



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
Old State House 150 Benefit Street Providence, RI 02903

Telephone 401-222-2678
TTY 401-222-3700

Fax 401-222-2968
www.preservation.ri.gov

MINUTES

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
May 9, 2012

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

Dr. Richard Greenwood, Deputy Director
Dr. Timothy Ives, Principal Archaeologist
Ms. Mercedes Monteiro, National Register Assistant - Heritage Aide
Ms. Sarah Zurier, Senior Special Projects Coordinator

GUESTS

Mr. Clark Schoettle, Providence Revolving Fund
Mr. Edward Connors, National Register Consultant

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Janet Coit, Director DEM
Mr. Robert Goff
John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner
Mr. Pieter N. Roos
Mr. Keith Stokes, Executive Director, EDC
1 Vacant

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 A.M., Mr. Hoogeboom, Chairman, presiding.

2. Minutes of April 11, 2012

On a motion by Dr. Morenon, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously VOTED to approve the Minutes of April 11, 2012.

3. Executive Director's Report

a) Dr. Greenwood introduced Dr. Timothy Ives, Principal Archaeologist.

b) Several bills have been filed in the General Assembly to re-start the Historic Preservation Investment Tax Credit program. Grow Smart RI is leading a broad coalition to advocate for adoption.

c) Ms. Zurier reported on the 27th annual statewide historic preservation conference held on Saturday, April 21, 2012 in Woonsocket. Attendance exceeded 500 people, and programs and tours were very successful. Ms. Zurier also distributed nomination forms for 2012 Rhody Awards for Historic Preservation, and Commissioners are encouraged to nominate projects and individuals.

4. Adoption of Regulations for Registration and Protection of Historic Cemeteries

Mr. Sanderson presented the regulations for Commission approval. In 2011 the General Assembly authorized RIHPHC to adopt state regulations that establish standards for registering and protecting historic cemeteries. Public notice of the proposed regulations was given on March 7, 2012, and a public hearing was held on April 25, 2012. The proposed regulations were reviewed by the Office of the Attorney General, and they have been endorsed by the RI Advisory Commission on Historic Cemeteries.

Under state law, cities and towns have authority to regulate historic cemeteries. RIHPHC's regulations provide authoritative guidance to city and town officials about the kinds of information that are useful to document historic cemeteries, and the regulations establish the review process to protect historic cemeteries and historic burials. The RIHPHC regulations describe specific roles for the city or town to record information about historic cemeteries; the local building official to regulate construction that impacts historic burials; and the city or town council to review and approve alteration or removal of a historic cemetery.

As the result of comments received, a change was made to the regulations that was not part of the original proposed rule. Section 5(d) now describes the process for the local building official

to issue a permit to allow excavation or construction within twenty-five (25) feet of a historic cemetery when the boundaries of the cemetery are adequately documented and there is no reason to believe additional graves exist outside the recorded cemetery, and the proposed construction or excavation activity will not damage or destructively alter the historic cemetery. Section 5(e), 5(f), and 5(g), now describe the process for the city or town council to allow the alteration or removal of a historic cemetery or allow construction within twenty-five (25) feet of a historic cemetery.

Rhode Island's historic cemeteries are important historic properties. They often are of great artistic, cultural and religious significance and may have archaeological value. The RIHPHC procedures for registration and protection of historic cemeteries will help to preserve these important cultural resources.

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

VOTED the following resolution:

Whereas, Rhode Island General Laws Title 23, Chapter 18 authorizes City and Town Councils to prescribe standards regulating historic cemeteries in order to prevent any construction or excavation that might cause deterioration of or damage to any cemetery or burial ground, or to any structures or gravesites located in any cemetery or burial ground or any historic cemetery; and in addition, the statute specifies that the city or town recorder of deeds shall maintain a register of all historical cemeteries located within the city or town; and

Whereas, Rhode Island General Laws Title 23 Chapter 18-11.2 authorizes that in the absence of a local ordinance establishing standards regulating historic cemeteries, regulations adopted by the Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission shall govern; and

Whereas, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission finds that historic cemeteries have archaeological and scientific value, often are of great artistic, cultural and religious significance, and represent for all cultures a respect for the sanctity of human life; and it is the policy of the Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission that marked or unmarked historic cemeteries should be preserved; and

Whereas, pursuant to the provisions of Title 23 Chapter 18-11.2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, and in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act Chapter 42-35 of the General Laws, the Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission gave notice of its intent to adopt Rules for the Registration and Protection of Historic Cemeteries on March 7, 2012, and a Public Hearing was held on April 25, 2012; and

Whereas, in the development of the proposed regulation, consideration was given to: (1) alternative approaches, (2) overlap or duplication with other statutory and regulatory provisions,

and (3) significant economic impact on small business; and no alternative approach, duplication, or overlap was identified based upon available information; and the Commission has determined that the requirements are the minimum necessary to accomplish its purpose and will not negatively impact small businesses;

Now Therefore, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission hereby adopts the Procedures for Registration and Protection of Historic Cemeteries in the form presented this May 9, 2012, as amended.

5. National Register of Historic Places

Final presentation: Yacht *Weatherly*, Newport

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the Yacht *Weatherly*, berthed in Newport.

Weatherly is a 12 Meter Class sloop designed by Philip Rhodes and built by the Luders Marine Construction Company of Stamford, Connecticut in 1958 for the purpose of defending the 1958 America's Cup. She measures 69' overall, with a 58' registered length between perpendiculars, and a 46' waterline length; her beam is 11'-8". *Weatherly's* original displacement was approximately 58,000 pounds, and is currently about 60,000 pounds. She is of double planked wooden construction, both layers fore and aft with staggered seams and scarf joined planks. The yacht has an aluminum $\frac{3}{4}$ fractional sloop rig. Originally built without an engine, she is now powered by her second, a Westerbeke 46 HP diesel driving a 16"-diameter, three-blade, feathering bronze propeller. *Weatherly* is home ported in Newport, Rhode Island, the site of her successful defense of the America's Cup in 1962. Her summer berth is at the Newport Harbor Hotel and Marina. She sails mainly out of Newport, but she occasionally travels down east to Maine, and south to the Chesapeake. She spends seven months of the year in the water and is hauled out for the winter, currently at New England Boat works in nearby Portsmouth, Rhode Island.

The 1958 sailing yacht *Weatherly* is nominated under Criterion A as the successful 1962 defender of the America's Cup, the most prominent trophy in the world of sailing. She is tied with the *Columbia* of 1958 as the oldest extant winner of the Cup, and remains the only vessel in the history of the Cup to win it after an unsuccessful first attempt. *Weatherly* is also significant under Criterion C as an early and notable example of the 12 Meter Class of racing yachts which were built to compete for the America's Cup. Designed by Philip L. Rhodes, one of the leading American naval architects of the 20th century, and built by A.E. "Bill" Luders, *Weatherly* is an important example of 12 Meter design and wooden and laminate yacht construction.

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

VOTED to approve the National Register nomination for the Yacht *Weatherly*.

Final presentation: Downtown Providence Historic District Amendment –
98 Dorrance Street - Narragansett Parking Garage

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the Narragansett Hotel Garage.

The structure is a three-story building with brick and concrete walls and a heavy interior frame of rolled steel *I*-beams to accommodate the weight of automobiles. The building occupies a 7,412 sq. ft. parcel on the east side of Dorrance Street, directly across from the former site of the Narragansett Hotel. The façade comprises a buff-brick wall with evenly-spaced, paired, multi-light, steel-frame windows on the upper floors. A central, first-floor automobile entrance is flanked by standard door openings. A simple parapet surrounds the roof. A narrow, modillioned hood demarcates the first and second floors and is also found at the façade's cornice. A central, metal sign inscribed *Narragansett Hotel Garage* rests on this upper hood. Built in 1923 as a parking garage for the Narragansett Hotel (which stood across Dorrance Street until its demolition in 1960), it is now the oldest automobile parking structure Downtown.

It is proposed to change the National Register status of the Narragansett Hotel Garage, a property lying within the Downtown Providence Historic District, from non-contributing to contributing to the significance of the historic district. This building is consistent architecturally and historically with other buildings in the Downtown Providence Historic District and is within the city's Downtown Providence Design Review District.

The Narragansett Hotel Garage was considered a non-contributing resource at the time the nomination for the original Downtown Providence Historic District was submitted in 1983. The building is the subject of an ongoing rehabilitation project that intends continued use of the first floor for parking and adaptation of the upper two floors for residential use. In the course of this work, steel frame windows, based on the design of the originals, have been installed, thus restoring the façade to near original appearance.

The Narragansett Hotel, perhaps the finest hotel in the city's history, was built in 1878. In 1923 a separate corporation, Narragansett Hotel Garage, Incorporated, was formed for the purpose of storage and rental of automobiles, as well as other related activities. A three-story parking structure with masonry exterior walls and a steel *I*-beam interior frame, one of the earliest of its kind in the city, was built directly across the street from the hotel. After the demolition of the hotel in 1960, the garage continued in its original use until it became the subject of the current rehabilitation and re-use project.

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

VOTED approval to amend the Downtown Providence Historic District National Register nomination to include the Narragansett Hotel Parking Garage as a contributing resource.

Final presentation: Downtown Providence Historic District Boundary Increase
250 and 254 Washington Street: First Universalist Church and Former Providence
YWCA Building

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the properties.

The First Universalist Church (1872) 250 Washington Street: Edwin O. Howland, architect, from designs by Henry Hudson Holly, is a High Victorian Gothic church built of brick and stone, set on a high basement, with a tower and spire on its northeast corner. The building is simply articulated, with vestigial buttresses and pointed-arch windows with voussoirs of brown and tan stone. The entrance (east) front on Greene Street has as its central feature the high gable end of the nave. The tower on the northeast has entry portals on its north and east faces. The handsome though austere auditorium has dark wainscoting, clustered colonnettes with foliate capitals, Eastlake-inspired furnishings, and fine stained glass windows from Henry Sharp of New York. The church, which covers the majority of its lot, has a small border of lawn with shrubs enclosed by an iron picket fence. This, like other remaining churches downtown, is a remnant of the 19th-century residential neighborhood in this area. The church today is largely surrounded by commercial, institutional and high-rise residential buildings.

The Young Women's Christian Association, now 1890 House (1905-6) 254 Washington Street: Hoppin & Ely, architects, is a six-story, brick-clad, stone trimmed, steel-frame building set on a high basement with regular fenestration, an ornate pedimented front entrance and a bold, decorative cornice. The YWCA Building was begun early in 1905 and dedicated 3 December 1906. It housed YWCA activities until it was sold and converted into housing for the elderly in the mid-1970s. The YWCA Building is typical of simpler turn-of-the-century Downtown structures. Though not lavishly detailed, it achieves a monumental presence through the straightforward articulation of its well-proportioned masonry walls, which includes a rounded corner at the corner of Washington and Jackson Streets, a rusticated first story bounded by a granite watertable and a beltcourse incised with a meander, and a top story that features raised panels between the windows

It is proposed to expand the boundary of the Downtown Providence Historic District to include: First Universalist Church, 250 Washington Street and the Young Women's Christian Association Building, 254 Washington Street. These buildings are consistent architecturally and historically with other buildings in the Downtown Providence Historic District and are within the city's Downtown Providence Design Review District. Their presence provides a highly visible anchor at the western end of Washington Street, one of the principal thoroughfares in the downtown historic district.

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

VOTED approval to amend the Downtown Providence Historic District National Register

nomination to include 250 and 254 Washington Street: First Universalist Church and Former Providence YWCA Building as contributing resources.

6. Other business

There was no other business.

7. Next meeting date: Wednesday June 13, 2012.

8. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:05 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Edward F. Sanderson".

Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director