

**Preservation Connecticut  
Board of Trustees  
Hybrid meeting, 7 March 2024**

*members present:* M.J. Agostini, Deb Cohen, Ellen Gould (Zoom), Henry Griggs (Zoom), John Harrington (Zoom), Jeff Kaufman (Zoom), Tom Nissley, Priyanka Panjwani, Edith Pestana, Cristina Ross, Caroline Sloat, Brian Smith, Bob Tierney

*staff present:* Jane Montanaro, Stefon Danczuk, Mike Forino, Kristen Hopewood (Zoom), Brad Schide, Jordan Sorensen, Renée Tribert, Stacey Vairo (Zoom), Chris Wigren

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

**Minutes. On a motion by Bob Tierney, seconded by Brian Smith, minutes of the meeting of 7 December 2023 were approved with correction to the spelling of Bob's name.**

Chair's report. Caroline noted the article in the current issue of Connecticut Magazine featuring Deb Cohen's and John Harrington's houses, with quotes from Stacey Vairo. She also asked members of the Board to follow developments in the current legislative session. Jane Montanaro asked members to support the bill to increase the filing fee that funds the Community Investment Act account, which provides funding for preservation and other land-based programs. The Government Administration and Elections Committee will hold a hearing on March 8; next steps will be Finance, then Appropriations.

Written reports. Jane reported on next steps for the strategic plan and noted that up to date legislative information is available on the PCT website.

Kristen Hopewood provided an update on efforts to recruit sponsors for the awards. to date, we have pledges of \$18,800; the goal is to surpass last year's total of \$22,200.

Stefon Danczuk provided an update on Fort Decatur, Ledyard. The developer withdrew its application for quarrying but plans to resubmit. Stefon is coordinating with local and national organizations to respond to that application when it happens.

Brad Schide noted that there is a new developer for the Reid & Hughes building in Norwich, site of a PCT revolving fund loan.

Jordan Sorensen said that much of the increase in media coverage is due to the Fort Decatur issue and to videos and photos posted by Stefon.

Financial reports. Jane reported that the 2022-2023 audit was filed in late January. The current reports show nothing unusual; she is waiting on payments from the State for the Circuit Rider Grant for last year and this year, as well as the Preservation Toolbox. Peter Stockman continues to track the investment account.

Stewardship—awards. Chris Wigren presented committee and staff recommendations for 2024 Awards of Merit:

- Kirschenbaum dome restoration, Branford;
- Sally Zimmerman and Allen Olsen, restoration and community activism, Chaplin;
- Frederick Sturges house restoration, Fairfield;
- State Capitol skylights restoration, Hartford;
- Shepherd Home rehabilitation, Middletown;
- New London City Hall rehabilitation, New London;
- Fulton Park stewardship, Waterbury; and
- Walnut Hill stair restoration, New Britain (honorable mention).

Other awards:

- Mimi Findlay award: Orion Newall Vuillemot;

- Janet Jainschigg award: Steve Marshall;
- Harlan Griswold award (presented with the State Historic Preservation Office): Farmington Canal Heritage Trail.

**On a motion by Bob Tierney, seconded by Cristina Ross, the board ratified these awards.** They will be presented on Thursday, May 9.

Stewardship—1772 Foundation grants. Mike Forino presented a slate of grants to submit to the 1772 Foundation. He noted that this is the 14<sup>th</sup> year that Preservation Connecticut has administered grants for the foundation. PCT received 52 pre-applications; Circuit Riders visited 34 sites, and 23 applications were submitted. Staff is recommending a total of \$134,000 to 16 organizations:

- Darien Historical Society: \$10,000 for roofing at the Bates-Scofield house (NR)
- Mather Homestead Foundation, Darien: \$10,000 for painting at the Mather Homestead (NHL)
- Farmington Historical Society: \$6,952 to paint the Gridley-Case cottages (NR)
- Avery-Copp House Museum, Groton: \$7,500 to re-roof the carriage house (NR)
- Haddam Historical Society: \$2,500 to repair the chimney on the Thankful Arnold house (NR)
- Rockfall Foundation, Middletown: \$10,000 for re-roofing of the Capt. Benjamin Williams house (NR)
- Norfolk Foundation: \$10,000 for window repairs at the Royal Arcanum building (NR)
- Society of the Founders of Norwich, CT, Inc.: \$9,705 for foundation and sill repairs to the Joseph Carpenter silversmith shop (NR)
- Music Mountain, Inc., Canaan: \$10,000 to paint Gordon Hall (NR)
- Connecticut Landmarks: \$5,583 to repair the historic fence at the Phelps-Hatheway house, Suffield (NR)
- Colonial Dames of America: \$6,150 to repair the bulkhead and cellar entrance at the Joseph Webb house, Wethersfield (NHL)
- Wilton Historical Society: \$10,000 to re-roof the Lambert house (SR)
- Windham Preservation, Inc.: \$10,000 for roofing at the Windham Inn (NR)
- Amity-Woodbridge Historical Society: \$9,000 for chimney repairs at the Thomas Darling house (NR)
- Seabury Society for the Preservation of the Glebe House, Inc., Woodbury: \$10,000 for re-roofing (NR)
- Woodstock Historical Society: \$6,610 to restore the entry of Palmer Hall (NR)

**On a motion by Tim Nissley, seconded by John Harrington, the Board approved the grants for recommendation to the 1772 Foundation.**

Stewardship—Seaside State Park. Chris provided an update: The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is proceeding with plans to demolish the sanatorium buildings, which are listed on the National Register, and develop the park. In a meeting with DEEP intended to solicit suggestions for mitigation, Jane and Chris maintained that the department has not demonstrated the necessity of demolition. The State Historic Preservation Office shares this viewpoint. In the meantime, Jane, Brad, and Chris has been in conversations with an attorney representing a client who intends to file suit under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act to block demolition. They offered advice based on PCT's experience with CEPA cases and may be asked to testify if the suit comes to trial.

Strategic plan. Jane reported that she has asked some Trustees to serve on the advisory committee for the strategic plan; she asked members for other volunteers or suggestions for people from outside PCT to serve. Suggestions included representatives from the Bridgeport churches of Pitts Chapel in New Haven, or someone from SHPO. Jane noted that the

consultant, Susan West Montgomery, has recommended using the Bridgeport CIF grant project as a concrete starting point for future plans.

Closing. Caroline reminded members of upcoming events and meetings; Priyanka Panjwani described plans for Jane's Walk events on May 4. The meeting was adjourned at 4.10 p.m. Members and staff attended a reception at the home of Jim and Martha Alexander.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Wigren  
Deputy Director

Preservation Connecticut  
Board of Trustees  
Virtual meeting  
6 June 2024

*members present:* Caroline Sloat, MJ Agostini, Deb Cohen, Ellen Gould, Garry Leonard, Tom Nissley, Priyanka Panjwani, Cathy Osten, Edith Pestana, James Quinn, Pieter Roos, Cristina Ross, Brian Smith, Bob Tierney.

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

*others present:* Roberta Boyle, Accounting Resources, Inc.

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

Minutes. Caroline noted some typographical errors in the minutes of the March meeting. On a motion by Brian Smith, seconded by Tom Nissley, the minutes were approved, pending correction.

Chair's report. Caroline announced that Jonathan Wharton has resigned from the Board, citing increased work load. On a motion by Brian Smith, seconded by Bob Tierney, the Board accepted Jonathan's resignation with regret.

Caroline observed that discussion of the 2024-2025 budget will show a tight cash position, despite a bequest of \$158,000 recently received. On the positive side, she noted a number of good programs, including Talking About Preservation and the latest Preservation Awards, which increase PCT's presence and create good feeling. The upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and strategic plan will offer opportunities to diversify our support and extend our reach.

Financial reports, year to date. Roberta Boyle presented current financial reports. The current year situation is tight because the State decided not to approve the grant for the Circuit Rider program this fiscal year. Usually the grant is approved during the fiscal year, retroactive to the beginning of the year. This year, due to compounding delays by PCT in submitting the application and by SHPO in processing it as well as to heightened legislative scrutiny, SHPO felt it could not approve the grant. Jane is shifting some expenses to the next fiscal year and is preparing an application for an amendment to cover a few items but most of the cost of the Circuit Riders is not covered, creating an operating loss of \$200,000 for the year to date. We have cash—the final installment of the FY 2023 Circuit Rider grant was finally received, and the bequest helps the bottom line, but it may be necessary to dip into the operating reserve until the annual statutory payment from the Community Investment Act is received in the fall. In the meantime, expenses are on budget, and investment income is strong.

Financial reports, 2024-2025 budget. Roberta presented the proposed budget. On the income side, the budget assumes a continued statutory payment of \$380,000 (unchanged since at least 2017) and \$300,000 Circuit Rider grant. The Community Investment Fund grant of \$5.1 million for the Washington Park project has not been approved by the Bond Commission, so only a tiny portion of it is included in the budgeting. [Note: the Bond Commission approved the grant on 7 June.] Increased funding is budgeted for contributions (\$45,000) and special events (\$30,000). Income from easements, bequests, and tax vouchers cannot be predicted so it is not included in the budget.

Expenses are essentially the same, with a three percent salary increase for staff, new expenses of \$15,000 for the strategic plan and \$20,000 for Washington Park. Maintenance &

Repair grants, usually funded through the CIA statutory payment, will be contingent on a separate grant from SHPO.

In discussion, Jane noted that the special events income may be a series of events, or a campaign connected with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, probably not a single big event. One suggestion was a “50 for 50” campaign with a goal of raising \$50,000. Seeing an increase in the statutory payment was discussed; a bill to raise the CIA fee was introduced by Cathy Osten this year but did not pass; she will try again next year with the thought that once the fee is increased asking for a raise would be more likely to succeed.

On a motion by Garry Leonard, seconded by Pieter Roos, the Board approved the 2024-2025 budget as presented.

Written reports. Jane reported that the bill to modify SHPO’s environmental review process did not pass, and she has received indications that it will not come up in the special session in June. However, it almost certainly will come up again next year. In the meantime, PCT and Connecticut Preservation Action plan to spend the year reaching out to legislators about the value of preservation for their constituents and offering PCT’s expertise to help them understand preservation issues. SHPO is also working behind the scenes with some of the legislation’s sponsors. Brian Smith noted that he knows some of the sponsors and is encouraging them to make any arbitration process professional and impartial. Garry asked Jane to provide the Board with basic facts to use in discussing the bill.

Chris Wigren reported that he hopes to complete the preservation easement on the Olmsted/Warneke property in East Haddam during the summer. The owner is also donating a conservation easement on the property, which has made the process more complex.

Renée Tribert noted that one fee-for-service project had been cancelled by the client, but might come back to PCT.

Kristen Hopewood reported that sponsorships for the awards exceeded last year’s—more than \$24,000, versus \$22,000 in 2023.

Stefon Danczuk invited Board members to an archaeology program June 7 and 8 at the Barnes Museum in Southington.

Mike Forino reported that the Bond Commission was expected to approve the Community Investment Fund 2030 grant for the Washington Park project on June 7. He also has been working with Gerber Fellow Anna Fossi who is compiling a list of sites associated with LGBTQ history in Connecticut; she expects to finish this summer and present her findings to the Board in September.

Stacey Vairo described her ongoing role as an adviser to the Freeman Center in Bridgeport: the Center expects to break ground on restoration of the Freeman houses this summer but needs to find a new owner’s representative to oversee the work; there will be a gallery opening on June 20.

Brad Schide is administering a \$200,000 grant program for homeowners in New Haven’s Winchester Arms Company National Register district, in partnership with the New Haven Preservation Trust. The money comes from a developer as mitigation for demolition of several buildings in the Winchester factory which were too contaminated for reuse. He also noted a potential Environmental Protection Act case in South Norwalk, where a developer is seeking to demolish two buildings listed on the National Register to build a new hotel.

Strategic plan. Jane reported that the strategic plan committee met once, and Trustee members of the committee have prepared equity audits of several PCT programs. The consultant, Susan West Montgomery, will make recommendations for the plan based on those audits; she also has been conducting external interviews. The committee will meet again on June 13 and sometime in August, and the consultant will attend the September 12 Board meeting. All Board members are invited to participate in the planning process. Priyanka Panjwani commented that the process was well-run and thought-provoking.

Other. Jane announced that she plans to convene a meeting of the Engagement committee and others in July to discuss ideas for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. All Board members will be invited.

Executive session. At 3.05 p.m. the Board went into executive session for the Executive Director's annual review.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Wigren  
Deputy Director

Preservation Connecticut  
Board of Trustees  
Hybrid meeting, Whitney Armory boarding house and via Zoom  
12 September 2024

*members present:* Deb Cohen (Zoom), Ellen Gould (Zoom), Henry Griggs, John Harrington (Zoom), Jeff Kaufman, Garry Leonard, Tom Nissley (Zoom), Cathy Osten, Priyanka Panjwani (Zoom), Edith Pestana (Zoom), Peter Roos, Caroline Sloat, Brian Smith (Zoom), Bob Tierney (Zoom),

*staff present:* Jane Montanaro, Stefon Danczuk, Mike Forino, Anna Fossi, Olivia Grella, Kristen Hopewood (Zoom), Jordan Sorensen, Renée Tribert, Stacey Vairo, Chris Wigren

*others present:* Susan West Montgomery

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

Minutes. On a motion by Jeff Kaufman, seconded by Garry Leonard, the minutes were approved as presented.

Chair's report. Caroline thanked those who participated in the strategic plan process. She also reported on a meeting at Ellen Gould's house to begin planning for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and on efforts to address the Circuit Rider grant, with thanks to Cathy Osten for her help in identifying possibilities for increasing funding.

Executive director's report. Jane Montanaro elaborated on strategies for funding, including increasing PCT's statutory grant through the Community Investment Act to cover the Circuit Rider program without applying through SHPO, as well as possible line item funding outside of the CIA. She noted that a reception for legislators was being planned for the 50<sup>th</sup>. Brian Smith suggested displays in the corridor between the Capitol and legislative office building if they're still being scheduled.

Governance. Bob Tierney nominated Ellen Gould to be the Board's secretary; with a second by Garry Leonard, she was elected. Bob reported on efforts to recruit new Trustees but had no names at the moment. Members are encouraged to submit suggestions; Jane mentioned the possible need for attorneys.

Jane noted that she is updating committee assignments and asked members to volunteer for committees they're interested in. Henry Griggs and Brian Smith volunteered for the legislative affairs committee, Pieter Roos for the boarding house subcommittee.

Jane also reminded members to fill out confidentiality, conflict of interest, and campaign contribution disclosure forms, required every year. **The board portal, where they reside isn't intuitively found. Please give advice as to how to link to it and obtain these forms.**

Financial reports. Garry announced values for the investment accounts: endowment, nearly \$1.6 million, and reserve account, over \$600,000. For the year to date, he reported that the financial position was less good than usual, on account of the Circuit Rider grant's not being paid; the budget was able to absorb the shortfall last year but will probably have to draw on the reserve fund by the end of the year.

On a motion by Garry Leonard, seconded by Jeff Kaufman, the Board approved the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that Jane Montanaro, who is Executive Director of this corporation, is empowered to execute and deliver in the name and behalf of this corporation

certain contracts named above with the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic and Community Development, and to affix its corporate seal.

Stewardship. Mike Forino introduced Anna Fossi, the Edward F. Gerber Fellow for 2023-2024, who made a presentation of her research to identify sites associated with LGBTQ history in Connecticut. The results are posted on the website at <https://preservationct.org/lgbtq>. She also will make a presentation on a Talking About Preservation program.

Jane announced that the Gerber Fellowship will be transformed into the Circuit Rider Fellowship.

Development. Jane announced that Ed Gerber has donated \$30,000 for the Circuit Rider Fellowship. The goal is to match that, with the Board asked to lead the effort. She asked every Board member to make a donation in any amount. Donations can be made online at <https://preservationct.app.neoncrm.com/forms/circuit-rider-matching-fund>.

Strategic plan. Jane introduced Susan West Montgomery, who has been the consultant for the strategic planning process. Susan walked the Board through the draft plan, which is built around the same goals as the previous plan: Make a big impact, Engage and inspire, and Build a strong and sustainable organization. The draft plan also includes a revised mission statement, guiding principles, strategic approaches and priorities, as well as appendices. In discussion, Trustees noted that fundraising would be crucial for impact and stressed the need for flexibility to address unforeseen circumstances and opportunities and for periodic review. Susan recommended first steps include realigning staff and Board assignments for the Washington Park project as well as allocating time and personnel for fundraising.

On a motion by Cathy Osten, seconded by Pieter Roos, the meeting was adjourned at 3.55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Gould  
Secretary

EG/cw

Preservation Connecticut  
Board of Trustees  
19 December 2024  
Eli Whitney boarding house, Hamden

*members present:* MJ Agostini (via Zoom), Ed Gerber, Ellen Gould (via Zoom), John Harrington, Garry Leonard, Tom Nissley (via Zoom), Priyanka Panjwani, Edith Pestana, Cristina Ross, Caroline Sloat, Brian Smith, Bob Tierney

*staff present:* Jane Montanaro, Stefon Danczuk, Andrea Floersheimer, Mike Forino, Kristin Hopewood (via Zoom), Jordan Sorensen, Renée Tribert, Stacey Vairo (via Zoom), Chris Wigren

*others present:* Bill Malitsky, Focus Government Affairs

Caroline Sloat called the meeting to order at 1.35 p.m. Those present introduced themselves.

On a motion by Brian Smith, seconded by John Harrington, the minutes of the September meeting were approved as written.

*Chair's report.* Caroline reminded members to complete the confidentiality and conflict of interest forms, accessible through the portal printed on the agenda. She remarked that she was pleased with activity at PCT, and particularly the ways historic preservation was helping address Connecticut's housing shortages.

*Written reports—Executive Director.* Jane Montanaro welcomed Andrea Floersheimer, the new Circuit Rider Fellow, and thanked Board members who supported the creation of the position. She also noted that Board giving was a factor that grantors look at, so it is important to have some level of participation by all. Ed Gerber further introduced Andrea.

Jane reported that PCT will host the annual gathering of statewide preservation organizations from the Northeast on January 9-10. The 1772 Foundation provides funding for these useful meetings, at which staff members network and share helpful information.

*Written reports—staff.* Staff members highlighted items from their written reports.

- Chris Wigren described continuing advocacy for Seaside Sanatorium in Waterford, including a nomination to the National Trust's Eleven Most Endangered list.
- Jordan Sorensen reported on cooperation with Sustainable Connecticut, which encourages municipalities to carry out various sustainability actions. She currently is discussing more representation for preservation in the menu of actions and planning a webinar.
- Renée Tribert discussed successful efforts to recruit a developer for the Aeolian piano factory in Meriden, which is now being rehabbed for housing.
- Kristen Hopewood talked about her work putting together the annual report and year-end appeal. The goal for the appeal this year is \$75,000, a substantial increase, and giving so far has been slow.
- Stefon Danczuk reported on advocacy for Fort Decatur in Ledyard; the town planning & zoning commission closed hearings on a proposal for excavation and development that could endanger the site of a War of 1812 fort; a decision is expected by 21 December.
- Stacey Vairo reported on training sessions for historic district commissioners as well as Preservation 101 presentations in several towns.

*Governance committee.* Bob Tierney pointed out to members the committee descriptions and assignments in the meeting packet; let him or Jane know if you wish to change committees. It is hoped that all committees will meet in late January.

*Finance committee.* Garry Leonard reported that investments continue to perform well, ahead of the benchmark. The endowment currently has about \$1.65 million; the reserve account about \$400,000. Jane said that she has not had to borrow from the reserve since the beginning of the fiscal year, but that it may be necessary to draw on it since PCT did not receive the expected State grants during the previous fiscal year. The committee will review the situation at its next meeting.

Year-to-date revenues and spending are on track with the budget; the statutory payment from the Community Investment Act has been received, and the Circuit Rider grant is expected.

Jane reported that she expects to receive a draft of the audit soon; well ahead of the State deadline of 31 January.

*Legislative outlook.* PCT's lobbyist, Bill Malitsky of Focus Government Affairs, summarized outlook for this year's legislative session. Revenues have been good, but "guardrails" enacted in 2017 prevent the state from increasing spending more than 5 percent over the previous year. Expecting rises in fixed costs, Governor Lamont has ordered agencies to submit budget requests at 5 percent *less* than last year's level. Protecting the Community Investment Act from being swept into the general budget will be important; efforts to increase PCT's allotment, or to increase the overall fee which feeds the CIA are ongoing. Bills on other topics will begin to be submitted in January. He noted that Cathy Osten has been eager to promote our policies and programs. Housing is a major issue and adaptive reuse of historic properties is vital to help correct this issue. The past is important to preserve the future.

Preservation Connecticut plans to host a reception for lawmakers on Thursday, February 20, in the Legislative Office Building. This will be both a celebration of PCT's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a chance to educate legislators about the value of preservation and the differences between SHPO and Preservation CT. The legislators recognize the important work we do and enjoy reading about their towns in our newsletter. Bill will work to get law makers to come. Jane asked members to plan to attend, and to invite their representatives.

*Strategic plan.* Since the strategic plan proposes making the Washington Park project a model for future PCT activity, Mike Forino reported on the progress of the project, which will provide repairs to several historic churches in Bridgeport. Although the Community Investment Fund, (CIF) which provided the grant for the project, was promoted as a program specifically to assist neglected communities, previously undisclosed bureaucratic requirements from the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) threaten to put substantial burdens on the churches, who are, strictly speaking, not the grant recipients. This has made the process more difficult, although Mike has built up enough trust with the churches that they're still willing to participate, and he is confident that PCT and DECD will be able to find a workable solution.

To supplement the CIF grant, PCT is applying to M&T Bank for a grant of \$990,000, to be used for additional capital work at the churches plus administrative costs for PCT. The project has already helped to generate relationships among the churches, which did not exist before.

Caroline challenged Board members to develop an elevator speech to describe the Washington Park project to people they meet. A community has been created and is a positive step toward a new way of thinking about PCT's new strategic plan.

**A motion was made by Bob Tierney to adopt the new Strategic Plan. Ed Gerber seconded it. All members voted in favor of the motion.**

The meeting was adjourned at 3.15. p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Gould, secretary

EG/cw