

MINUTES

**State Historic Preservation Review Board
450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut
Plaza Level, Meeting Room B (South Building)
Friday, March 23, 2018, 9:30 a.m.**

Present: Dr. Bucki, Dr. Feder, Mr. Herzan, Ms. Saunders, Ms. Sutton, Mr. Wigren

Absent: Mr. Edwards (chair), Mr. Favretti

Staff: Jenny Scofield, Elizabeth Shapiro, Catherine Labadia, Marena Wisniewski

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Wigren (Vice Chair) at 9:40 a.m. Mr. Wigren introduced the role of the State Historic Preservation Review Board (SRB) and each member who was present. The SRB welcomed Ms. Sutton as a new member and announced the resignation of Dr. Tucker from the SRB.

II. Review of Public Comment Procedures

Copies of the public comment procedures were available at the sign-in table. Mr. Wigren also read the procedures.

III. Approval of the December 1, 2017 meeting minutes

Ms. Scofield agreed to make minor edits to the minutes, received from SRB members.

A motion was made by Dr. Feder, second by Mr. Herzan to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2017 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. Cypress Cemetery, Old Saybrook (Criterion C, local)

Staff recommended Cypress Cemetery for listing at the local level under Criterion C for its collection of significant Funerary Art. The period of significance extends from 1679 to 1904. Ms. Scofield summarized that the nominated portion of the cemetery is 3.5 acres. The annex established in 1904 is excluded. The nominated portion contains approximately 750 contributing markers.

Ms. Scofield reported that the town helped initiate the nomination and this was done in conversation with the cemetery association. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to the cemetery association and the Town of Old Saybrook 30 days before the meeting. The CLG response is in process. No letters of objection to the nomination were received. Kate Kuranda and Scott Goodwin of R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, attended the meeting as consultants for the nomination. J.H. Torrance Downes also attended the meeting on behalf of the nomination.

Mr. Downes introduced himself as a board member of the Cypress Cemetery Association, Old Saybrook Historical Society, and a planner at RiverCOG. He commented that he does outreach and tours for the cemetery and is happy with the information in the nomination.

Mr. Herzan asked why the cemetery was named Cypress. Mr. Goodwin responded that it was renamed like many other cemeteries in the nineteenth century. Mr. Herzan asked for this information to be added to the nomination.

Mr. Herzan noted that this nomination was fascinating. Dr. Bucki commented that the authors did a thorough job of articulating funerary art. She asked if this cemetery is a typical or unusual example of its type. Mr. Herzan responded that this cemetery is an outstanding property to document because it contains so many examples of various funerary art.

Ms. Saunders commented on photos 10 through 20. She asked if the photos could be taken at a different angle to make it easier to see detail on the specific markers. Mr. Goodwin responded that he considered taking images of just marker details. Discussion continued regarding the difficulty of photographing this particular property because of its orientation. Mr. Wigren suggested using a mirror. The transfer of nomination digital photograph files to the National Park Service was explained.

Mr. Herzan asked if the cemetery should be considered for state level significance. Mr. Goodwin responded that there are many other examples of the work of the carvers represented here throughout the area, but locally this cemetery is the best comprehensive collection.

Dr. Feder asked about the discrepancy in the death date for Lady Fenwick. Mr. Downes noted that Mathew Griswold was given charge of taking care of that tombstone in perpetuity and the Griswold family continued this tradition (there are 11 Mathew Griswolds). There is an error on the inscription. Mr. Goodwin added that members of the Griswold family were some of the first experts in sandstone carving.

Mr. Wigren noted that the reference to landscape improvements on p. 8-36 (second paragraph) is not previously mentioned in the nomination.

Mr. Wigren commented that the use of the term Victorian in the periodization in this nomination is different than the way the term is typically used. Victorian does not typically refer to resources from 1810. In the Stonington Cemetery nomination, the term Early Republic was used for this time period.

Mr. Wigren commented on the changing attitudes toward death mentioned on p. 8-29. It is difficult to talk about this without mentioning changes in religious beliefs at the time and the influence of religion on these attitudes.

A motion was made by Ms. Saunders, second by Mr. Herzan, to list the Cypress Cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places (Y-6, N-0, Abstained= 0).

2. Connecticut Valley Hospital Cemetery, Middletown (Criterion A, state and C, local)

Staff recommended the Connecticut Valley Hospital Cemetery for listing at the state level under Criterion A in the categories of Social History and Health/Medicine; and at the local level under Criterion C for Landscape Architecture. The period of significance dates to the time period of active burials, from 1878 through 1957. Ms. Scofield summarized that the hospital campus was listed on the National Register in 1985, but the district boundary was restricted to the core of the campus. The cemetery is visually and physically separated from that area.

Ms. Scofield reported that the nomination was initiated by the Connecticut Valley Hospital (CVH) and hospital representatives had an opportunity to review the nomination. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to CVH, the Connecticut Department of Public Health & Addition Services, and City of Middletown 30 days before the meeting. Middletown is not a CLG. No letters of objection to the nomination were received. Kate Kuranda and Scott Goodwin of R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, attended the meeting as consultants for the nomination. Three CVH staff members attended the meeting on behalf of the nomination, including Helene Vartelas, CEO; Tracy Starbird, art therapist and tour guide; and Monique Proto, Director of Recovery Services and tour guide.

Ms. Vartelas stated that the cemetery reflects the social meaning of mental efforts and support's CVH's efforts of recovery. This is a good time to recognize the importance of the cemetery because May is mental health awareness month, which is when CVH hosts an annual service at the cemetery.

Dr. Feder asked if the events mentioned on p. 8-20 of the nomination (such as animal attacks) really happened on hospital grounds. Ms. Vartelas responded that yes, CVH was a campus with large grounds. It had its own railroad stop. People were buried in numbers and CVH recently completed a reclamation project to install a tablet with people's names matched to the number on their burial marker.

Dr. Feder commented that this cemetery is an interesting site. Dr. Bucki added that this is a good nomination in terms of institutional history. She was surprised that any of the records are public. Ms. Vartelas responded that during the tablet project, the Attorney General's office was involved and the listing of names was allowed through a special ruling. Acknowledgment of mistreatment [in terms of not identifying patients buried by name] happened around the country in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Dr. Bucki asked if this would include potters' fields. Ms. Kuranda responded that the single-grave approach is the second stage after potters' fields.

Dr. Bucki asked if this is a typical example of this type of cemetery. Ms. Kuranda responded that this is the only cemetery of its kind in Connecticut, but when compared nationally, it is typical of the single-grave approach used by institutions. Mr. Herzan commented that he was fascinated that these types of cemeteries were more common in Massachusetts than Connecticut.

Mr. Wigren noted that photos 7 and 8 are of standard markers. He asked if you can assume the family came in later and changed them and if they are the only such examples in the cemetery. Mr. Goodwin responded that they are. Ms. Vartelas confirmed that one is marble and one is an iron cross; they are the only markers that differ from the others in the cemetery.

Mr. Herzan and Dr. Bucki noted that the use of Dr. Lawrence Goodheart's work showed good research. His publications are good to have in the bibliography.

SRB members discussed examples of the history of social stigma that this nomination addresses. Ms. Vartelas commented that there are a lot of examples of stories that have been shared.

A motion was made by Mr. Herzan, second by Dr. Bucki to list the Connecticut Valley Hospital Cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places (Y-6, N-0, Abstained= 0).

V. Discussion

Ms. Scofield noted that work on draft revisions to the bylaws is ongoing. Continued discussion of the bylaws and project to update old nominations will be placed on a subsequent meeting agenda.

VI. New Business

No new business was discussed.

VII. Staff Report

Ms. Scofield announced SHPO's upcoming conference to be held on May 16 at the Sheraton Hartford South in Rocky Hill. She noted that SRB members should have received the announcement, along with the announcement of SHPO's Fellowship. More details about the conference will be available on SHPO's Facebook page. Ms. Scofield distributed paper copies of the Fellowship announcement and asked the SRB to circulate it to interested parties.

Ms. Scofield reported that SHPO's statewide plan draft is in progress. The SRB will be invited to review and comment on it soon. She noted that the plan is required as part of SHPO's federal Historic Preservation Fund allotment and that the content of the plan must be designed to meet requirements of SHPO's annual reporting to the National Park Service.

Ms. Scofield mentioned the landscape and digitization projects that SHPO is planning. Dr. Bucki asked about the consideration of Olmsted's Seaside Park in resiliency planning.

Ms. Scofield reported that staff Kristina Newman-Scott and Cathy Labadia attended the NCSHPO meeting and advocacy week in Washington D.C. with successful results.

Mr. Wigren announced the CT Trust for Historic Preservation's annual preservation award presentation to be held on April 5.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 a.m.