



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

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
May 13, 2009

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Robert Goff
Ms. Patrice O'Malley Hagan
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board
Mr. Karst Hoogeboom
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. Ronald Onorato
Dr. Patricia Rubertone
Mr. Frederick C. Williamson, Chairman & SHPO

STAFF PRESENT

Dr. Richard Greenwood, Deputy Director
Ms. Mercedes Monteiro, National Register Assistant
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director
Ms. Sarah Zurier, Sr. Special Projects Coordinator

GUESTS

Ms. Adriana Thomas, House Policy Office
Mr. Russell Dannecker
Mr. Charles Borders
Mr. Richard Youngkin & Ms. Joan Youngkin

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Robert E. Cusack
Mr. John Grosvenor, AIA
Mr. Bradford Kopp
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Mr. Jared L. Rhodes, Chief of Statewide Planning representing Kevin Flynn
Mr. J. Michael Saul, Interim Executive Director, EDC
Dr. Michael Sullivan, Director DEM
John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

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

2. Minutes of March 18, 2009

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

VOTED to approve the Minutes of March 18, 2009.

3. Executive Director's Report

a) President Obama has requested a modest increase in Federal FY 2010 funding for historic preservation programs. Rhode Island's Congressional delegation has supported the President's request.

b) In 2008, State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits approved by RIHPHC totaled \$27.2 million.

c) The Heritage Harbor Museum project construction has stopped due to financial issues between Struever Brothers, Eccles & Rouse and their banker Citibank. RIHPHC is administering \$5 million in State bond funds for the museum development, and RIHPHC is reviewing the \$100 million development project for tax credits. RIHPHC has agreed with Heritage Harbor and the State Budget Office to continue to disburse bond funds on a significantly reduced reimbursement schedule until October 1, 2009, pending resolution of the SBER financing issues.

d) Information was distributed about the RI Ocean Special Area Management Plan. The plan is being developed in part to regulate off-shore wind power development projects. RIHPHC will review visual impacts to historic properties and underwater archaeological impacts.

e) The International Yacht Restoration School will hold a ribbon-cutting on the renovated historic Aquidneck Mill building on May 14. RIHPHC assisted the project with a State Preservation Grant and by approving State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits.

4. National Register of Historic Places

Final Approval

Borders Farm, North Road, Foster

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the property. Borders Farm Historic District

is significant under National Register Criterion C at the local level as a well-preserved example of the landscape of small family farms that typified northwestern Rhode Island in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Composed of two adjacent farms that became combined under one ownership, the district possesses the characteristic attributes of the region's agricultural holdings during this period when dairy and poultry husbandry predominated among a variety of farming activities. The district features farm cottages, barns and other outbuildings, set in a patchwork landscape of barn yards, gardens, tilled fields, hayfields, pasture, ponds and woodlots bounded by stone walls and farm lanes.

George Phillips (1788-1858), the son of Captain Abraham Phillips whose farm was located to the northeast on Foster Center Road, moved into the district as a young man, assembling a farm on North Road through a series of purchases between 1808 and 1821. In 1817, George, in partnership with William Stone and Benjamin Bennett, Jr., acquired a half interest in a sawmill established by the Hopkins family on a stream near the intersection of Salisbury and Balcolm Roads, directly north of his farm. Phillips and his partners improved this mill privilege, most likely to accommodate a turning shop. Phillips operated this mill in addition to farming his North Road holdings for much of his life. He turned the operation of the mill over to his son George W. Phillips (1822- 1891) by 1850, but continued to farm his land. In January, 1858, he transferred the 150-acre farm and a nearby lot of about twenty acres in two undivided halves, one to his son George W., and the other to his daughter Sylvania (1825-1888) and her husband Abijah B. Sweet (ca 1819-1900); later that year George Phillips died.

Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Ms. Hagen, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the nomination.

Preliminary Consideration

"Bit O' Heaven," Mohegan Cottage, Block Island

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the property, a well-preserved summer cottage built in 1886. The shingled cottage retains a virtually unaltered interior finished in varnished matchboard siding and varnished trim. The house was published in Scientific American magazine at the time of its construction.

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

VOTED preliminary approval for the nomination.

5. Preservation Is Local

Dr. Greenwood and Ms. Zurier reported on the new Preservation Is Local program. A new initiative of the RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission,

Preservation is Local (PIL) promotes community preservation activities in Rhode Island through regional summits, grants to municipalities, and increased technical support for local preservation priorities. The initiative draws on the expertise of Grow Smart Rhode Island, RI Historical Society, Preserve Rhode Island, RI Statewide Planning, RI-DEM, and John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

Preservation is Local launched in spring 2009 through three regional **Preservation is Local Summits**. Municipal planners, historic district commissioners, land trust members, heritage professionals and volunteers, stewards of historic sites, and other stakeholders participated—along with the Preservation is Local advisors from our partner organizations. Summits focused on heritage tourism and education; survey and registration of historic properties; local historic districts; planning and land use; and historic property management. In each case, there was discussion of recent projects that have been effective, threats that need to be addressed, and new opportunities and projects that show promise.

Information gathered at the Summits will contribute to the development of the **Preservation is Local Grants** program. There will be \$150,000 in project grants available to municipalities. An additional \$50,000 (approximately) will be available for **Certified Local Government (CLG)** grants to municipalities that have Local Historic District Zoning. Sample projects include preparing National Register nominations; drafting local design review guidelines; creating wayfinding signs; marketing heritage events; developing a visitor services study; planning for a community's historic properties; and preparing architectural plans to restore a historic site. Communities are encouraged to team up on joint applications like surveying a historic commercial corridor that traverses three towns or a preparing a regional tourism study.

Applications for **PIL Grants** and **CLG Grants** up to \$20,000 will be available at the end of May 2009 and due in July 2009. Decisions will be made in October 2009. Applicants will be required to demonstrate the availability of funds or in-kind services to meet the matching requirements.

Funds for **Preservation is Local** are provided by a grant from Preserve America, a federal initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our priceless cultural and natural heritage.

6. Other Business
There was no other business.
6. Next meeting date: Wednesday June 10, 2009.
7. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:15 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,

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