



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

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
April 11, 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 Hoogeboom
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Dr. Patricia Rubertone
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson representing Frederick C. Williamson, Chairman & SHPO

STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Jeffrey Emidy, National Register Assistant
Ms. Pamela Kennedy, Deputy Director
Dr. Paul Robinson, Principal Archaeologist
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director

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
Mr. George Johnson, Statewide Planning
John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner
Dr. Ronald Onorato
Mr. Jean Rondeau

GUESTS

Mr. Michael Hogan, House Policy Office
Rev. Patrick Crough, Old Stone Church, Tiverton
Frederick Stachura & Tina Regan, The Historic Collaborative
Mr. Richard Bixby, Tiverton

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 A.M., Mr. Hooageboom, presiding in the absence of Mr. Williamson, Chair.

2. Minutes of March 14, 2007, meeting

On a motion by Ms. Hagen, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission

VOTED unanimously to approve the Minutes of March 14, 2007.

3. Executive Director's Report

a) Mr. Sanderson reminded Commissioners that the date of the annual statewide historic preservation conference was April 14.

b) Mr. Sanderson announced that Paul Robinson would report on archaeology and the Salt Ponds development project later in the meeting.

4. National Register Review Board

Final Nominations

Harris Mill, Main Street, Coventry

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the three-story, stone mill constructed in 1850; the 1850 picker house (stone); 1883 spinning mill (stone); and the 1912 weave shed (brick); and boiler houses and engine house. Some 19th-century machinery remains in the mill buildings. The well-preserved mill complex is adjacent to the Harris Mill Village that is not included in the current National Register nomination but probably is eligible for listing. During discussion, Commissioners were interested in the existence of historic mill machinery, and they asked RIHPHC staff to urge the owner to preserve and record these artifacts. Following further discussion, on a motion by Mr. Grosvenor, seconded by Ms. Hagen, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the nomination.

Franklin Farm, Abbott Run Valley Road, Cumberland

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the 19th-century farm complex that includes a mid-century farmhouse, a rare early 19th-century English barn, and an early 20th-century dairy barn. This is a well-preserved general farm that became a dairy operation in the early 20th century. Sixty-five acres of the original farmland remain with the property. Following

discussion, on a motion by Ms. Hagen, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the nomination.

Downtown Providence Historic District Amendment

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the amendment that adds seven early 20th-century buildings that are consistent with the history and architectural character of the historic district. During discussion Mr. Grosvenor noted the potential for future development in the area of the amendment, he felt the buildings were of marginal significance, and he questioned whether the National Register listing would lessen development opportunities. Ms. Hagen replied that including the buildings in the National Register historic district may encourage preservation of smaller scale historic buildings that are part of the character of the district and that promote a walkable neighborhood. Following discussion, on a motion by Ms. Hagen, seconded by Dr. Rubertone, the Commission

VOTED to approve the nomination. Mr. Grosvenor voted no.

Preliminary Presentations

Wickford Historic District Amendment

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the amendment to add three late 19th-century houses that are located adjacent to the current boundary of the historic district and that are consistent with the history and architectural character of the district. Following further discussion, on a motion by Dr. Rubertone, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval for nomination of the amendment.

Old Stone Church, 7 Old Stone Church Road, Tiverton

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the well-preserved 1845 Greek Revival church building. The interior retains historic features. The property also includes a mid-century Italianate cottage parsonage, an 1850 Church Hall, and an historic parish cemetery. The congregation gathered in the 17th century, and this parish has been an important local institution in the history of the Town of Tiverton. The property is the site of the annual townwide clambake. Following further discussion, on a motion by Dr. Rubertone, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval for nomination.

Rich's Annex Diner, Cranston

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the 1933 Worcester Lunch Car Company diner. This diner first opened in Newburyport, Massachusetts in 1933; the wholly self-contained diner structure was treated as an addition to an existing diner. In 1936, it was remodeled by the original manufacturer. In 1937, it was sold and moved to Concord, New Hampshire where it was operated as a "stand-alone" diner until 1996. It was moved to Providence, Rhode Island in 2000, and then moved again to its current site in Cranston, RI. The diner retains many elements of its historic design including an arched roof with monitor windows, metal panels on the exterior, general interior layout (cooking area, counter area, table area), and tiles on some walls and floors. The owner reports that the following items that were removed from the diner are in safe storage and will be returned: marble service counter, silver-metal grill hood, leaded windows, chrome hat racks, counter stools, enameled refrigerator doors. The booths and tables are missing, but the owner expects to replace them during restoration with similar materials from other historic diners.

During discussion, Commissioners expressed enthusiasm for the preservation of historic diners, but several Commissioners noted the unusual circumstances of this particular diner, including its multiple relocations and especially the problem of historic integrity due to the number of character-defining features that have been removed. Ms. Kennedy reported on a conversation with staff at the National Register program at the National Park Service who indicated that a property may only be judged on the basis of its physical condition at the time of nomination. If the Commission believes Rich's Annex Diner is eligible for the National Register in its current state, then the Commission may act on a nomination; or, if the Commission does not believe Rich's Annex Diner is eligible for the National Register in its current state, then the Commission may decline to nominate the property until the missing elements are back in place. Dr. Malone described the difficulties of accurately restoring a historic diner and urged the Commission to be cautious about taking an action before seeing the finished restoration work. Following further discussion, on a motion by Dr. Morenon, seconded by Mr. Cusack, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval for nomination with a number of concerns and reservations. In its existing condition the diner does not appear to meet National Register eligibility, however, once the missing features are replaced the diner may meet National Register eligibility. Each missing element that is replaced must be documented concerning its date and origin of manufacture, its original use and the circumstances of its reuse in Rich's Annex Diner. In addition, the Commission will take into account the workmanship and skill of the completed restoration work. The Commission's preliminary approval does not apply to a re-creation of the original appearance of Rich's Annex Diner using new materials. Finally, the Commission will welcome historical research that places Rich's Annex Diner into historical context and demonstrates the property's level of National Register significance.

3. Executive Director's Report continued

- b) Archaeology at Salt Pond Seaport Village development project – CRMC File #1989-02-032.

Dr. Robinson provided a summary of the project and the archaeology. Currently planned for 50 house lots, archaeological site RI 110 is a large, complex and important 500 year-old Narragansett Indian settlement. The site is a place of human burial and ceremonial activity as well as containing rare evidence of Narragansett daily life before the beginning of European settlement. The diversity and complexity of the site is not matched by any known site in Rhode Island and perhaps, New England. Investigations conducted so far have documented cultural features throughout the Salt Pond Seaport Village project area, so that development here will be unable to avoid adverse impacts to the archaeological site. The Narragansett Indian Tribe has identified the site as a place of cultural and spiritual importance to the Tribe.

Mr. Sanderson distributed a copy of Section 220 of the RI Coastal Resources Management Plan, and he distributed sections of RIHPHC *Procedures for Registration and Protection of Historic Properties* that relate to the Commission's evaluation of historical significance and consideration of an undertaking by the Commission.

At the present time, the landowner is carrying out archaeological investigations under a permit issued by RIHPHC for testing within the area of a planned roadway. The landowner has submitted an application for a new archaeology permit for testing within planned house lots; that application is under review.

The Commission received the reports presented by Dr. Robinson and Mr. Sanderson and took the information under advisement. During discussion, Commissioners Morenon and Rubertone and Review Board member Hebert emphasized the significance of the archaeological information presented. The Commissioners requested that Mr. Sanderson continue to carryout the RIHPHC and CRMC review processes. At the May 9, 2007 Commission meeting, Mr. Sanderson will provide an additional report on the status of this project.

6. Other business:
7. There was no other business.
8. Next meeting date: The next meeting of the Commission will be Wednesday, May 9, 2007.
9. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:15 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,

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