



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

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
October 12, 2011

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Robert Goff
Mr. John Grosvenor, AIA
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board
Mr. Karst Hoogeboom, Chairman
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Dr. Ronald Onorato
Mr. Pieter N. Roos
Edward F. Sanderson, State Historic Preservation Officer & Executive Director

STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Jeffrey Emidy, Sr. Project Review Coordinator
Dr. Richard Greenwood, Deputy Director
Ms. Mercedes Monteiro, National Register Assistant - Heritage Aide
Ms. Charlotte Taylor, Senior Archaeologist

GUESTS

Mr. Raymond Choiniere, House Policy Analyst

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Janet Coit, Director DEM
Mr. Robert E. Cusack
John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner
Mr. Jared L. Rhodes, Chief of Statewide Planning representing Kevin Flynn, Asso. Dir
Dr. Patricia Rubertone
Mr. Keith Stokes, Executive Director, EDC
1 Vacant

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was convened at 9:30 A.M. Mr. Hoozeboom, Chairman, presiding.

2. Minutes of September 14, 2011

Postponed.

3. Executive Director's Report

a) Mr. Sanderson reported that Senator Jack Reed has introduced legislation to establish a Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. The Park would carry on the work started with the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor established in 1986.

b) Mr. Sanderson reported a recent meeting with Colin Kane, Chair of the State I-195 Redevelopment Commission, RIDOT Director Michael Lewis, and Federal Highway RI Division Manager Peter Osborn. Federal requirements on the project, including the historic preservation memorandum of agreement that provides for RIHPHC review and approval of redevelopment of I-195 vacant land, will continue in effect and will apply to the State I-195 Redevelopment Commission.

c) Mr. Sanderson reported that the Principal Archaeologist Position has been advertised.

4. Reports on Salt Pond Archaeological Site issues and Providence Viaduct Project

Mr. Sanderson reported on the status of the RI Coastal Resources Management Council hearings on development of the Salt Pond archaeological site. Generally, the CRMC hearing panel finds that the development Assent issued in 1991 remains valid. However, the CRMC hearing panel also finds that archaeological requirements imposed as a condition of the Assent have not been completed, particularly in the light of significant additional discoveries in the intervening 20 years. The hearing panel recommends that CRMC continue in force a "cease and desist" order on any development activity until all archaeological requirements are completed. The hearing panel finding must be approved by the full Council; however, if approved the finding represents a substantial endorsement of the RIHPHC recommendation conveyed to CRMC in 2007 and vigorously contested by owner Richard Baccari.

In the federal lawsuit, Mr. Bacarri has appealed the action of the federal Circuit that denied his motion accusing the State of taking his property to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Ms. Charlotte Taylor, Senior Archaeologist, and Mr. Hebert presented information about the RI Department of Transportation Providence Viaduct project. The Providence Viaduct carries Interstate 95 north-south through downtown Providence. The Viaduct structure is in need of replacement, and the construction plan involves constructing as many as 40 new piers to

support new roadway structure. The project impact area overlies the Covelands Archaeological District. During the 1980s, the Covelands Archaeological District was identified during development of the Capital Center project and construction of Northeast Railroad Corridor improvements and the Civic Center Highway Interchange.

Covelands appears to have been occupied 5,000 years ago as sea levels rose, eventually forming Narragansett Bay and the Great Salt Cove in Providence. About 1,000 years ago, the Covelands area appears to have been a significant settlement, and a variety of artifacts have been recovered, including stone tools and pottery. Today, the cultural features of Covelands lie approximately 20 feet below the current ground level, covered by urban fill and development.

In accordance with federal regulations (including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act), the RIDOT and Federal Highway Administration have considered the potential for the Providence Viaduct project to impact and destroy significant archaeological resources in the Covelands Archaeological District. In order to investigate features and mitigate unavoidable destruction by recovering archaeological information prior to construction, required archaeology could cost in the range of \$20 to \$30 million for all phases of the RIDOT project. The high cost for archaeology is largely the result of very difficult site investigation conditions: deep excavation to remove the overburden of fill would require reinforced coffer dams; the affected soils contain toxic residues; the excavation pits will flood from ground-water and require continuous pumping.

In consideration of the extremely difficult conditions for archaeological data recovery and extraordinary costs that would be required, RIDOT, the Federal Highway Administration, the Narragansett Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, and RIHPHC have agreed upon alternate measures to mitigate the construction impacts on the Covelands Archaeological District. The cost for the alternate mitigation measures would be a fraction of the projected archaeological costs for the Providence Viaduct project. RIDOT and RIHPHC are working together to finalize the specific actions that will be taken.

General discussion followed the presentation.

5. Other business

There was no other business.

6. Next meeting date: Wednesday November 9, 2011.

8. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:49 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,



Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director