



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

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION May 14, 2008

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Robert E. Cusack
Mr. John Grosvenor, AIA
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board
Mr. Karst Hoogeboom
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Dr. Ronald Onorato
Mr. Jared L. Rhodes, Chief of Statewide Planning representing Kevin Flynn, Asso. Dir
Dr. Patricia Rubertone
Mr. Frederick C. Williamson, Chairman & SHPO

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Pamela Kennedy, Deputy Director
Ms. Mercedes Monteiro, Heritage Aide
Dr. Paul Robinson, Principal Archaeologist
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director

GUESTS

Mr. Michael Hogan, House Policy Office
Mr. Charles Adams, Jackson House owner
Ms. Elizabeth Warren, NR consultant
Mr. Michael Van Leesten & Mr. Clark Schoettle, Bomes Theatre

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Joseph Dias, representing Dr. Michael Sullivan, Director DEM
Dr. James Garman, NR Review Board
Mr. Robert Goff
Ms. Patrice O'Malley Hagan
Mr. Saul Kaplan, Executive Director, EDC
John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner
Mr. Jean Rondeau

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 A.M.

2. Minutes of April 12, 2008 meeting

The Minutes of April 12, 2008 were deferred.

3. Executive Director's Report

a) Dr. Robinson and Mr. Sanderson reported on the status of archaeological site RI #110 and the Salt Pond Residences project. (See separate memorandum.)

b) Mr. Sanderson reported on new legislative amends to the RI Historic Preservation Investment Tax Credit. The Rhode Island House Finance Committee voted April 3, 2008 to approve H-8016 Sub A, proposed legislation that would make significant changes to Rhode Island's Historic Preservation Investment Tax Credit program. The new bill allows most projects that are already in the pipeline to continue with a reduced credit amount and higher fee. A moratorium on new projects would go into effect as of January 1, 2008.

Summary of H-8016 Sub A

RIHPHC staff are working with the Division of Taxation to promulgate rules and regulations for implementation of the changes, and the adopted rules and regulations will determine how the process is actually carried out.

1. Provide the full 30% tax credit for projects that were completed by December 31, 2007, with no caps placed on credit redemption. Part 3 Applications must be submitted to RIHPHC and fee paid on or before May 15, 2008. Projects that fail to meet this deadline will be treated under the new rules.
2. Restrict future eligibility to projects that submitted a Part 1 application to RIHPHC prior to January 1, 2008. Projects that submitted a Part 1 application to RIHPHC after December 31, 2007 will not be eligible for the program.
3. Require projects that want to continue in the program to pay an up-front processing fee ranging from 3% to 5% of Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures, with 2.25% due on or before May 15, 2008, and the balance due on or before March 5, 2009.
4. Reduce the tax credit to between 27% to 25%, depending on other options chosen by developers. They would be given the option of paying a 3% processing fee and receiving a 25% credit; paying a 4% fee and receiving a 26% credit; or paying a 5% fee and receiving a 27% credit. (By comparison, through 2007 developers paid a 2.25% fee upon project completion and received a 30% credit).
5. On or before May 15, 2008, every project that continues in the program will enter into a contract with the Division of Taxation stating the amount of project Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures, the tax credit percentage, and the amount of fees. The contract will constitute a

State guaranty that the stated amount of tax credits will be available when earned. In a significant change from current law, projects will not be allowed to claim additional tax credits based on an increase in the Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures. If final Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures should be less than the amount stated in the contract, overpayment of fees will be refunded by the Division of Taxation.

6. RIHPHC will continue to review projects and certify compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation. The Division of Taxation will take over review of cost certifications, collect fees, and administer tax credit contracts for each project.

The goal of the legislation is to reduce the program's cost to the State Budget at a time of serious budget deficits without taking away the value of the tax credits to current and future holders of tax credit certificates. House Majority Leader Gordon Fox and House Finance Committee Chairman Steven Costantino have pledged their efforts to develop a new historic preservation investment tax credit program for future projects.

c) In 2006, RIHPHC awarded a State Preservation Grant for repair and restoration of the historic Smithfield Exchange Bank in Greenville. Recently the Smithfield Building Official issued a condemnation order threatening demolition if the deteriorated structure is not repaired immediately. RIHPHC staff have been closely monitoring the situation, consulting with the Smithfield Preservation Society, local officials, and the State Building Code Commissioner.

4. National Register of Historic Places

Final Nominations

Benjamin Jackson House, 115 Nyatt Road, Barrington

Ms. Kennedy provided information about the house, built in 1910 and designed by architect Norman M. Isham. This is a substantial, 2-1/2-story, brick Neo Georgian house with an asymmetrical facade, and a balustraded porte cochere with Palladian windows on the second and third floors above it. The arched dormers are capped with broken ogee pediment detailing. The original house burned shortly after it was completed in 1910, and it was immediately rebuilt. Interior details include extensive fine woodwork and a magnificent staircase based on the 1786 John Brown House in Providence.

During discussion, Dr. Onorato noted that the building is one of Rhode Island's finest Neo-Colonial style houses and is an important work of architect Norman Isham. The owner, Charles Adams, described recent restoration work. Following further discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the nomination.

Preliminary Consideration

Bomes Theatre, 1015 Broad Street, Providence

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the Bomes Theatre, built in 1921. The neighborhood movie theater exhibits terracotta trim on the brick exterior; the original marquee appears to remain but has been boxed inside later panels; original storefronts have been altered; some deteriorated original windows appear to remain behind plywood panels. On the interior, the lobby area has been altered; the proscenium arch remains together with cornice, cove ceiling, and decorative details but all are quite deteriorated.

During discussion, Commissioners noted that while some of the building retains some of its historical character, alterations and deterioration diminish the historical integrity of the property. Ms. Kennedy described NPS criteria for National Register integrity. Mr. Cusack noted that while some features are deteriorated or missing, the theater has not been remodeled or irreversibly altered. Preservation consultant Clark Schoettle and owner, Michael Van Leesten described plans to rehabilitate the Bomes Theatre as a community oriented cultural center. Mr. Sanderson reported that Commissioner Rondeau, while not able to attend the meeting, wished to express his support for the theater project.

Following further discussion, on a motion by Dr. Malone, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval for the nomination.

Sullivan Building, Broad Street, Providence

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the property, built for the Sullivan Supply Company in 1919 and converted for use as an Almacs Grocery Store in the 1940s and for use as an automobile supply store in 1967. Some pressed tin ceiling tiles remain on the interior, but no other significant historical architectural features remain, and no clear area of historical significance has been identified. After discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission unanimously

VOTED that based on the information currently available, the property does not appear to be eligible for National Register listing.

5. There was no other business.
6. Next meeting date: Next meeting date: Wednesday, June 11, 2008.
7. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,

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