



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION  
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MINUTES  
RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION  
May 13, 2015

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Michael Abbott, AIA  
Ms. Morgan Devlin  
Mr. Karst Hoogeboom, Chairman  
Dr. Patrick Malone  
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon  
Dr. Ronald Onorato  
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, State Historic Preservation Officer  
Ms. Ruth Taylor

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Joanna Doherty, Principal Architectural Historian  
Mr. Jeffrey Emidy, Principal Project Review Coordinator  
Dr. Timothy Ives, Principal Archaeologist  
Ms. Michaela Jergensen, Senior Reviewer RIDOT Projects  
Ms. Katherine Jurczyk, Senior Grants Coordinator

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Al Cocce, AIA, representing John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner  
Ms. Janet Coit, Director DEM  
Mr. Mohamad Farzan, AIA  
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board  
Ms. Caitlin Greeley, Statewide Planning, representing Kevin Flynn  
Mr. Pieter N. Roos  
Mr. Clark Schoettle  
Executive Director EDC

GUESTS

Ms. Valerie Talmage, Preserve Rhode Island  
Mr. Steven Kut, RIDOT

## II. AGENDA

### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 A.M., Dr. Onorato presiding in place of Mr. Hoogeboom, Chairman, who joined the meeting about 10:00 A.M.

### 2. Minutes of March 11, 2015

On a motion by Ms. Devlin, seconded by Dr. Morenon, the Commission unanimously VOTED to approve the Minutes of March 11, 2015.

### 3. Commissioner Report

Commissioner Ruth Taylor reported on the Newport World Heritage Commission. In 2014, Governor Chafee appointed a Newport World Heritage Commission (NWHC) to work with the National Park Service and others to consider preparation of a World Heritage Nomination for Newport. Previous efforts in 2007 resulted in a NPS finding that Newport was “worthy of consideration” for nomination. In 2014-2015, the NWHC has focused on the theme of religious liberty as an “Outstanding Universal Value” worthy of World Heritage recognition. Current thinking is to draft a significance statement that includes properties in both Newport and Providence (including the Roger Williams National Memorial Park) that are related to Rhode Island’s seventeenth-century establishment of religious liberty and Rhode Island’s civic and cultural development during the century following. The NWHC expects to submit a letter to NPS in May 2015 requesting that Rhode Island be included on the United States Tentative World Heritage List in 2016. The NWHC will pursue several avenues to build community and NPS support for the nomination, including establishing a website with information about the World Heritage nomination process. Commissioners Roos, Onorato, and Sanderson are also working with the NWHC.

During discussion, Commissioners expressed support for the proposed World Heritage nomination. Dr. Malone suggested that NWHC consult Dr. Patricia Rubertone’s research on Roger Williams.

### 4. Executive Director’s Report

a) Governor Raimondo has appointed Mr. Sanderson to serve as State Historic Preservation Officer; he replaces Jonathan Stevens.

b) Katherine Jurczyk has been appointed Senior Grants & Loan Coordinator. Katy joins the RIHPHC staff after several years working in the State Office of Management & Budget.

c) Jeffrey Emidy has been appointed Supervising Historic Preservation Specialist and Deputy Director. Mr. Emidy has worked successfully at the RIHPHC for ten years, and he has been assigned increasing responsibility as he was promoted from National Register Assistant to Senior Historic Preservation Specialist and then to Principal Historic Preservation Specialist. His professional working experience has involved him directly and indirectly in all RIHPHC program areas, with substantial experience with the National Register of Historic Places and Project Review.

d) The annual Statewide Preservation Conference was held on Saturday April 25 before an audience of 519. Keynote speaker Robert Thorson inspired the crowd with his talk, "From Sticks to Stones and Back Again: The Underground Story of New England's Stone Walls." The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Inc. presented awards and thanked Senator Jack Reed and Congressman David Cicilline for their leadership in establishing the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park.

During the day, everybody fanned out to workshops to learn about preservation tax credits and grants, energy-efficiency, forested landscapes, village planning, and more. Tour groups explored Rhode Island's northwest corner, from Burrillville to Glocester to Scituate to Foster. And the day unfolded with many opportunities to network. Our closing reception took place at the Chepachet Union Church.

#### 5. Special Report by Valerie Talmage, Executive Director, Preserve Rhode Island

Preserve Rhode Island (PRI) is the nonprofit statewide advocate of historic places. PRI advocates for State policy on issues such as the 2014 Bond Issue for State Preservation Grants, the 2015 Historic Preservation Tax Credits, and coordinates a statewide roundtable of leaders in historic preservation.

Other PRI programs include:

- Partnering with RIHPHC to present the annual Rhody Awards
- Publicizing endangered historic properties
- Publishing the electronic newsletter "Around The Block" that features historic preservation news from around the state
- Leading the Historic Sites Coalition of nonprofit historic sites
- Organizing the Rhody Ramble family programs at historic sites

PRI stewardship includes:

- Lippitt House Museum in Providence
- Blithewold Mansion & Gardens in Bristol
- Walker House in East Providence
- Jeremiah Dexter House in Providence
- Stewardship services to other nonprofit historic sites, including

- Stephen Hopkins House (Society of Colonial Dames)
- Shakespeare's Head (Providence Preservation Society)
- Mowry House (Smithfield Land Trust)
- Chase Farmhouse (Town of Lincoln)

PRI is developing a Preservation Easements program that will preserve historic lands and associated historic buildings on Block Island and other areas.

PRI and RIHPHC staff collaborate on a variety of issues, assuring that administration of State government preservation programs is coordinated with private nonprofit preservation activities.

6. Special Report by Stephen Kut, RIDOT Geographic Information Systems Manager & Jeff Emidy, RIHPHC Deputy Director

RIDOT and RIHPHC have been working together for several years to establish a shared "Historic and Architectural Resources Management System" (HARMS) utilizing MS Access databases and Geographic Information System technology. The effort is funded by the Federal Highway Administration in order to streamline cultural resource information that is needed for planning and review of transportation projects. Overall, the project is transitioning from archival paper records to electronic data management that is coordinated with other State electronic information databases.

In Phase 1 of HARMS, GIS consultants worked with RIDOT and RIHPHC staff to establish the system architecture and protocols for collection, editing, and access to information. Security of data files is particularly important for archaeological properties and information that is confidential to Native American tribes. A GIS pilot (or "Beta" version) was created and will undergo testing. A second phase of GIS development is expected to begin in the fall of 2015.

HARMS development has been hampered by RIHPHC's very limited internet bandwidth. RIDOT has agreed to fund installation of a fiber optic cable for RIHPHC during 2015, and RIHPHC has secured State Budget commitment to fund increased annual service cost for the cable.

During discussion, a number of Commissioners expressed their sense of the importance of the HARMS project and appreciation for the RIDOT-RIHPHC joint approach. Dr. Malone emphasized the value of having historical resources data integrated with other agencies information data layers in the State GIS system, and he suggested that other states' models should be compared with Rhode Island. Mr. Sanderson noted that field survey work of the 1970s and 1980s inventoried historic properties using paper records and established broad understanding of Rhode Island's cultural resources. Today, these paper records are obsolete

technology. The HARMS project is an opportunity to upgrade the information technology and also to update and revise the documentation itself. For this reason, HARMS will represent a major RIHPHC initiative.

Mr. Emidy reported on improvements to RIHPHC's MS Access databases. In the past year, the State Division of Information Technology has upgraded RIHPHC computer operating systems from Windows 2003 to Windows 2010, and that change has triggered updating of multiple RIHPHC databases. Former stand-alone databases for different categories of historic properties are being combined and integrated into a single more comprehensive historic properties database. Individual program databases for grants, tax credits, easements, project review, etc. will no longer collect separate information about historic properties. Instead, program information will now be linked to the master historic properties database which will have a summary screen for each property that lists the various relevant program activities and links to more detailed information for each program. The historic property database will also be linked to the GIS HARMS so information may be queried by mapped location or by characteristics such as street address, date of construction, etc.

7. Other Business: There was no other business.
8. Next regular meeting date: Wednesday June 10, 2015 at 9:30 AM.
9. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.

Minutes recorded by,



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