLEY</b>	\$206,664	3	\$162,317	2	15.5%
<b>EAST BAY/ISLANDS</b>	\$362,910	8	\$296,288	6	28.2%
<b>NEWPORT</b>	\$496,511	6	\$245,011	3	23.3%
<b>NORTH/WEST</b>	\$28,591	2	\$11,880	1	1.1%
<b>PROVIDENCE</b>	\$466,404	7	\$116,136	3	11.1%
<b>SOUTH COUNTY</b>	565,549	10	\$212,549	5	20.2%
<b>SIGNS</b>			\$1,885		.2%
<b>BOND FEE</b>			\$4,000		.4%
<b>ALL</b>	<b>\$2,126,629</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>\$1,050,066</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

During discussion, Dr. Onorato commended the work of the Review Panel, and Mr. Sanderson thanked Sarah Zurier and Pamela Kennedy for their work in the review process. Following discussion, on a motion by Mr. Hoozeboom, seconded by Ms. Hagen, the Commission

VOTED to approve the recommended 2007 State Preservation Grants.

Two Commissioners were recorded as not voting on certain grant applications. Dr. Onorato did not vote on Hale House. Mr. Grosvenor did not vote on Blithewold, Great Friends Meeting House, Museum of natural History, and Beavertail Lighthouse.

5. National Register of Historic Places

Final Nominations

Broadway-Armory Historic District (Boundary Increase) Providence

Ms. Kennedy presented information about an amendment to the historic district boundary to include several 19<sup>th</sup>-century buildings located at the corner of Broadway and Dean Streets. Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the amendment to the nomination.

### Paradise Farm, Middletown

Ms. Zurier presented information about the property that includes a 1755 farmhouse, an 1860 barn, an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century carriage shed, a family cemetery with internments dating from 1786 to 1872 (additional, unmarked burials of slaves are believed to be located south of the house), and an agricultural landscape of open fields and stone walls. The land may contain archaeological sites related to Native American and African American farmer workers and slaves; archaeological investigations are being conducted by the Public Archaeology Lab. The Colonial house became the headquarters of a summer estate for the Norman Family during the 1890s, and Providence architects Clarke & Howe were hired in 1915 to "update" the exterior in the Colonial Revival style and to add Neo-Federal style mantels and trim on the interior. The farmhouse was expanded to the rear, leaving the original building plan intact. The extensive property has been preserved as the Norman Bird Sanctuary. Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Ms. Hagen, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the nomination.

### Preliminary Consideration

#### Grace Note Farm, 969 Jackson Schoolhouse Road, Burrillville

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the history of the property beginning with its settlement as a farm in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A typical one and a-half story farmhouse remains with additions and alterations. On the original building, the center chimney has been replaced and new single, double, triple windows have been added; at one end of the house, a 2-story section has been added; at the opposite end two one-story extensions have been added. On the interior, some ceilings have been removed and extensive historic timber framing and board paneling from other structures has been added. Former barns have been remodeled for use as horse stalls; a former shed has been remodeled as a guest apartment; and board fences for horses divide the open land. A 19<sup>th</sup>-century cranberry bog is not in use. A small historic cemetery is located on the property.

During discussion, several Commissioners noted that although the property has a very attractive character and preserves beautiful forest and meadow land, extensive alterations have been made to the property that diminish its historical integrity as a potential National Register nomination. The Owner, Ms. Virginia Sindelar, explained that prior to her ownership, a former owner had begun to repair the deteriorated building by stripping out worn materials, and after a 1950 fire the building was gutted and used for the storage of antiques.

Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission unanimously

VOTED that Grace Note Farm contains many interesting features and preserves an attractive natural setting, but the extent of alterations to the physical fabric of the house and outbuildings has irretrievably compromised the National Register integrity of the property, and it is not

recommended for National Register nomination.

Following the vote, Ms. Kennedy explained that the RI General Assembly enacted legislation in the 2007 session to permit "historic" farms serving a limited number of tourist visitors to serve meals prepared in a kitchen not fully licensed by the State Department of Health. The intent of the legislation was to assist farm-based heritage tourism. In discussions of the draft legislation, RIHPHC explained that the standard definition of "historic" is listed on the National Register or designated by local historic district zoning and certified by RIHPHC. This definition of "historic property" is applied by the RIHPHC to regulatory and advisory reviews of development, approval of tax credits, award of grants, relief from provisions of the state building code, etc. Grace Note Farm serves guests who are interested in horseback riding, and the owner wished to qualify for the relaxed Department of Health kitchen regulation. Commission members noted that the worthwhile purpose of encouraging agricultural heritage tourism does not need to be linked exclusively to historic farms, and they recommended that the legislation could be amended to allow a broader range of traditional farms to participate in the program.

6. Other business:

There was no other business.

7. Next meeting date: The next meeting of the Commission will be Wednesday, December 12, 2007.

8. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,

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