



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

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MINUTES

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

March 9, 2022

Location:

R.I. Department of Business Regulation
560 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, R.I.
DBR Board Room, First Floor

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Michael Abbott, AIA
Ms. Meredith Brady, Associate Director, Division of Statewide Planning (arrived at 9:45)
Mr. Warren Ducharme, representing James Cambio, State Building Code Commissioner
Mr. Jeffrey Emidy, Interim State Historic Preservation Officer
Dr. Morgan Grefe
Ms. Kaity Ryan
Mr. Clark Schoettle
Ms. Ruth Taylor, Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Paul Jordan, representing Terrence Gray, Acting Director, Rhode Island Department
of Environmental Management
Mr. Jesse Saglio, President, Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
[Vacant]
[Vacant]
[Vacant]
[Vacant]
[Vacant]

STAFF PRESENT

Joanna Doherty, Principal Architectural Historian
Katherine Pomplun, Principal Grants Coordinator
Roberta Randall, Principal Historical Architect
Elizabeth Totten, Senior Project Review Coordinator
Sarah Zurier, Principal Special Projects Coordinator

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 A.M., Ms. Taylor, Chair, presiding.

2. For approval: Minutes of December 8, 2021 Commission meeting

On a motion by Mr. Schoettle, seconded by Mr. Abbott, the commissioners voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2021 Commission meeting as they appear in the draft. Dr. Grefe abstained from voting.

3. Interim Executive Director's Report

Jeffrey Emidy reported that:

- a. The State Review Board held a meeting on February 7, 2022. They conducted two final reviews that will be presented at this meeting, and two preliminary reviews. One preliminary review was for the Wells House, an 18th century cape on Barber's Pond Road in South Kingstown. Though more research is needed, the Board thought that this appears to be a good example of this type of building. The other preliminary review was for the Holy Ghost Church, on Atwells Avenue in Providence. The church was constructed between 1901 and 1910 in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. The interior of the church has been modified, but over 50 years ago. The Board approved moving forward with the nomination with some questions to be answered about the dates of some modifications and whether to include an adjacent school.
- b. In mid-January, the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) released a report concluding that, by a preponderance of evidence, they were ready to declare that one of the shipwrecks in Newport Harbor is that of the British transport ship *Lord Sandwich*, which was previously known as HMB *Endeavour*, the ship that Captain James Cook sailed to chart the east coast of Australia in 1770. The following week, the Museum made a very public announcement of this determination. This did not sit well with Dr. Kathy Abbass, of the R.I. Marine Archaeology Project (RIMAP). She states that no indisputable evidence has been found and that all of the evidence has not been analyzed yet and thus the determination is premature. We do not disagree with these statements, but will say that the evidence that has been collected and analyzed does suggest that it may be *Endeavour*. Soon after, the ANMM posted the draft report on their website, including location information on the wreck. We asked that the location information be redacted and the ANMM complied. After a number of newspaper articles and social media posts from both Australia and the United States that characterized the disagreement in unflattering terms, like "annoyed," and "aggravated," things seem to have cooled down. The ANMM is planning a symposium on *Endeavour* and other 18th century shipwrecks for later this year.

Mr. Abbott asked how we protect the shipwreck from damage and looting. Mr. Emidy

- replied that there is a “no anchor – no dive” zone around the Transport Fleet wrecks, which is monitored by the Newport Harbor Master. Looting is a more difficult problem, and we don’t know fully how we are going to approach it. That is part of the reason that we were upset about the release of location information.
- c. We received word a few weeks ago that the governor had proposed a budget cut at the Governor’s Commission for Disabilities and has asked them to trim, or extend over more years, the grants that they had already approved. We had received a \$500,000 grant to be paid over FY2022 and 2023 for the Old State House elevator and ADA project. With the proposed cuts, our grant would decrease to approximately \$220,000. We were asked to explain how that would affect our project. Our response was that it would likely cause us to lose our \$500,000 Save America’s Treasures grant because we plan to use the Commission’s grant as match. After a few tense weeks and some correspondence with our Congressional delegation, we found out that the Governor’s Commission voted to keep our grant intact. Construction drawings are being prepared for the project now.
 - d. This week is national Preservation Advocacy Week. The Rhode Island team is being organized by Rachel Robinson of the Providence Preservation Society and Alyssa Louzopone of the Newport Restoration Foundation. On the national level, Advocacy Week is put together by Preservation Action and it is typically held in person in Washington, D.C. However, it is virtual again this year. Yesterday, our team, which also includes a couple of students from the preservation program at Roger Williams University and representatives from Preserve Rhode Island, the Preservation Society of Newport County, and others from the Providence Preservation Society, had a call with staff from Senator Whitehouse’s office and with Representative Cicilline and staff from his office. A call with Representative Langevin’s staff will take place today, and on Monday, we have a call with Senator Reed’s staff – he may join in, as well. There are virtual meetings with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, National Park Service, and other organizations going on this week, as well.
 - e. On February 25th, The National Park Service announced the Semiquincentennial Grant Program, which was created by Congress in 2019. The program supports the preservation of state-owned sites and structures listed on the National Register that commemorate the founding of the nation. Applications are due May 3rd.
 - f. Mr. Emidy is sad to announce that Enerida Ademi, our GIS staffer, left during the second week of February to take a full-time position in Connecticut. We had a little sendoff for her to thank her for her three plus years with the Commission and to wish her well, and Mr. Emidy thanked her for the record here.

Additionally, Mr. Emidy has regretfully accepted the resignation of Katy Pomplun, effective Friday. Ms. Pomplun has been the Commission’s exemplary grants coordinator since 2015, when we lured her from the Office of Management and Budget. Ms. Pomplun has done a wonderful job with the grants program and has proven to be a very valuable asset in our office. She even learned to be a preservationist during her time with us. We will be very sad to see her go, and Mr. Emidy thanked Ms. Pomplun for all that she has done for our office, and in particular, for the help that she has given him with financial and other matters during his stints as

interim director.

4. For consideration: 2022 Certified Local Government Grants Recommendations

Ms. Pomplun reported that we received 11 applications for Certified Local Government Grants this year, for a total of \$123,350. Last year we had eight applications for \$65,500 and were able to fund them all. Assuming that we are level funded through the Historic Preservation Fund, we will need to award a minimum this year of \$65,205 – 10 percent of our funding.

Ms. Pomplun explained that the funding priorities that we have established are:

- Projects that help communities plan for protecting historic resources from the effects of climate change and sea level rise
- Projects that promote the recognition or preservation of resources associated with historically underrepresented groups, and
- Projects that will provide training opportunities for historic district commissions and municipal planning staff.

Having reviewed the 11 applications, the staff recommend funding five projects:

- From the Town of South Kingstown, a proposal to host a one-day Historic District Commission (HDC) training program, known as “CAMP” – Commission Assistance and Monitoring Program – conducted by professional staff and trainers of the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions. The proposed funding includes free registration for up to 60 participants from local HDCs, interested town staff, and commission members. This is basic training that will be most helpful to HDCs that have new members and where refreshers are needed. The recommended funding is \$12,500. In-kind match is proposed.
- From the Town of Bristol, a proposal to resurvey the Bristol Waterfront National Register Historic District to update the inventory that was completed in 1974. This may also lead to updates to other areas of the nomination. The recommended funding is \$25,000. In-kind match is proposed.
- From the City of Newport, a proposal to develop graphics for the city’s “Design Guidelines for Elevating Historic Buildings.” The graphics may include photographs, drawings, and architectural renderings of appropriate design concepts. The recommended funding is \$20,000. \$5,000 cash plus in-kind match are proposed.
- From the Town of Cumberland, a proposal to hire a consultant to assist with the process of designating Arnold Mills as a local historic district. There is a National Register Historic District there already, but there has been local opposition in the past. The consultant will examine boundaries, prepare a presentation about the benefits of local historic district designation, present to the Planning Board, Ordinance Sub-Committee, and Town Council, and prepare flyers and mailings for property owners. The recommended funding is \$8,000. \$1,500 cash plus in-kind match are proposed.

- \$10,000 to be reserved by the RIHPHC for the 2023 Annual Statewide Preservation Conference or other statewide training initiatives. The results of the ongoing Conference Evaluation and Recommendations Study will inform how these funds are used in 2023.

The staff recommend not funding six applications:

- From the Town of Coventry, a \$5,000 request for a National Register nomination for the Coventry Alarm Building.
- From the Town of Glocester, a \$10,000 request for a project to provide architectural assistance for structures in the National Register-listed Chepachet Village Historic District.
- From the City of Newport, a \$5,000 request for a National Register nomination for the John Bliss House.
- From the City of Providence, a \$10,000 request for an annotated bibliography and finding aid for Broad Street Community Design Studios.
- From the City of Providence, a \$9,100 request for a multimedia historic preservation story of the Museum of Natural History.
- From the Town of South Kingstown, a \$9,000 request for a moisture infiltration assessment at the South County Art Association's Helme House.

The total amount for funding the five recommended projects is \$75,250.

A motion was made by Dr. Greffe to accept the recommendations of the staff. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ryan and approved unanimously.

5. For consideration: Proposed window replacement at Riverside Middle School
179 Forbes Street, East Providence

Mr. Emidy explained that, when this item was put on the agenda for consideration, he expected to receive information in time for the meeting. That information has not been received, so there is nothing for the Commission to consider. Ms. Taylor stated that we would table that action and Mr. Emidy should make his presentation about the project "for information."

Mr. Emidy reported to the Commission that the staff received a review inquiry on January 17 for the replacement of the windows at Riverside Elementary School, on Forbes Street in East Providence. The reasons cited were the need for more ventilation - a reaction to COVID - and the ability to install window air conditioning units. The existing windows are predominantly a large, fixed sash over a narrow hopper sash, arranged in groups with narrow, fixed sash between. The proposed windows are single- or double-hung with configuration changes within the banks of windows resulting in four windows with wider, solid mullions. We initiated our review under the State Historic Preservation Act because the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) appears to have some approval process over this project and because it is a municipal property. The school was surveyed in 2021 as part of the survey of all East Providence schools. The consultant found the

school eligible for listing in the National Register, and the staff agree.

On February 2nd, we responded by letter, indicating that, “These windows are not an adequate match and as proposed do not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and would result in a diminution of the building’s historic integrity.” East Providence Superintendent Kathryn Crowley subsequently requested a meeting, which was held on February 17th. Another meeting was held on March 1st, this time including a representative from RIDE. At that meeting, Mr. Emidy asked that the East Providence team continue to work on a redesign of the project with the goal of finding a mutually satisfactory design that would both meet the needs of the school department and the concerns of the RIHPHC. Additionally, he asked for information about classroom ventilation requirements that he presumes RIDE possesses, and for an evaluation of the ventilation efficacy of different window types so that we can consider those in continuing consultation for this project. Superintendent Crowley stated that she needs to order the windows as soon as possible to have them installed for the start of the 2022-23 school year. Therefore, she does not have time to continue consultation and will appeal to the governor.

On March 2nd Mr. Emidy emailed a letter to Superintendent Crowley asking her to confirm that, as she expressed in the meeting on March 1, the East Providence School Department is terminating consultation with our office on this matter. He has not received a response, which is why there is nothing for the Commission to consider at this point. He has since been called by the Governor’s Office, which was called by the mayor of East Providence, and by the School Department’s lawyer.

Mr. Emidy explained that, as he sees it, there are three options:

1. Consultation resumes and we reach a mutually satisfactory agreement
2. We cannot agree and the East Providence School Department appeals to the Governor
3. The East Providence School Department terminates consultation, at which point the Commission sends a summary of the process to the Governor to explain what happened.

Mr. Emidy explained that he would provide an update on the situation, or an action item if needed, at the next Commission meeting.

6. For consideration: Commission easements review policy

Mr. Emidy explained that, as the commissioners are aware, the RIHPHC and the “State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations through its Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission” hold about 140 preservation easements. In his memory, under RIHPHC executive director Ted Sanderson, staff conducted most of the easement project reviews. Reviews were only brought to the Commission for approval if the project was high profile or controversial. Under RIHPHC executive director Paul Loether, this policy changed, and Mr. Emidy believes that we started bringing all easement project reviews to the Commission for approval. The frequency of easement project reviews is irregular, and

they range from significant remodeling to tree removals. There are a number of easement property projects up for review right now, many because of bond-funded grants from RISCA. He wonders if the Commission really wants to review all of these projects.

Mr. Emidy reminded the commissioners that he emailed a copy of a proposed easement review policy to them. He read it into the record (see attached).

The commissioners discussed the proposed policy. They were supportive of not having to review every easement in detail, but were not ready to adopt the policy as proposed because they feel that it is too restrictive. Mr. Emidy explained that having to wait for Commission approval of even the simplest easement projects can be inconvenient, and the commissioners recognized that concern. The commissioners proposed that a list of staff-reviewable undertakings could be generated and approved. Additionally, the concept of using a “consent agenda” was proposed and generally agreed upon as a way forward. Mr. Emidy stated that he would look into the consent agenda process and start working on a list of staff reviewable undertakings.

A motion to suggest that a list of actions that are reviewable by the staff be created was made by Mr. Schoettle and seconded by Mr. Abbott. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Emidy explained that the next three agenda items are simple easement projects that the staff are prepared to approve. The Commission determined that they should be presented in general terms and would be voted on as a group. Mr. Emidy explained that, due to technical difficulties, he could not provide visual presentations. Mr. Schoettle expressed concern about this process. Ms. Taylor stated that she believed that, in this case, this would be fine as the staff agree that these projects are acceptable.

7. For consideration: Easement Review
Faxon Lodge patio railing
28 Gammell Road, Newport

Mr. Emidy explained that Faxon Lodge, at 28 Gammell Road, in Newport, has been to the Commission for a significant review in the recent past. There is a patio behind the building that historically was enclosed by a brick railing. The proposed project is to replace it in-kind, based on historic photographs. Drawings have been reviewed that show the new railing matching that shown in the photographs.

8. For consideration: Easement Review
South County Art Association access ramp
2587 Kingstown Road, South Kingstown

Mr. Emidy explained that the South County Art Association is proposing a project to add a ramp at the rear of Helme House, its headquarters. It is a low, wood ramp that will not be seen from the street.

9. For consideration: Easement Review
Providence Public Library [1952-54 addition] exhaust vents
150 Empire Street, Providence

Mr. Emidy explained that the Providence Public Library is proposing a project to add exterior vents to the 1952-1954 addition building at its 150 Empire Street location. The Commission previously approved a large project in the addition building that includes a café space at the south end. As part of that project, two exterior vents were added. Now that they have a tenant lined up, that tenant needs more ventilation for its equipment. They have proposed adding two louvered wall vents that match those installed previously on a recessed connector wall. The vents will be on a space that is elevated from the sidewalk and inaccessible to the public.

A motion to approve these three easement proposals was made by Mr. Schoettle and seconded by Mr. Abbott. The motion was approved unanimously.

10. For consideration: Easement Review
Jenks Park Master Plan
Broad Street, Central Falls

Mr. Emidy explained that the next agenda item is an easement review for a master plan for Jenks Park, on Broad Street in Central Falls, however, our purview is more complicated than that. The Commission holds an easement on the tower and surrounding land. The City has applied for a R.I. Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) grant for playground repairs and it is a municipal property, so we have review purview under the State Historic Preservation Act. We have also awarded a State Preservation Grant for the Cogswell Tower restoration. Finally, federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds will be used for park-wide improvements, including, most immediately, the restoration of Cogswell Tower, and that is a Section 106 review. To their credit, the City has a schematic master plan, which is what we are asking for the Commission's input on today under the easement.

Jenks Park and Cogswell Tower are located between Broad Street on the east, where the main entrance is, and Washington Street on the west. The park is adjacent to Central Falls City Hall. The park was created in 1890, when Alvin Jenks donated four acres of land to memorialize his family. The terrain of the park is gently rolling with significant rock outcrops, and consists of meandering paths with hardscape features including the tower, three "summer-houses" with cast iron umbrella roofs, a former fish pond, and a much-altered fountain. There may be some other historic landscape features there that are not

recognized at this time, and we are not sure what was original and when other elements were added. We know that Cogswell Tower was constructed about 1900.

Because we hold an easement, proposed changes must be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The city has plans to make improvements in five phases, which will be implemented as funding is available. Funding for the tower and the playground phases is in the works. Our review of the application to the RIDEM for the playground phase triggered the easement review of the schematic master plan.

There isn't a lot of detail in the schematic plan, so we are asking for the Commission's conceptual approval and as the details come in, we will either do staff review or ask for Commission review.

The staff are reviewing the tower phase under the State Preservation Grant, and possibly under Section 106 because of CDBG funding. This phase consists of repairs to the tower, a proposed cantilevered deck off the north side of the tower apron - over what is now bare ground and ledge, and security fencing at the top of a steep drop to the north of the tower. The staff recommend approval of the deck as it is a reversible treatment and approval of the fencing. We also recommend that all existing paths in this area be maintained in their historic configuration.

The playground phase will relocate the playground from its current spot within a pathway that we are calling the "trapezoidal feature," closer to the Washington Street entrance to the park. That space is largely empty today. Currently, the entrance path is a Y shape, but a 1939 aerial shows two parallel paths. By 1972, they had been joined by diagonal paths. As it dates from after 1972, we do not consider this to be a historic path layout. There is a metal fence along the Washington Street edge of the park, but the age of the fence and this configuration are unclear. The new plan can be said to return to the essence of an earlier design, near the northernmost path that was present in 1939. We do not have the details of the playground proposal yet.

The staff believe that the playground relocation is acceptable, but we will recommend that the equipment be in natural/neutral colors. The entrance was one of the things that we were initially concerned with, but when we saw the 1939 and 1972 orthophotos, we became less concerned. The staff believe that the new path is acceptable because the path location has changed over time with the most recent path dating to about 1980. We recommend maintaining the existing metal fence, retaining wall, and piers on Washington Street unless historic documentation justifies removal, but we recognize that alterations to it will be needed.

The Amphitheater phase utilizes a natural slope rising west to east across the park. As shown in the master plan, this phase does impact the current circulation, specifically by removing the "trapezoidal feature." We know that the trapezoidal feature is early because it appears on a 1901 postcard, but we don't know what its purpose was. The paths around Elk Rock are also changed slightly in the master plan. The plan also includes the relocation of a "summer house." This structure does not appear on the 1895 atlas, but it is on the 1902 Sanborn map. The issue prompting the idea of moving it is that it is in a

difficult location at the southern edge of the park, in a forgotten corner. Because the trees have grown up around it, it is fairly hidden and subject to repeated vandalism. The staff recommend that the existing circulation pattern and pathway routes should be retained, including the trapezoidal feature. Its removal would not be reversible and would result in the loss of a character-defining feature at this end of the park. The path spurs that go toward the summer house, however, can be removed, because we recommend approval of the relocation of the summer house. The relocation is reversible and must be done so that, if desired later, the summer house can be put back. The base will have to be retained.

The last two phases are the Broad Street and fountain phases, at the east end of the park. There are not significant changes proposed in this schematic plan. An active play area is proposed in the location of a now-grass-filled, former fish pond. The outline remains, however. There is some minor path relocation reflected in this plan. The staff recommend retaining the shape of the former fish pond, that the design of the historic fountain guide the new fountain design, and that the existing path layout remains where possible, unless it is found to be a later alteration.

There are a few more overall details. The staff recommend that the pathways be a light color, not black asphalt. The existing lighting fixtures are not historic, so they do not need to be retained or replicated, but we recommend that the new lighting should be compatible with the park.

The master plan is largely conceptual, however, there are some aspects of it that we are concerned about, so it makes sense to tell the city now, rather than later, if the Commission agrees with it or where it sees potential problems. As we have stated, there are some things that we, the staff, think will be okay, so we would like to also pass that information on to the city, if the Commission agrees. We also recommend that the city conduct a cultural landscape inventory or assessment as soon as possible, so that we have it in hand before review of the amphitheater, Broad Street, and fountain phases.

A motion to endorse the staff recommendations and to stipulate that the plan can go forward with continued guidance from the staff and Commission was made by Ms. Ryan and seconded by Mr. Abbott. The motion was approved unanimously.

11. For consideration: State Historic Preservation Review Board action
Final approval: Newport Historic District – Additional Information
(Newport Spring)
Newport

Joanna Doherty reported that, at its February 7th meeting, the State Historic Preservation Review Board approved additional information pertaining to the Newport Town Spring Site for the Newport Historic District nomination. The site is within the existing district boundary but mentioned only in passing in the original nomination. The Spring Box was recently the subject of an archaeological investigation, which prompted the desire to

amend the nomination. The additional information was completed by the Public Archaeology Laboratory.

Ms. Doherty explained that a spring box is a structure that allows water to be obtained from a natural spring, protects the water from contamination, and provides a place for sedimentation and a point of collection. The central element is a collection chamber that is fed by a lead-in pipe. Periodic cleaning of sediment was facilitated by an accessway at the top and a drainpipe at the bottom. A screen-covered distribution pipe located slightly above the bottom allows water to be channeled to other locations. Newport's earliest public water source, the site of the town spring is located at what is now an open area near Washington Square, at the intersection of Spring, Touro, and Court House streets.

Ms. Doherty stated that the Newport Town Spring Site is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the area of "exploration and settlement" as a significant natural feature that influenced Newport's 1639 settlement and subsequent town organization. It is also eligible under Criterion D in the area of "archeology, historic-non-aboriginal" for the belowground survival of its stone spring box, built around 1803. Early infrastructure features such as spring boxes rarely survive, are poorly documented, and are largely ignored in discussions of municipal water management. For that reason, the Newport Town Spring Site has provided important information about the construction and modification of spring boxes and has the potential to provide additional information about Newport's water system before 1881, when a centralized waterworks was created and the spring was closed.

Access to fresh water is a prerequisite for human settlement at all times and in all places. Long before Europeans arrived in Newport, Native Americans had been living at and around the spring. European settlers first arrived in 1639. The town grew up around the spring and oriented toward the harbor. The land surrounding the spring was the first to be allotted to the settlement's most prominent members.

The spring likely remained an open-air landscape feature until the first decade of the nineteenth century, when the Newport Aqueduct Company was incorporated to build a water distribution system for Newport using the water from the town spring. After receiving a charter from the state, they hired Colonel Jeremiah Olney in March 1803 as the project surveyor. The spring box almost certainly was constructed at the same time to enclose the spring and control water pressure and flow throughout the system.

The Newport spring box is a stacked fieldstone chamber with a slightly tapered "beehive" construction that supports massive, stone-slab, ceiling beams. The spring box has a lead-in conduit high on the upslope side to channel spring water in, an iron distribution pipe on the downslope side of the box to deliver water offsite, and a plugged wooden pipe which possibly served as the drainpipe. A lead pipe extending down the west wall probably fed the pitcher pump at street level.

By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the town spring was proving insufficient to serve Newport's expanding population. Following an act passed by the Rhode Island

General Assembly allowing towns and cities to grant individuals or corporations exclusive rights to construct public water supply systems, in 1876 Newport granted George H. Norman, a Boston contractor, the right to build a system for the city drawing from Easton's Pond and the marshlands around it. The Newport Water Works Company was incorporated in 1879, and in 1881 Norman transferred the completed waterworks to the corporation. With the construction of the new water supply system, the town spring and well pump would have been abandoned and removed.

With the widespread availability of automobiles beginning in the 1920s, the city's livery stables transformed into service stations; by 1925, a gas station was operating on the former Town Spring site. By 1940, the site was leased to the Colonial Beacon Oil Company, which replaced the original gas station with the building that stood on the property until 2019. Although the spring no longer surfaced at the site (and hadn't for quite some time), the oil company chose to commemorate its location with the installation of The Old Town Spring Plaque in 1941 in a small, landscaped island at the southeast corner of the gas station. It is a rectangular brass plaque affixed to a large conglomerate stone, engraved with an image of the town spring pump and water trough backed by the Old Colony House. It reads: "The Old Town Spring. Around which Newport was founded and some of the earliest houses of the town were built and for which the street was named." The plaque has since been removed and is on site awaiting reinstallation.

In 2015, Church Community Housing Corporation, in collaboration with the Newport Spring Leadership Committee, purchased the site. The new owners commissioned a series of studies to explore redevelopment options, which led to the demolition of the gas station and an archaeological investigation of the site.

The archaeological survey was conducted in 2018 by Salve Regina University archaeologists and a team of speleologists. The team removed sediment samples from the bottom of the box and from surrounding fill. All of these are characterized as representative, run of the mill, historic trash.

A motion to support the Review Board action was made by Mr. Schoettle and seconded by Mr. Abbott. The Commission voted unanimously, with Ms. Ryan abstaining, to approve the motion.

12. For consideration: State Historic Preservation Review Board action
Woonsocket Company/Bernon Mills Historic District – Additional
Information
Front Street, Woonsocket

Mr. Emidy explained that, because of technical difficulties and time constraints, he would like to continue this presentation to the next meeting. Ms. Taylor stated that we would do so.

13. For discussion: Rhody Awards for Historic Preservation – Commission input opportunity

Mr. Emidy explained that last year, staff presented the proposed Rhody Awards winners for Commission approval without giving commissioners adequate opportunity to provide input on the nominees. The process is tricky with timing and making nominees a part of the public record, but in discussion with Val Talmage at Preserve Rhode Island (PRI), Mr. Emidy thinks that a schedule that will work this year has been set in motion. It is still in draft form. As drafted:

- Nominations will be due May 9th
- The slate of nominees will be presented to the Commission on June 8th, and the Commission may approve letting the PRI and RIHPHC staff make the decisions
- Staff will accept comments from commissioners until June 22nd
- Staff will present their selections to the Commission on July 13th

There was no further discussion.

14. For information: Update on Rhode Island Cemetery Weeks

Sarah Zurier explained that, with the decision not to hold a preservation conference in 2022, we have pivoted to a new plan to cohost Rhode Island Cemetery Weeks with the Rhode Island Advisory Committee on Historical Cemeteries. Cemetery Weeks will run throughout April and May and will include historic cemetery cleanups, cemetery tours, gravestone restoration workshops, and other activities. All events will be outdoors, free, and open to the public. The goal is to get at least one activity in each of Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns. Right now, there are over 60 programs scheduled. There are links on our website for more information.

15. For information: Update on RIHPHC executive director hiring process

Ms. Taylor reported that she called the state human resources office and managed to get the *Request to Hire* that had been previously submitted dislodged. It is now moving through the approval process. She expects to receive paperwork for the next steps relatively quickly. She is also going to renew her assembly of a search committee.

16. Announcements

The next Commission meeting will be held on April 13, 2022.

17. For discussion: Conference Analysis/Recommendations Project discussion with consultant Susan West Montgomery

Mr. Emidy reminded the commissioners that we have initiated a project to perform an analysis of our past Statewide Historic Preservation Conferences, compare it to other states' conferences, and offer recommendations for how we should put on conferences in the future. We selected Susan West Montgomery to be the consultant to carry out the project. Ms. Montgomery has come to today's meeting to get input from the commissioners.

Ms. Montgomery introduced herself and led a nearly hour-long conversation about our Statewide Historic Preservation conference history, who our target audience is and should be, funding, administrative work, and other aspects of our past conference and ideas for the future.

18. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:03pm.

Minutes recorded by,



Jeffrey D. Emidy
Interim Executive Director



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

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To: RIHPHC Commissioners
From: Jeffrey Emidy, Interim Executive Director
cc:
Date: 9 March 2022
Re: Commission Easement Reviews

Proposed Policy for Easement Project Reviews by the Commission

Conditions under which an easement project is required to be reviewed by the Commission:

- Demolition or significant alteration of a historic building or structure on an easement property
- Demolition or significant alteration of a character-defining feature of a historic building or structure on an easement property
 - If the alteration is an in-kind repair or replacement, staff review is permitted
- Demolition or significant alteration of a significant landscape feature on an easement property where the landscape is included in the easement
- When a member of the Commission requests that an easement project be reviewed

Conditions under which the Commission may choose to review an easement project:

- When the Commission Executive Director requests a Commission review
- When the State Historic Preservation Officer requests a Commission review
- When the owner of an easement property requests a Commission review

Conditions under which an easement project is not required to be reviewed by the Commission:

- When a project does not affect any character-defining features of a historic building or structure on an easement property
- When a project does not affect significant features of the landscape of an easement property
- When a project consists primarily of in-kind repair or replacement

Easement property projects that are not reviewed by the Commission will be reviewed by the RIHPHC staff.