



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

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MINUTES
RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
April 5, 2021 9:30 am
via video conference

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Michael Abbott, AIA
Dr. Marisa Angell Brown
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Dr. Ronald Onorato, Chairman
Ms. Martha Werenfels, AIA

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dr. Tripp Evans
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson
Vacant (archaeologist)
Vacant (landscape architect/historian)

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Enerida Ademi, Data Control Clerk
Ms. Donna Alqassar, Heritage Aid
Ms. Joanna Doherty, Principal Architectural Historian
Mr. Jeffrey Emidy, Deputy Director
Mr. John Paul Loether, Executive Director/SHPO
Ms. Katherine Pomplun, Senior Grants coordinator
Ms. Elizabeth Rochefort, Principal Architectural Historian
Ms. Sarah Zurier, Principal Special Projects Coordinator

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:34 A.M. by Chairman Onorato.

2. Meeting procedures overview

Dr. Onorato explained the procedures that would be followed by Board members and attendees of the meeting.

3. Roll call

Dr. Onorato called the roll of Board members. See page one of these minutes for the attendance list.

4. Approval of minutes of February 1, 2021 meeting

On a motion by Ms. Werenfels, seconded by Dr. Morenon, the Review Board unanimously VOTED TO APPROVE the Minutes of February 1, 2021 without changes.

5. State Historic Preservation Officer's Report

- a) John Paul Loether announced that he is retiring as RIHPHC Executive Director and SHPO effective June 25, 2021. He stated that he has enjoyed working with the Board and they are doing a great job.

Ms. Werenfels stated that the Board will miss Mr. Loether. She asked how the position will be filled. Mr. Loether stated that the Commission will go through the process. In the meantime, he is recommending that the Commission appoint Jeff Emidy as acting director and also acting SHPO.

Dr. Onorato thanked Mr. Loether for his service.

- b) Mr. Loether stated that he continues to work with the governor's office on getting commissioners appointed. It has been a little challenging due to the change of administrations and virtually all of the governor's staff. One of the nominees for commissioner is Keith Stokes, who has also agreed to serve on the Review Board. Mr. Loether will ask the commission to make the Review Board appointment at their April 14 meeting. He is still working on filling the remaining seats on the Review Board and has reached out to some people and awaits responses.

6. Deputy Director's Report

- a. Jeffrey Emidy congratulated Ms. Werenfels on being elevated to the American Institute of Architects' College of Fellows. She is the first woman in Rhode Island to receive this designation. He read from DBVW's press release, "The College of Fellows, founded in 1952, is composed of members of the Institute who are elected to Fellowship by a jury of their peers. Fellowship is one of the highest honors the AIA can bestow upon a member. Elevation to Fellowship not only recognizes the achievements of the architect as an individual but also elevates before the public and the profession those architects who have made significant contributions to architecture and to society."
- b. National Register of Historic Places (NR) Nomination processing updates

- i. Mr. Emidy reported that the staff continue to see a number of “kicking the tires” inquiries about National Register eligibility for houses and for some commercial and industrial buildings. Most of the people that he has spoken to seem to be looking for funding for projects with the NR as a potential add-on.
- ii. Elizabeth Rochefort has been able to do a bit more research for the potential Loop Drive Historic District in North Kingstown, so it looks like the Board will see that for a preliminary review in June. The State Preservation Plan has come back from the National Park Service (NPS) with some work to do, so that is her priority right now.
- iii. Joanna Doherty has been working on the Beaver River Road Historic District nomination to get it ready for the Board to see in a few minutes.
- iv. Mr. Emidy stated that he has not done much NR work over the past couple of months while he has focused on Project Review, but he does have some to do before the end of April to get the Stedman and Fuller nomination to the National Park Service and the Donwell’s Diner nomination ready for the Board to review in June.
- v. Properties listed
 1. Mr. Emidy reported that the Plymouth Congregational Church, on Broad Street in Providence, was listed March 12th. It was the first bilingual nomination submitted to the NPS. Both the NPS and our office are excited about that. He thanked Joanna Doherty for shepherding the nomination at our office, Katy Pomplun and the CLG team, because that was a CLG grant project, and our new Project Review Coordinator, Elizabeth Totten, who worked on the nomination while she was previously employed at PAL. Elizabeth started with us on March 22nd. Mr. Emidy is working with her now, and Mr. Loether will at some point, and then Charlotte Taylor, to get her up to speed on the process. He stated that, hopefully, sometime soon she will get to meet all of the staff and all of the Board members. Ms. Totten stated that it has been a great first two weeks at the Commission and she looks forward to continuing to review projects.
- c. Mr. Emidy gave an update on National Register rulemaking, stating that it’s official - the proposed revisions to the NR regulations that were proposed under the Trump administration, which would have made a number of unpleasant or unworkable changes, were withdrawn by the Biden administration on January 28th.
- d. Mr. Emidy reported that the draft of the Historic Preservation Element of the State Guide Plan that was sent to the Board members has been presented to the staff and to the commissioners for review, as well. If the Board members have comments, they should send them directly to Mr. Loether.

7. National Register of Historic Places Final Review:
Beaver River Road Historic District
Richmond

Joanna Doherty made a presentation for final National Register approval for the Beaver River Road Historic District, in Richmond. The Beaver River Road Historic District is located in the southern part of Richmond, about two miles north of the village of Kenyon. It includes three historic farmsteads stretched along 1.5 miles of Beaver River Road, so named because of the proximity of the Beaver River, which defines the district's eastern boundary. From north to south the farmsteads are: Longdenholme, later known as Hoyle Farm; Walnut Hill Farm, later known as Cliffmoore; and Jamesford Farm. Each farmstead includes a farmhouse and outbuildings, with adjacent agricultural fields. There are a total of 21 contributing and 18 non-contributing resources in the district. The district is characterized by mostly flat terrain with open fields edged by woodlands; small hills; and low-lying wetlands in its southern end.

Longdenholme/Hoyle Farm includes a 1½-story, south-facing, ca. 1800 Cape. It is sheathed in wood clapboard and wood shingles. With its symmetrical façade, central entrance, gable roof with shallow eaves, and windows set close to the cornice line, the dwelling reflects its Federal period. It has been expanded with the addition of two 1-story ells. Outbuildings include a simple, shingled shed, which dates to the late 19th or early 20th century. A small burial ground is located to the southwest of the house. It is enclosed by granite posts and pipe railings and contains nine markers, the earliest dating to 1853. The most elaborate marks the graves of William and Sarah Greene, who purchased the property in 1853. Most markers belong to members of the Hoyle family, who owned the farm from 1881 to the mid-1990s. Four residences have been built on lots subdivided from the farm: the Sarah and John Hoyle House (1968), a Cape set on a 5-acre lot with a manmade pond; two non-contributing houses, built in 1986 and 1990 and not visible from a public way; and a house constructed in 2013. The former Hoyle Farm still includes large areas of open space, currently used to grow turf and hay.

A stone wall marks the boundary between the former Hoyle Farm and the former Walnut Hill Farm/Cliffmoore. The largest of the three farms in the district, Cliffmoore includes a farm complex with a dwelling and outbuildings, as well as stone walls, all on the west side of Beaver River Road. The farmhouse was built around 1860, likely by Benjamin Moore. It is a south-facing, 1½-story dwelling that exhibits elements of the Greek Revival style. Most notable is the center entrance, which is flanked by half-sidelights and set beneath a projecting entablature. The building retains its historic fenestration pattern and 6/6 wood windows. Its five-bay-by-three-bay massing, side gable roof and symmetrical façade reflect the lingering influence of the Federal style in rural areas. The house includes a rear wing, built by 1895. Two small, late-19th-century, gabled barns with hayloft doors stand to the northeast of the house and were connected to one another in the late 20th century. An early- to mid-20th-century dairy barn stands to the north of the farmstead; it is built into the hillside and constructed of concrete with corrugated metal siding. Two other outbuildings, an animal pen and a corn crib that date to the early to mid-20th century, are non-contributing due to their condition. Cliffmoore includes several historic landscape features, most notably an extensive allée of maple and tulip trees that were planted along Beaver River Road around 1900. Other landscape features include stone walls as well as a driftway, a dirt and grass lane edged by stone walls, which may have connected the barns to the fields to the north. The Cliffmoore farmstead

is surrounded by open fields that are currently used for turf production. Two houses, both non-contributing due to their integrity, were built in the mid-20th century on small lots carved out of the farmland: the Rosanna Perrault House (ca. 1946) and the Pauline and Michael Testa House (ca. 1950).

The southernmost farm in the historic district is the Jamesford Farm, which is divided from Cliffmoore on the north by a long stretch of stone wall and a hedgerow and ditch. The Jamesford Farmhouse was built ca. 1800. It is a south-facing, wood-shingled, 1½-story, center-entrance Cape that sits close to the road. Although historic window sash have been replaced, the fenestration pattern is intact. The dwelling is a simple expression of the Federal style, with windows set close to the cornice line, slender corner boards, and small gable-end cornice returns. A small, early-20th-century gable-roof barn with a vertical-plank door and a cupola sits just north of the house. Another barn, across the street from the house, has been converted to a residence and is considered non-contributing. The former Jamesford Farm includes large expanses of open space, recently used to grow corn but currently fallow.

Agriculture was the leading economic activity in present-day Richmond in the 18th century, and it is likely that properties in the district were farmed beginning in that period. They were certainly in agricultural use by 1860, when the U.S. Census agricultural schedule showed each of the three farms in the district producing corn, oats, hay and potatoes and with a few livestock. This was a period of subsistence farming, with agricultural products used mostly for family consumption. During this period, Beaver River Road was not a true road but a driftway connecting the farms to one another. Hedgerows and stone walls in the district delineate property boundaries and indicate probable locations of driftway gates.

By 1895, the farms were owned by the Hoyle, Moore and James families, who oversaw a shift from subsistence to market farming, specifically dairy and potato production. In the mid-20th century, with agriculture on the decline in Rhode Island, some farmers, including those in the Beaver River Road Historic District, turned to turf farming. Much of the land is still cultivated for this purpose today.

The Beaver River Road Historic District was formally determined eligible for listing by the National Park Service in 1995. This nomination largely adheres to the Determination of Eligibility (DOE) documentation. It includes a minor change to the district boundary; it documents 18 resources not described in the DOE, despite being within the DOE boundary, including some significant landscape features; it eliminates community planning and development as an area of significance; and it changes the period of significance.

The Beaver River Road Historic District is being nominated to the National Register at the local level of significance, under Criterion A in the area of agriculture and Criterion C in the area of architecture. The district's three distinct farmsteads evolved from 19th-century subsistence farming to market farms, eventually specializing in dairy, potato and turf farming and are thus illustrative of agricultural trends in Rhode Island. Together with the surrounding fields, landscape features such as stone walls and the tree allée, and with

minimal intrusions, the farms form a compelling cultural landscape. The district includes a collection of modest dwellings representing restrained expressions of the Federal and Greek Revival styles and simple agricultural outbuildings, including small mixed-use barns and sheds as well as specialized buildings, like the dairy barn at Cliffmoore. The period of significance is defined as 1763 (the date of the first major land division within the district) to 1970 (the date of the manmade pond at the Sarah & John Hoyle House, the most recent contributing resource in the district).

Mr. Abbott asked whether listing protects the open landscapes, or if they are still able to be developed. Ms. Doherty responded that listing doesn't offer a lot of protection, but the Beaver River Community Association hopes that increased acknowledgement and recognition of the historical significance of the area will help to protect the open space. All of the agricultural fields in the presentation are included as contributing resources in the district.

Dr. Onorato asked how the determination of integrity of the two barns at Cliffmoore was reached. Ms. Doherty replied that we felt that, while they are not in wonderful condition, they convey enough of their historic appearance to be considered contributing.

Ms. Werenfels asked if there is a downside to giving the corn crib and animal pen contributing status to record them for posterity. Ms. Doherty stated that we think the corn crib is too far gone to be contributing and the animal pen is more of a remnant. Photographs of both will be included in the nomination and they are described in the nomination. Ms. Werenfels stated that she believes they have enough integrity and they contribute visually to the district, so she would err on the side of making them contributing.

Ms. Werenfels commented that the photography in the nomination is very good, but that a good photograph of the rear of the Jamesford Farm house would be a good addition.

Dr. Morenon stated that, since the active agriculture in the district is turf farming, it would seem that the outbuildings are at risk because of a lack of use. This is an ongoing problem elsewhere, as well. If these features were to disappear, they would become archaeological features.

On a motion by Mr. Abbott, seconded by Ms. Werenfels, the Review Board unanimously VOTED FINAL APPROVAL for the nomination.

8. Old business

a) 2021 Statewide Historic Preservation Conference update

Sarah Zurier reported that our annual preservation conference, entitled "Come Back to the Future," is coming up April 21st through 23rd. It is three half days, with Wednesday as historic district commission workshops and Thursday and Friday more in the spirit of our traditional conference. We have two keynotes and 12 sessions and a handful of virtual tours. Marissa Brown is leading a discussion

with preservation futurists, Martha Werenfels is leading a session on preserving modern architecture featuring the Portsmouth Abbey church project. We really hope to see the Board members there. Registration is at preservationconferenceri.com. Dr. Onorato stated that the HDC workshops are a great idea. Ms. Zurier said that they are free for HDC members.

9. New business

There was no new business

10. Announcements

The next meeting will be held on Monday, June 7, 2021. It will be held virtually.

11. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Abbott and seconded by Dr. Morenon. The meeting adjourned at 10:24 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,



Jeffrey D. Emidy
Deputy Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer