

MINUTES

**State Historic Preservation Review Board
450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut
Plaza Level, Meeting Room E (North Building)
Friday, June 22, 2018, 9:30 a.m.**

Present: Mr. Edwards (chair), Dr. Feder, Mr. Herzan, Mr. McMillan, Ms. Sutton, Mr. Wigren

Absent: Dr. Bucki, Ms. Saunders

Staff: Jenny Scofield, Elizabeth Shapiro, Marena Wisniewski

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Edwards at 9:40 a.m. Mr. Edwards introduced the role of the State Historic Preservation Review Board (SRB) and each member who was present. The SRB welcomed Mr. McMillan as a new member and announced the resignation of Mr. Favretti from the SRB.

II. Review of Public Comment Procedures

Copies of the public comment procedures were available at the sign-in table and announced by Mr. Edwards.

III. Approval of the March 23, 2018 meeting minutes

A motion was made by Dr. Feder, second by Mr. Herzan to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2018 meeting (Y-6, N-0, Abstained-0).

IV. Action Items

A. Completed National Register Nominations

All registration forms are subject to changes made by the SRB and by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff.

Ms. Scofield reported that for the nominations on this agenda, all property owners were notified by mail and other interested parties were notified by email of the pending nomination, 30 days prior to the meeting. The chief executive officer of the municipality was also notified. All nominations were posted on the SHPO website and available for download during the noticing period.

1. Dixwell Avenue United Church of Christ, New Haven (Criterion C, state)

Staff recommended Dixwell Church for listing at the state level under Criterion C in the category of Architecture as a notable example of the work of John Johansen and at the local level under Criterion C in the category of Community Planning and Development for its association with New Haven's urban redevelopment program. The property also meets Criteria Consideration A as a religious property deriving its primary significance from architectural distinction. The period of significance is the date of construction, 1968-1969.

Ms. Scofield reported that the church was contacted by the New Haven Preservation Trust and SHPO staff prior to the start of the nomination project. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to the church, mayor, City Plan department, New Haven HDC, and New Haven Preservation Trust, 30 days before the meeting. The CLG response is in process and a letter of support was received from the HDC. A letter of support was also received from a member and historian emerita of church. No letters of objection to the nomination were received. Kate Kuranda and Kirsten Peeler of R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, attended the meeting as consultants for the nomination. Reverend Dr. Jerry Streets and five members of the church attended the meeting in support of the nomination.

Mr. Edwards opened the nomination for public comment. Rev. Dr. Jerry Streets identified himself as the senior pastor at Dixwell Church and spoke in support of the nomination. He noted that the church has been involved in social justice history since the 1700s, including the Amistad case. They will be celebrating their 200th anniversary in 2020. The church is the oldest African American Congregational United Church of Christ in the country and also currently operates as a multi-cultural congregation.

Dr. Charles Warner identified himself as the moderator for Dixwell Church and commented on the building's design. He stated that the building has a mammoth scale, but its shape also reminds him of the twelve Stations of the Cross. The design represents the church's humanistic approach to life. The church building and this nomination help to recognize the strength of the church community.

Mr. Edwards requested comments from the SRB. Mr. Wigren spoke of the significance of New Haven's urban renewal program and questioned if the level of significance for that association is national. New Haven was a model for the country, which was widely studied and analyzed. Board members discussed this item and the possibility of national significance. The SRB agreed to raise the level of significance under Community Planning to state level for this nomination so as not to delay it from moving forward.

In discussion of the architecture, Mr. Wigren recommended adding a note that Brutalism does not refer to the English word Brutal. He also requested a note be added in the nomination to say that the Florence Virtue project was altered.

Mr. Wigren commented that the building manages to look massive from the exterior but feels different on the inside. Ms. Kuranda responded that that aspect of the design speaks to the talent of the architect.

Mr. Edwards noted that on p. 8-13 Yale University President is referred to as Alfred Griswold, but was known as Whitney Griswold (his middle name). He requested an edit to the nomination to reflect this.

Mr. Edwards commented that the opposition to New Haven's urban renewal program should be noted in the Community Development section of the significance statement. Information about this opposition can be found in the *New York Times* archives for 1955. New Haven's local retail community was opposed to the redevelopment plan because of the federal funds focused on out-of-state retailers. After Macy's was constructed, three local New Haven stores went out of business. This opposition went outside of the Dixwell neighborhood and resulted in the creation of a community in New Haven that started historic preservation activities. It contributed to the establishment of the New Haven Preservation Trust in 1961.

Ms. Kuranda commented that one challenge of this nomination was trying to establish boundaries for discussion of the church in regards to the larger urban renewal program. How do you limit discussion in the nomination to one building without taking away from it? The SRB discussed how the urban renewal project ties in to the significance.

Ms. Sutton discussed racial integration in regards to the community development significance. She noted that in the architectural design section, a comparison of other architects and projects is used to qualify the importance of the building and the architect. A similar comparison could be applied for the community development significance, using racial integration as a measure of success. Mention the other institutions that incorporated racial integration as a project goal. Ms. Kuranda responded that she will revise the nomination to underline the racial integration component of the urban renewal program as it applies to the church.

A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Dr. Feder to list the Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ on the National Register of Historic Places (Y-6, N-0, Abstained= 0).

2. Laurel Beach Casino, Milford (Criterion A, local)

Staff recommended the Laurel Beach Casino for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the category of Recreation, as the primary community building constructed as part of a shoreline resort community chartered in 1899. The period of significance extends from the construction of the building in 1929 through 1968, the age cut-off, because the building has been in continual use for the same purpose by the Laurel Beach Association. Ms. Scofield explained that the building is later than the charter date of the community because the first casino on the site was lost during a fire.

Ms. Scofield reported that she and Douglas Royalty of SHPO staff met with representatives of the Laurel Beach Association in the community before the nomination project began. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to the Laurel Beach Association, Mayor, Milford Historic Preservation Commission, and Milford Historic District Commission 30 days before the meeting. No letters of objection to the nomination were received, but acknowledgement of the notice was received by email from the Laurel Beach Association and Historic Preservation Commission. No CLG response was received. Kate Kuranda and Kirsten Peeler of R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, attended the meeting as consultants for the nomination.

Dr. Feder asked for clarification in the first mention of the casino that the function does not refer to gambling (in a footnote or other method). He asked when the State of Connecticut passed a law stating that gambling was illegal. Ms. Peeler responded that she did research regarding when gambling was legalized in Connecticut, but gambling in the state is somewhat recent. She did not find legislation with a statement that gambling was illegal, only information that it is legal. Mr. Wigren noted that the broader point is that the word casino did not mean gambling until it became popular in Las Vegas. The SRB discussed the meaning of the term casino and other examples of casinos, such as in Newport, Rhode Island.

Mr. Wigren requested that the description of the building's steep roof be changed to moderately pitched throughout Section 7. The roof appears steep because the building is so long and horizontal, but has the same slope as a bowling alley.

Mr. Wigren asked the consultant to identify the municipalities the other casinos mentioned in the nomination are located in (ex. Short Beach is in Branford).

Mr. Wigren commented that the design of beach communities are a reflection of social strata. The size of the lots and amenities vary by income levels; the community buildings are an indicator of this.

Mr. Edwards questioned whether the property has state level significance if it is a rare example of this building type in Connecticut. The SRB and consultants discussed whether there are other extant examples. Mr. Herzan noted that if you are studying community buildings in general, there are several examples. Mr. Edwards asked for a show of hands from the SRB regarding whether researching state level significance was critical to the nomination. The SRB agreed that studying the level of significance was not critical in this case and the nomination should move forward as it is, with edits reflecting the comments previously discussed.

Mr. Edwards noted that the concept that shoreline communities had a railway component be mentioned in the nomination.

A motion was made by Dr. Feder, second by Mr. Wigren to list the Laurel Beach Casino on the National Register of Historic Places (Y-6, N-0, Abstained= 0).

3. Shoreline Electric Railway Power House, Old Saybrook (Criteria A and C, local)

Staff recommended the Shoreline Electric Company Power House for listing at the local level under Criteria A and C in the categories of Transportation and Architecture. Under Criterion A, it is one of few extant support facilities for the Shore Line Electric Railway system. Under Criterion C it is a notable example of the power house building type with features such as fireproof and vibration resistant construction. It operated with a coal-fueled electric system and used the water available on site for cooling. The period of significance dates from its construction in 1910 to 1929, then end of its operation as a power house for the railway.

Ms. Scofield reported that she worked with the Christine Nelson, the town planner, to initiate the project with support from the owner. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to the first selectman, town planner, Historic District Commission, and historical society 30 days before the meeting. No letters of support or objection were received, but Ms. Scofield spoke with the owner by phone to answer questions after he received the notice letter. The CLG response was positive. Kate Kuranda and Kirsten Peeler of R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, attended the meeting as consultants for the nomination. Christine Nelson, Old Saybrook Town Planner attended the meeting in support of the nomination and the property owner, Anthony Autorino was also present.

Mr. Edwards opened the nomination for public comment. Mr. Autorino stated that he is very much in favor of the National Register listing, but has partners that are concerned about potential limitations of listing. He has received state and town-sponsored proposals regarding potential uses for the building. Mr. Autorino asked questions about the benefits and consequences of National Register listing. Mr. Edwards clarified that the role of the SRB is to discuss the history and National Register eligibility of the property. Ms. Scofield and Mr. Autorino agreed to have further discussion about the National Register process and meaning of the designation. Mr. Autorino requested to place the nomination on hold to allow more time to read it and work with his partners on their questions.

A motion was made by Dr. Feder, second by Mr. Edwards to table the Shoreline Electric Railway Power House nomination until a subsequent meeting (Y-6, N-0, Abstained= 0).

Subsequent to the motion, SRB members offered a few suggestions regarding comparative research of the power house building type. Mr. Herzan noted that an authority on the Morton Plant is giving a lecture in July. Mr. Edwards mentioned that the Dynamo Station in Greenwich (Cos Cob) provided power for the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad. Mr. Wigren noted that this building was recorded through a HAER documentation and National Register form. Ms. Kuranda mentioned that several examples of power houses associated with mills survive, but examples of the building type within these more public facilities are less frequent.

4. Westville Village Historic District Amendment II (Criteria A and C, local)

Ms. Scofield summarized that the Westville Village Historic District Amendment II nomination was initially reviewed by the SRB at the September 15, 2017 meeting, during which quorum was not achieved. The SRB provided comments and requested that the Criterion C narrative be completed, along with minor edits and the addition of a photo key. At the December 1, 2017 meeting, the SRB voted to table the nomination until these edits were completed.

Ms. Scofield reported that the district was originally listed in 2003 and amended by one property in 2006. This amendment involves the addition of two parcels (3 resources) with an extension of the district boundary to river and the removal of a large property that has been substantially altered. The National Register criteria (A and C, local) and period of significance (1850-1950) has not changed from the original nomination. The property owners were notified by certified mail during the noticing period for the initial meeting, in coordination with the Westville Village Renaissance Alliance. Notice of the meeting was also sent to the mayor, city plan office and New Haven Preservation Trust. The CLG response was positive. No letters of support or objection were received. Elizabeth Holt of the New Haven Preservation Trust attended the meeting in support of the nomination. The author of the nomination, Colin Caplan was not able to attend.

Mr. Wigren asked whether there is a connection between the dye works and shirt factories in the mention on p. 8-12. He also requested the removal of the word renown and addition of a source in the mention of Brown & Von Beren on p. 8-14.

A motion was made by Dr. Feder, second by Mr. McMillan to list the Westville Village Historic District Amendment II on the National Register of Historic Places (Y-6, N-0, Abstained= 0).

B. Update of SRB Bylaws

Mr. Edwards opened the topic for discussion. Ms. Scofield noted SRB members received a track changes version of the existing bylaws and she distributed a recent example of similar SRB bylaws from Virginia. She collected examples of current bylaws from several states; the Virginia example was the most similar to Connecticut. Ms. Scofield summarized that staff updated all legal references (and provided a footnote to them), corrected name/location references, and compiled questions for SRB review. Staff did not make major changes to the bylaws in order to allow the SRB time to read the existing bylaws with small corrections.

Ms. Scofield asked the SRB to discuss the number of members needed to constitute a quorum. The current bylaws specifically state six people.

A motion was made by Mr. Edwards, second by Mr. Herzan to define quorum as a majority of the total number of members serving on the State Review Board (Y-6, N-0, Abstained= 0).

The SRB discussed each article of the bylaws and answered staff questions. Comments are summarized below.

Article I: No issues were heard.

Article II: The one-year term is not adequate, but editing this requires a statute change. Ms. Scofield noted that most SHPOs use terms of at least three years. More detail could be added on filling vacancies, resignations, etc. here or in Article III (the Virginia example has this under a heading for officers).

Article III: Change chairman to chair and vice chairman to vice chair.

Article IV: Remove time/location and say at a publically notified space. Add that a committee must be established by majority vote of Board. Add a procedure for remote participation (for SRB members, not for public). Include language regarding procedures in the case that teleconferencing is not successful due to technical issues (how long do you try for, etc.?).

Article V: Correct state statute to follow federal standards for notification.

Article VI: In reference to Roberts Rules, state that the SRB may elect alternative procedures to follow.

Article VII: Ms. Scofield asked if the SRB has any issue with the updated reference to the current procedural guidelines. No members expressed issues with this update.

Article VIII: Separate the ethics and conflict of interest statements.

Article IX: Delete this article and place the topic of public participation under meetings.

Article X: Ms. Scofield added an article regarding compensation because it appears in the bylaws for many other states.

Article XI: All or portions of the bylaws and operating procedures may be updated by majority vote of the SRB.

V. Discussion

Ms. Scofield announced that Rudy Favretti retired from the SRB and asked the SRB to welcome Mark McMillan as a new member. Phil Barlow has been appointed to the SRB and will begin with the September meeting.

Ms. Scofield mentioned that the SRB will review the proposed 2019 meeting schedule in September. Staff may arrange for National Park Service or diversity training for the November 30, 2018 meeting.

VI. New Business

No new business was discussed.

VII. Staff Report

Ms. Scofield reported that the second annual SHPO conference held Wednesday, May 16 at the Sheraton Hartford South in Rocky Hill was successful. SHPO awarded two fellowships at the conference, including one to Elizabeth Holt to attend a grant workshop and one to Christina Smith at Groundwork Bridgeport to attend a Landscape Design Summer Intensive program.

Ms. Scofield reported on staff changes at the National Park Service. Paul Loether retired as Keeper of the National Register and is now the Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer in Rhode Island. Joy Beasley will serve as the new Keeper and Associate Director (acting) of Cultural Resources, Partnerships, & Science. Dr. Julie Ernstein will serve as Deputy Keeper and Acting Chief of the National Register and National Historic Landmarks programs. Dr. Turkiya Lowe will serve as the acting NPS Federal Preservation Officer.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.