

Preservation Connecticut
Board of Trustees
Virtual meeting
2 March 2023

MINUTES

members participating: Deb Cohen, Ed Gerber, Ellen Gould, John Harrington, Jeff Kaufman, Garry Leonard, Regan Miner, Tom Nissley, Cathy Osten, Edith Pestana, Pieter Roos, Caroline Sloat, Bob Tierney, Jonathan Wharton

staff participating: Jane Montanaro, Stefon Danczuk, Kristen Hopewood, Renée Tribert, Stacey Vairo, Chris Wigren

others participating: Jay Lawlor, Hoopes Morganthaler Rausch Scaramozza

Caroline Sloat called the meeting to order at 2.04 p.m.

Bristol Enterprises settlement agreement. Caroline reported that the parties have reach an agreement on the terms of a settlement, and the Executive Committee has recommended that the Board accept them. Because it includes a confidentiality clause, the agreement was not circulated electronically; Board members may review it at the Boarding House. The Executive Committee also recommends that Preservation Connecticut not work with Bristol Enterprises or its principal, Ted Lazarus, again. PCT's sovereign immunity claim is still on appeal.

Taking over from Caroline, attorney Jay Lawlor said that the agreement represented a pretty fair compromise. The principal terms are:

1. A payment by PCT of \$1.3 million. One million dollars will be paid by PCT's insurance carrier (the full amount of coverage), the remaining \$300,000 will come from PCT's own funds.
2. Complete releases exchanged by all parties.
3. No admission of liability by any party.
4. Confidentiality about the terms, with exceptions for sharing with our attorneys, accountants and others need to know the terms, provided they agree to be bound by the confidentiality requirement. If asked, the response should be "I am not at liberty to disclose the terms of any settlement that may have been reached."
5. Mutual non disparagement provision.
6. Payment to be made within 28 days of full execution.

Discussion followed concerning ways to avoid similar lawsuits in the future. Measures discussed include:

- Including limitation of liability clauses in future contracts.
- Consider including alternate methods of dispute resolution, such as arbitration or mediation, in future contracts.
- Carrying errors and omissions insurance.
- Continuing to pursue sovereign immunity, perhaps through legislation (although we are aware that there could be down sides).

Jane will work with the Governance committee to follow up on these and other suggestions.

On a motion by Bob Tierney, seconded by Garry Leonard, the Board voted to accept the settlement terms. The officers and other Board members expressed their thanks to Jay for his hard work.

Report of the Chair. Caroline announced that Garrett Heher has resigned from the Board. He has been a member since 2015 and contributed his financial expertise.

For the next strategic plan, language that supports increasing outreach and building relationships with minority communities will be developed as part of a process of review and education to become successful in an arena that is new to us. Board members who wish to contribute to this effort are encouraged to let Jane know.

Written reports. Jane introduced the director's and staff reports and reported that she had listened to testimony that morning on Bill 6756, which proposes a procedure to appeal decisions by the State Historic Preservation Office. She also reported that the CIF application for funds to renovate several churches in Bridgeport had been re-submitted.

Financial reports. Garry Leonard reported that income is slightly above projections for this point in the fiscal year, and expenses are slightly below, leaving us in good shape. Investments are performing better than benchmarks. Current balances are \$1.3 million in the endowment (soon to be \$1 million), and \$1 million in the reserve fund.

Connecticut Preservation Awards. Chris Wigren presented recommendations from the staff (Jeff Kaufman also participated in the review).

For Merit Awards:

- Ansonia: Mordecai Prindle house: renovation
- Bristol: Arts and Innovation Magnet School (Memorial Boulevard School): adaptive use
- Hartford: 99 Pratt Street (Steiger Building): adaptive use
- New Haven: Hotel Marcel (Armstrong Rubber Company building): adaptive use, sustainability
- New London: City Hall, City Council chamber: restoration
- Norwalk: Shirt Factory Lofts (LeRoy Shirt Company factory): adaptive use
- Westport: Old Mill Grocery and Deli: grassroots activism

For the Harlan Griswold Award, jointly presented with the State Historic Preservation Office: Jared Edwards, FAIA, preservation architect and activist.

On a motion by Ed Gerber, seconded by Garry Leonard, the awards were approved.

Grants. Mike Forino presented recommendations from staff (with Caroline) for 1772 Foundation grants and PCT maintenance and repair grants.

For the 1772 Foundation grants, PCT received 57 pre-applications requesting a total of \$470,780 and 25 final applications requesting a total of \$230,298. Staff recommended funding the following 16 projects, for a total of \$134,000:

- Branford Land Trust, window restoration: \$10,000
- Clinton, Adam Stanton House, Inc., window restoration: \$10,000
- Cheshire, Ball & Socket Arts, Inc., office building window restoration: \$10,000
- Madison Historical Society, Allis-Bushnell house, painting: \$10,000
- Morris Historical Society, 1772 Schoolhouse, roofing: \$10,000
- Mystic Seaport Museum, American Seamen's Friend Society Reading Room, roofing: \$10,000
- New Milford Historical Society, Bank building, masonry repairs: \$7,000
- Newtown Historical Society, Matthew Curtiss, Jr. house, roofing: \$10,000
- Norwich Arts Center, St. Mary's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society building, floor repairs: \$7,500
- Old Saybrook Historical Society, General William Hart house, roofing: \$10,000
- Thompson Historical Society, Old Town Hall, painting: \$10,000
- Wallingford, Gaylord Hospital, Persky building, roofing: \$6,000

- Washington, Steep Rock Association, Isaac Camp house, chimney repair: \$3,500
- Windham Free Library Association, Dr. Chester Hunt's office, painting: \$10,000
- Windham Preservation, Windham Inn, roofing: \$10,000

For the Maintenance and Repair grants, PCT received 17 pre-applications requesting a total of \$240,000 and 5 full applications. Staff recommended funding the following four projects for a total of \$49,500:

- Barkhamsted Congregational Church, painting: \$15,000
- Hartford, Trinity Episcopal Church, chimney repairs: \$15,000
- Litchfield, St. Michael's Episcopal Church, electrical upgrades: \$7,000
- New Haven, Pitt's Chapel UFWB Church, boiler replacement: \$12,500

Mike noted that he is still working with some congregations who were not ready to submit applications for this round. There is still some money in the fund, and he hopes to fund these other congregations or else have a second round later in the year.

On a motion by Tom Nissley, seconded by Ed Gerber, the Board approved the grants.

Seaside State Park, Waterford. Chris Wigren provided information about the history of the site, beginning as Seaside Sanitarium, the first purpose-built facility for heliotropic treatment of tuberculosis in children, and recent announcement by the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection that it plans to demolish all the historic buildings on the site. Staff is working with the State Historic Preservation Office to address this threat. Discussion followed.

Other business. Caroline reminded members of upcoming events: Annual meeting on 21 April; Awards presentation on 4 May, and in-person Board meeting on 8 June. She asked Board members for suggestions as to who might narrate the awards video; names mentioned were John Dankowski, Alisyn Camerota, John Nowacki, and Judy Woodruff.

Pieter Roos reported on vandalism by teenagers at the Mark Twain house. Police have identified the teens, who will be assigned community service at the Twain house. In the meantime, private donors and a Go Fund Me campaign have raised money to repair broken windows and a damaged statue. The incident has prompted the Mark Twain house and Stowe-Day Foundation to increase efforts to reach out to the neighborhood, which had fallen off during the pandemic.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Wharton, secretary

JW/cw

Preservation Connecticut
Board of Trustees
Virtual meeting, 8 June 2023

members present: M.J. Agostini, Deb Cohen, Ed Gerber, Ellen Gould, Henry Griggs, John Harrington, Garry Leonard, Regan Miner, Tom Nissley, Cathy Osten, Priyanka Panjwani, Cristina Ross, Caroline Sloat, Brian Smith, Jonathan Wharton

staff present: Stefon Danczuk, Mike Forino, Anna Fossi, Kristen Hopewood, Jane Montanaro, Jordan Sorensen, Renée Tribert, Stacey Vairo, Chris Wigren

Caroline Sloat called the meeting to order at 2.05 p.m.

Minutes. On a motion by Tom Nissley, seconded by Ed Gerber, the minutes of the 2 March 2023 meeting were approved as printed. Brian Smith abstained.

Chair's report. Caroline introduced Brian Smith, new gubernatorial appointee, who briefly described his background. He also reported that the General Assembly did approve funding for creating a preservation toolkit website based on a recommendation by the preservation study group of a few years ago.

Caroline reported on progress at the Thompson Historical Society and William Mason house in Thompson—one the recipient of a 1772 Foundation grant, the other of a PCT award. She praised staff for work on the Green Book documentation project, revisions to the Local Historic District website, and the annual awards program. Finally, she reminded Board members to sign and return the confidentiality and conflict of interest agreements.

Written reports. Jane Montanaro called attention to her report about passage of HB 6756, which establishes a working group to study the work of the State Historic Preservation Office. Jane is trying to suggest members for the group and will follow its meeting schedule.

Jordan Sorensen highlighted the report that she and Mike Forino had met with administration and faculty from the Bullard-Havens Technical High School in Bridgeport to discuss incorporating preservation training in its carpentry and masonry programs. The school is enthusiastic; planning will continue, along with connection-making to business members.

Governance. Jane presented Priyanka Panjwani, an architect originally from India, as a candidate for board membership (resume in the meeting packet); on a motion by Tom Nissley and seconded by Ed Gerber, she was elected.

Jane reminded members of expectations of board members: to attend board and committee meetings (let the office know if you cannot); to serve on at least one committee; and to help open doors to other potential supporters, donors, or board members. Committee descriptions were included in the meeting packet; members were asked to tell the office which committee or committees they wish to serve on.

Legislative update. Cathy Osten provided a summary of some final actions from the General Assembly session, which ended at midnight.

- The implementer for the SHPO study bill added the five Native American communities to the working group.
- The budget includes bonding for several important projects, including for arts and church buildings in Norwich; these are subject to the governor's action on the bond committee.
- The budget still has some holes to deal with.
- Cathy is beginning to work on legislation for PCT for next year, including an increase in PCT's share of the Community Investment Fund to \$500,000 and formalizing sovereign immunity.

Finance. Garry Leonard noted that the year-to-date expenditures were skewed by the payment for the settlement in the Bristol Enterprises lawsuit; otherwise, expenditures are mostly at or below budget. The new budget is not ready; the Finance Committee plans to have a proposal for approval by email before the end of the month. Investments continue to perform above benchmark; the Merrill-Lynch advisor will review with the committee at its next meeting.

On a motion by Tom Nissley, seconded by Garry Leonard, the board approved a resolution authorizing Jane Montanaro to enter into contracts with the State of Connecticut for the Fiscal Year 2024 statutory payment and Circuit Rider grant.

Washington Park, Bridgeport. Jane introduced Anna Fossi, who will serve a six-month preservation fellowship with PCT; the fellowship has been funded by Ed Gerber. Anna's resume was included in the meeting packet.

Mike Forino provided an overview of PCT's application to the State's Community Investment Fund for a grant of nearly \$6.2 million to fund renovations at eight buildings belonging to six church congregations in the Washington Park National Register district of Bridgeport. Renovations will support and allow expansion of community services offered by the churches which are important to the neighborhood. This proposal grows out of Circuit Rider visits to the area. Mike and Jordan have been meeting with the congregations since 2021. Two applications have been turned down; however, the State has provided suggestions for improving the submissions. A key factor will be obtaining support from area legislators. Anna Fossi's fellowship will focus on this project, and PCT also hopes to hire a part-time community outreach coordinator from the neighborhood. A community meeting will be held this evening in Bridgeport; board members are invited to attend.

Seaside State Park, Waterford. Chris Wigren reported on coordination with SHPO and attempts to communicate with DEEP. However, nothing has happened. DEEP had announced a public meeting sometime in June but no date has been set. Anyone who wishes to be informed of developments can sign up with DEEP through a website in the meeting agenda.

Executive session. The board went into executive session at 3.45 p.m. for the executive director's annual review.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Wharton, secretary

JW/cw

Approval of March minutes corrected to read 'Brian Smith' rather than 'Bob Smith.'

**Preservation Connecticut
Board of Trustees
Hybrid meeting, 8 September 2023**

members present: Ed Gerber, Henry Griggs, John Harrington, Jeff Kaufman, Garry Leonard, Cristina Ross, Caroline Sloat, Brian Smith. Bob Tierney

members participating via Zoom: M.J. Agostini, Deb Cohen, Ellen Gould, Regan Miner, Cathy Osten, Priyanka Panjwani, Edith Pestana, James Quinn

staff present: Stefon Danczuk, Jane Montanaro, Renée Tribert, Jordan Sorensen, Chris Wigren

staff participating via Zoom: Kristen Hopewood, Stacey Vairo

Caroline Sloat called the meeting to order at 2.08 p.m.

Minutes. One correction to the minutes of the 8 June 2023 was noted: in the section on Minutes, 'Bob Smith' should be 'Brian Smith.' On a motion by Bob Tierney, seconded by Garry Leonard, the minutes were approved as corrected. Jeff Kaufman abstained.

Chair's report. Caroline noted that the coming year was to be a time to 'get back to the new normal' after pandemic upheavals. Updating the strategic plan will be an important focus. She thanked staff for assisting in response to a local question in her town, Thompson, and observed that the brief entries in staff and Circuit Rider reports often represent a significant investment of time and important contributions to local issues.

Written reports. Jane Montanaro noted that events over the summer had provided several opportunities for informal discussion and relationship building with legislators. In November, she will serve as state advocacy captain at the National Trust conference.

In addition to his written report, Chris Wigren announced the upcoming donation of another preservation easement, for 357 Garden Street in Wethersfield, an 18th-century house remodeled in the mid-19th century; the owners particularly wish to restrict subdividing the property, which could result in the construction of a new building in front of the historic house.

Renée Tribert highlighted inquiries she receives from developers looking for opportunities in Connecticut and asked trustees to let her know about historic properties that are or will soon be available for redevelopment. Pre-market information is particularly useful.

Governance. Committee descriptions and assignments were included in the meeting packet; Trustees were asked to confirm their assignments and let staff know if they wish to change committees. The Engagement committee needs a chair.

On a motion by Bob Tierney, seconded by John Harrington, Deb Cohen, James Quinn, and Jonathan Wharton were elected to a second term on the board. Regan Miner announced her resignation from the board and was thanked for her service.

On a motion by Bob Tierney, seconded by Brian Smith, Ed Gerber, Ellen Gould, and Edith Pestana were elected to a new term on the board.

The board congratulated Priyanka Panjwani on her appointment to the State Review Board and wished Cristina Ross well in her campaign for re-election to the New Canaan town council.

Financial reports. Garry Leonard reported that the committee had reviewed investments with Merrill Lynch; the investment account continues to perform above benchmarks. Currently, the endowment account contains approximately \$1,356 million, and the reserve account

approximately \$380,000, after payment of the settlement with Bristol Enterprises. The Finance committee recommends keeping a recent bequest in a CD account for the moment, until the markets settle.

Cathy Osten said she and other legislators were looking into the possibility of raising the recording fee that funds preservation and other state programs under the Community Investment Act. The question is what amount would be feasible.

On a motion by Garry Leonard, seconded by John Harrington, the board approved the 2023-2024 budget as presented.

Development. The new committee chair, M.J. Agostini, outlined ideas for donor cultivation events, in coordination with the Engagement committee. Henry Griggs offered his house for an event and suggested outreach to people who reached the age where they are required to take distributions from retirement accounts. A date for a committee meeting will be set soon.

Engagement. The committee—still seeking a chair—had met in the morning before the board meeting, so Caroline made an oral report with the assistance of committee members reviewing the tentative program ideas that had been discussed. Ellen Gould described an idea for a yet-to-be-developed Olmsted-related program that might include a bus tour of dispersed sites, noting that this bus tour operator also has other tours including an overview of rehabbed buildings for the Norwalk Preservation Trust. This suggests a possible collaboration with PCT based on the surveys of other cultural landscapes documented on the website. John Harrington is working on a friend-raising event at his house targeting the online house restoration community. Plans are being made for a special opening of Sturges Cottage in Fairfield on Saturday, February 10, 2024. For the spring, Priyanka Panjwani discussed a plan to coordinate a statewide program of Jane's Walk events to take place on the first weekend in May. Upcoming anniversaries around which events could be planned include Lafayette visit bicentennial, 2024; PCT 50-year anniversary, 2025; and the American Revolution 250th, 2025-2031.

A new season of Talking about Preservation is being planned with an in-person event at Dudley Farm Museum in Guilford.

Caroline announced an intention to revise membership fees. A proposal will be developed for the December meeting following analysis of current income and the setting of future goals.

Jane reported on a preliminary discussion by staff toward revising the strategic plan. Notes in the meeting packet include analysis of the status of goals and strategies from the current plan. The new plan will focus on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and must cover ways of developing the tools and vocabulary to engage underserved communities. This could include such topics as addressing the elitist reputation of the preservation movement, addressing funding bias and complexity of programs and funding mechanisms which make them unfeasible for low-income users.

Jane has begun to look for a consultant to help with the process. **On a motion by Garry Leonard, seconded by Brian Smith, the board voted to authorize Jane to create and post a request for proposals for a consultant with DEI focus to assist in developing a strategic plan, with responses to be reviewed by a subcommittee to be identified.**

Garry Leonard, Cristina Ross, and Jeff Kaufman volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

Caroline noted that the need for the strategic plan to address DEI grows out of the Community Investment Fund application to help churches in the Washington Park neighborhood of Bridgeport maintain and repair their buildings to house social service programs crucial to the community. This effort has highlighted the difficulties such areas face in using traditional preservation tools. Jane reported that PCT had hired Katharine (Kat) Morris, principal of Community Climate Co. and a community organizer originally from Bridgeport, to consult on the grant application process. Edith Pestana agreed that based on her experience this would be a worthwhile collaboration.

Stewardship. Jane reported that the public meeting to discuss plans for Seaside State Park, Waterford, has not been announced; she encouraged board members to register for notifications. Applications for Maintenance & Repair grants are due 15 September; a committee meeting to review them will be scheduled for late September.

On a motion by Jeff Kaufman, seconded by Cristina Ross, the meeting was adjourned at 4.06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Wigren
Deputy Director

**Preservation Connecticut
Board of Trustees
Hybrid meeting, 7 December 2023**

members present: MJ Agostini, Henry Griggs, Jeff Kaufman, Garry Leonard, Cathy Osten, Pieter Roos, Caroline Sloat, Brian Smith. Bob Tierney

members participating via Zoom: Deb Cohen, Ellen Gould, John Harrington, Priyanka Panjwani, Edith Pestana, Cristina Ross

staff present: Jane Montanaro, Stefon Danczuk, Mike Forino, Anna Fossi, Brad Schide, Jordan Sorensen, Renée Tribert, Stacey Vairo, Chris Wigren

staff participating via Zoom: Kristen Hopewood

Caroline Sloat called the meeting to order at 2.03 p.m.

Minutes. One correction to the minutes of 8 September 2023 was noted: Jeff Kaufman also volunteered for the strategic plan committee. **On a motion by Bob Tierney, seconded by Garry Leonard, the minutes were approved as corrected.**

Chair's report. Caroline thanked John Harrington for hosting a get-acquainted event at his house for online old-house enthusiasts and noted a recent article in the Connecticut Post highlighting John's and Deb Cohen's stewardship of their historic homes. Caroline also reported on attending the Historic New England summit in Providence and asked Board members to participate generously in the year-end appeal.

Written reports. Jane Montanaro reported that the annual report was receiving compliments and thanked staff for their work in producing the report and carrying out the work included in it. In light of that work, Mike Forino's and Kristen Hopewood have new titles: Field Service Manager for Mike and Membership and Outreach Manager for Kristen. In addition, Mike has completed his Ph.D. in history at the University of Delaware; Stefon Danczuk has completed the capstone project for his master's degree in public history at Central Connecticut State University; Jordan Sorensen is taking online courses toward on a certificate in Sustainability at Cornell University; and Chris Wigren will receive a Public Service award from the Connecticut chapter of AIA. Staff have created four videos for Connecticut Main Street's Main Street Accelerator capacity-building program, work coordinated by Jordan with tech by Stefon. Mike and others are in conversations with Bullard Havens Technical School and the Eli Whitney Museum to provide needed preservation trades training for students.

Financial reports. Garry Leonard noted that due to the reporting schedule the reports presented are two months out of date; since then the cash level has been increased with the annual state payment from the Community Investment Act and there have been no extraordinary expenses. The investment report will be distributed separately to Board members. **On a motion by Garry, seconded by Bob Tierney, the Board approved the financial reports.**

The Finance Committee asked the Board to forgive a tax credit pass-through loan for the Hubbard Mansion in Stamford (Rebecca Shannonhouse and PamCunconan). The loan, in the amount of \$348,000, was made five years ago with the expectation that it would be forgiven, since it really was only an advance on a tax credit which was assigned to PCT on behalf of the property owners. **On a motion by Pieter Roos, seconded by Cathy Osten, the Board approved forgiving the loan.** Board members suggested that PCT consider asking for a preservation easement in similar cases in the future.

Garry announced that PCT had received a bequest of \$138,000 from the estate of Thomas Talamini, who with his late wife, Jane (a former Trustee), was a longtime supporter of PCT and other historical organizations. The funds have been invested in treasury bills for the time being, to take advantage of favorable interest rates.

Jane said she is waiting for a draft of the annual audit; when it is delivered the Finance Committee will review it and recommend approval by the Board.

Stewardship. Staff members reported on ongoing advocacy work.

Fort Decatur, Ledyard: Stefon Danczuk reported on efforts to protect the site of this highly significant installation from the War of 1812. The owner of the property has applied to the town Planning and Zoning Commission for a permit to quarry for gravel, removing a large portion of the hill on which the fort was located. While the fort itself would not be directly affected, outlying archaeological resources would be destroyed and there is the potential for damage from blasting. Stefon is working with local citizens along with the Archaeological Conservancy and the American Battlefield Trust to oppose the P&Z application and to convince the owner to sell or donate the site to the Archaeological Conservancy. Board members suggested that he contact local Tribes for input and support and clarify what state permitting would be required for the quarry.

United Illuminating transmission lines, Bridgeport and Fairfield: Stacey Vairo described advocacy efforts relating to UI's application to the Connecticut Siting Council to construct new electrical transmission lines along the New Haven railroad line through Fairfield and Bridgeport, which will create adverse impacts on dozens of National Register sites and three National Historic Landmarks. The impacts include property takings as well as visual impact of monopoles ranging from 125 to 195 feet tall; proposed work in Bridgeport's South End also raises questions of environmental justice. PCT has been asked to apply to be an Intervenor in the case; however, staff believe that they can be just as effective by partnering with other Intervenor, including the Town of Fairfield, the City of Bridgeport, and the National Trust. Trustees affirmed that decision.

Washington Park, Bridgeport: Mike Forino reported on the ongoing and evolving project to apply to the Community Investment Fund 2030 for a grant to support churches around the park. The churches provide vitally needed social services but are hampered by the need for repairs to their historic buildings. Although two applications to the Fund have been unsuccessful; PCT is preparing to apply again. Since the last Board meeting, Mike and others have been exploring potential partnerships with other community groups; one option under consideration is creating a new community-based organization to receive and manage the grant with assistance by PCT. Lack of support by local legislators severely hurt the previous applications, and, while our team's efforts to bring them on board are ongoing, Cathy Osten will bring the importance of this opportunity to their attention.

80 Shore Road, Waterford: Brad Schide has been working with the State Historic Preservation Office and local advocates to prevent demolition of this house, a contributing resource in the Hartford Colony National Register district. The Historic Preservation Council has requested that the Attorney General take legal action under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act. After a recent site visit, preservationists are waiting for the AG's office to decide whether it will act. This case raises once again long-standing proposals to flag National Register properties on local land records so that owners will be aware of historic designation. This could be a future policy effort with the General Assembly.

Other items. Chris Wigren asked Board members to suggest candidates for annual preservation awards; the Mimi Findlay award for young preservationists is a particular concern since it has not been given in two years. Nominations are due February 2.

Caroline noted that Jane will be circulating proposals for consultants to lead the strategic plan process. All Trustees are invited to attend a meeting on January 10.

On a motion by MJ Agostini, seconded by Bob Tierney, the meeting was adjourned at 4.15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Wigren
Deputy Director