

**MINUTES**

**172<sup>st</sup> MEETING**

**NEW YORK STATE BOARD FOR HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION**

**7 June 2018**

**Peebles Island State Park  
Waterford, New York**

The following were present:

SRB Members

Doug Perrelli, Chair  
 Tom Maggs  
 Jennifer Lemak  
 Erika Krieger  
 Paul Stewart  
 Chuck Vandrei  
 Jay DiLorenzo  
 Wint Aldrich [left 12:30]

Absent

Wayne Goodman  
 Kristin Herron

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Daniel Mackay, Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation  
 Michael Lynch, Director, Division for Historic Preservation  
 Kathleen LaFrank, Board Secretary  
 Julian Adams, Director, Community Preservation Services  
 John Bonafide, Director, Technical Services Bureau

Staff

Virginia Bartos  
 Jennifer Betsworth  
 Jennifer Walkowski  
 Bill Krattinger  
 Kathy Howe  
 Beth Cumming  
 Nancy Herter  
 Larry Moss  
 Sloane Bullough  
 Christina Vagvolgyi  
 Paul Archambault  
 Dan Bagrow  
 Andy Farry  
 Josalyn Ferguson  
 Philip Perazio  
 Mike Lenardi  
 Tim Lloyd  
 Cordell Reaves  
 Erin Czernecki  
 James Finelli  
 Weston Davies  
 Linda Macke  
 Greg Smith  
 John Rozell

Guests

Danny Williams, Buffalo Colored Musicians Club  
 Bararah Williams, Buffalo Colored Musicians Club  
 George Scott, Buffalo Colored Musicians Club  
 Craig Steger, Buffalo Colored Musicians Club  
 Nina Gellman, Amagansett Light Saving Station  
 Charles C. Savage, Amagansett Light Saving Station  
 Rev. L.B. Vanager, Pine Hollow Cemetery  
 Rev. H. Vanager, Pine Hollow Cemetery  
 Lee Riccetti, Heritage Consulting, Fuller Shirt Company  
 Mark Thaler, Lacey Reilly Thaler Wilson Architects, Wardencliff Lab, Queensbury Hotel

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Chair Doug Perrelli, who introduced new member Erika Krieger and asked all the members to introduce themselves. Each member then introduced him or herself to the board, staff and guests.

Order of Business

Following the roll call, the minutes of the 171<sup>th</sup> meeting of the State Board for Historic Preservation were reviewed.

Motion to Approve: Tom Maggs

Second: Jay DiLorenzo

**Vote: Unanimous**

Meetings

The next board meeting is scheduled for September 6, 2018, at Planting Fields Arboretum on Long Island. The meeting was scheduled at this location to coincide with an exhibit of thirty sculptures by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney at the site and to honor outgoing board chair Bob MacKay. Bob MacKay and Wint Aldrich had also strongly recommended that the board members be given the opportunity to tour Whitney's house and studio, which are about twenty minutes away from the meeting site, and Kath LaFrank will work to set that up.

Kath stressed that it was crucial that SRB members inform her promptly if they cannot attend the meeting, noting that they came close to not having a quorum for today's meeting. Doug Perrelli added that members really had to do a better job responding because Kath is really struggling to maintain a quorum.

Jay DiLorenzo inquired about the number of vacancies on the board and was told that there were three. Kath explained that we had nominated three qualified candidates who were eager to served more than a year ago but that board positions were going unfilled across the state. She explained further that with three vacancies, if one or two members can't make it, our whole agenda is in jeopardy and that it then affected people applying for tax credits, grants, etc. Wint discussed the "shame factor" of listing those who failed to attend in the minutes. Kath noted that there were plenty of legitimate reasons for not being able to attend a meeting; the problem was

those who failed to respond at all to repeated requests, noting, “I just need you to tell me whether or not you can come so that I can plan.” Doug promised to assist with this in the future by reaching out to people.

Daniel Mackay added that there has been some progress on our candidates and we expected to be able to seat them in September.

## **Reports**

### **Deputy Commissioner Daniel Mackay**

Deputy Commissioner Mackay noted that he was completing his first year in state service. He apologized for Commissioner Harvey’s unavoidable absence but noted that she will join the board in September on Long Island. Daniel also congratulated Doug on assuming the chair and thanked and welcomed Erika before beginning his report.

### **Welcome and Introduction of New Chair**

Dr. Douglas Perrelli is the Director of Archaeological Survey, the cultural resource management arm of the Department of Anthropology and Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology, State University of New York, Buffalo. Doug earned his PhD from the University at Buffalo, State University of New York in 2001. Staff has met with Doug in person and by phone to discuss how the board might proceed under his leadership

On behalf of Commissioner Rose Harvey, I wanted to update you on activities at the agency and within the division. Commissioner Harvey is planning on joining us for our September 6th meeting at Planting Fields Arboretum on Long Island. The Board's former chair, Bob MacKay, expects to attend that meeting.

### **State Review Board Appointments**

We have three candidates for vacant positions on the State Review Board that are pending before the NYS Senate and Governor's appointment office. I am hopeful that these proposed new members will join the board by our September meeting

### **NYS Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program**

The enacted state budget agreement reached in early April included language to reauthorize and enhance the NYS rehabilitation tax credit programs.

- Credit was reauthorized (a year early) through 2024
- Payout of the state credit was de-coupled from the new payout rules of the federal credit. The state credit can be taken in full in the year a building is placed in service, while the federal credit will shift to a five-year payout after June 2020.
- The implementation date for updated census tracts was shifted from January 1 to April 1. This dataset updates every five years and the Division requested more time to

evaluate and implement the datasets and mapping required to administer the program.

Newly ineligible census tracts that result from census data updates will remain eligible for program applications for two years.

### **Federal HPF Funding allocation**

In late May, the Department of Interior announced the annual appropriation in HP "grants" to State Historic Preservation Offices. \$48.9 million in funding was awarded nationally; New York State was awarded \$1.436m (second to California), by formula. This funding line has grown modestly in the last two years due to clearly articulated demand for services and effective advocacy in Washington. Senator Gillibrand has lead the effort in the Senate to secure higher allocations for SHPOs and related federal historic preservation grant funding; in the House, we've had strong bi-partisan support from the NYS delegation.

These funds cover a portion of the Division's budget for program implementation and staffing under our responsibilities to administer the National Historic Preservation Act in NYS, including funds for the Certified Local Government Grant Program.

### **Summary**

10% of SHPO HPF to be awarded = \$143,000

Awards= \$130,600

### **NPS Underrepresented Communities Grants**

The NYC LGBT Historic Context Statement is now complete; we will provide to members of the board and have requested that it be featured on the Division's webpage. This document prepared by the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project team and edited by staff at NY SHPO was funded, in part, by our first Underrepresented Communities Grant from NPS. Also completed under this same grant was a reconnaissance survey of 99 potentially significant historic resources and the following five NR nominations:

- Earl Hall (Columbia University)
- Bayard Rustin Residence
- Caffè Cino
- Julius' Bar
- Alice Austen House (nomination update)

While SHPO has concluded Grant #1 we are at the midpoint of the second Underrepresented Communities Grant that we received for additional survey and NR nominations for the NYC LGBT Project. To date, under Grant #2 we have received a total of 20 intensive-level inventory forms for significant properties. Between now and

March 2019 we will be working with the Project Team to complete an additional 30 inventory forms and two National Register nominations (properties TBD).

And, as reported last meeting, we have been awarded a third NPS grant to develop a context statement for 20<sup>th</sup> Century African American history in New York State. I want to thank Kathy Howe and the survey unit for undertaking these applications and thank both you and Kath for building an effective relationship with the consultants in these projects.

### **Disposition of the NYSCC fleet:**

There has been increasing media attention on the NYS Canal Corporation's disposition of canal vessels, with as many as 29 vessels proposed for DEC reef projects in the Atlantic Ocean and Long Island Sound.

Pursuant to the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law, Section 14.09 (Section 14.09), and state regulations, the New York State Canal Corporation is responsible for managing historic properties in a manner that emphasizes preservation and to avoid or mitigate the impact of undertakings that might adversely affect historic resources listed on or eligible for inclusion on the State and/or National Registers of Historic Places to the fullest extent possible.

The list of 29 vessels proposed by the NYSCC are stated to have reached the end of their operational service life and consequently were proposed for scuttling. The Canal Corporation examined prudent and feasible alternatives and determined reefing to be the most prudent course of action for seven vessels to date, and given our Division's determination of adverse impact, reached a resolution with SHPO that required the following mitigation:

- HABS/HAER Level 3 documentation of all vessels, except scows
- Retention of architectural and shop drawings of all vessels, except scows
- Certification of photo documentation before scuttling
- NYPA [New York Power Authority] will undertake a survey of all motorized vessels in their floating plant 50 years of age or older to provide NY SHPO with a roster of potentially historic vessels remaining in the CC inventory
- CC will retain a qualified consultant to develop a historic context for CC vessels to aid in the determination of historic significance going forward.
- The data collected from these stipulations will be used to create an Internet-based directory of vessels removed from active NYSCC service.

After delivering a detailed report on the canal boat situation, Daniel paused to allow questions from the board.

Wint Aldrich inquired if the Canal Corporation had committed to preserving any of the vessels, the *Urger*, for example, as a museum? Daniel noted that the *Urger* is the iconic flagship, although there are other vessels of similar significance. He added that there have been proposals to remove the *Urger* from the water and commemorate her on land; however, the agency had significant concerns that such a use would represent an irreparable impact and compromise to the

resource that would not allow it to return to water use. Doug responded that such a compromise might be less impactful than putting holes in vessels and sinking them, and asked if there was a process to select representative examples of types and styles and preserve them, rather than making them into reefs. Daniel stated that that's what we had tried to achieve in the stipulation, consideration for the rest of the fleet. He added that there was a willingness to sign off on these few because there were vessels with higher integrity, and we could use this opportunity to negotiate for the preservation of the fleet.

Jay DiLorenzo stated that his belief that this is one of those issues that the state board should take a position on. He stated that these resources are so important to the canal, especially considering the amount of time the board has spent listing the canal and the amount of time this board has spent pondering the listing of the canal. These vessels are a very important part of that history. He stated that there was real concern with the state doing away with these historic assets.

## **BOARD BUSINESS**

Doug Perrelli noted that Jay's remark was a perfect segue to a new meeting section called "Board Business." Doug noted that there were topics, such as the canal boats, which the board should discuss and address, and that this part of the meeting would provide a forum for that discussion. He promised to try to provide topics for discussion, suggesting that the archeology committee would be one instance where he and Chuck [Vandrei] might like to present something; he also noted that he would like the SRB to have more input into the division's five-year Statewide Preservation Plan.

The discussion then returned to Daniel Mackay, who concluded his report by noting that today's meeting included twenty-one nominations from thirteen counties, with Erie County leading the way. Eighteen of the twenty-one nominations for review are in census tracts qualified for the state Historic Tax Credit program, underscoring the strong interrelationship between tax credit incentives, survey work and the National Register program. He thanked the National Register unit for their diligence, expertise and committed pace that has presented the board with a full agenda for the day but also acknowledged the contributions of staff across other units from survey to GIS to compliance and archeology for their contributions to the substantial work that informs today's agenda.

Daniel subsequently introduced Kathy Howe, Survey Coordinator, who acknowledged and thanked Paul Archambault, who, after administering the SHPO's coastal survey project for the past three years, had recently announced that he was resigning to return to his home in Tennessee.

## **Nomination Reviews**

Before the reviews began, Doug Perrelli provided a brief overview about how he intended to run the meeting, noting that as chair he was going to facilitate more discussion of individual nominations, stating that he wanted it to be a more deliberative process. He said that he would wait for motions and not put people on the spot. He also thanked Kath LaFrank and Michael Lynch for the new chart summarizing the nomination proposals and asked if anyone had any

suggestions for its improvement. Lastly, he briefly discussed Roberts Rules of Order and noted that he was fine with having discussion before motions and votes. He emphasized again that discussion was most important and that he intended to encourage it.

### **Colored Musicians Club, Buffalo, Erie County**

Presented by: Jennifer Walkowski

After her presentation, Jennifer introduced George Scott, president of the club, Dan Williams, vice president and Craig Steger, nomination author. Both Mr. Scott and Mr. Williams addressed the board.

George Scott noted that it was an honor that the club was being considered for designation. He related that in creating the museum he observed that the musicians were humble and didn't brag about their achievements. They were more concerned that their story would be told and that the rich history of the club be recorded.

Dan Williams stated that he had not intended to speak but that "due to the current condition of our country [he] felt it necessary." He noted that he had wanted to be a history teacher and expressed his love of history. He said that we do not often attach the significance of our history in terms to how we live our lives today and how it moves forward. He described the jazz musicians as "guys and women who simply wanted to be musicians and practice their craft and raise their families." He stated that the Colored Musician's union had the first female president of any union in the United States and that she had been elected in 1927. He noted that the union affected the community by putting in a credit union because the members couldn't do business with any banks. This allowed them to buy cars and homes and thus to enter the mainstream of America and become a part of the history of being Americans. Mr. Williams stated that he was proud to be an American and that he had served 20 years in the military. He explained that he was currently involved with the club and museum because he wanted to give back to the community. He discussed the current program of the club and the museum in terms of showcasing the music of people who had also wanted to make a difference in their communities. He concluded his remarks by saying that no matter what you do for a living, it had nothing to do with how you live. He then addressed the board, noting that the members are very important to making sure that all Americans have the opportunity and the ideals that they need to prosper in this great country. He added that what makes this country great is that you have the opportunity to do something great if you want to, ending with the words "give us that opportunity."

Discussion: Board members were visibly moved by these remarks, Wint Aldrich crying "Bravo"! Doug Perrelli said that the form was fantastic, noting that he appreciated the demographic analysis, especially the map. Jennifer complimented the author, noting the incredible amount of information that he turned up. Wint also complimented the research, noting that it was only marked as local significance. He sensed that there were similar efforts going on in many other communities, perhaps not to this extent. Kath LaFrank added that we could explore national significance, but the difficulty was that we would have to develop a national context for all similar colored musician's clubs. The author noted that he had begun to develop such a context but that it was incredibly difficult to acquire the information. Kath noted that it was important to get this one listed now and that we could always add another layer of significance later without



returning to the review board Daniel Mackay noted that this club was within the most recently created state heritage area, the Michigan Street African American Heritage Area; this included not one building but an entire neighborhood that was significant in the state's African American history, especially Buffalo's.

Motion to approve: Tom Maggs

Second: Paul Stewart

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

### **Faith Missionary Baptist Church, Buffalo, Erie County**

Presented by: Jennifer Walkowski

Discussion:

Wint Aldrich noted that it was especially interesting how the congregation had preserved the Jewish iconography, noting that the board had seen similar situations before, especially in Harlem where former synagogues were now used by African American groups. Doug Perrelli felt that the social history component was a strong point of the nomination.

Motion to approve: Wint Aldrich

Second: Paul Stewart

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

### **St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Church Complex, Buffalo, Erie County**

Presented by: Jennifer Walkowski

Discussion:

Wint Aldrich asked if this were a tax credit project and Kath responded that it was; Daniel Mackay added that the project was for the school. Wint asked what they were doing with the church, and Jennifer responded that the church was closed and was now in private ownership. Kath LaFrank added that we did have permission to nominate it, adding that a number of dioceses were now giving permission – Albany was among the few that were not. Kath explained that she had written a letter to the Buffalo diocese a few years ago explaining that if the diocese was selling its buildings to private owners who wished to use the tax credits, developers would need their permission to nominate the church buildings because we could not nominate schools without the churches; subsequently, the diocese started giving permission. Wint hailed this as a major breakthrough.

Jennifer Lemak inquired about the iconography in the stained-glass windows, and Jennifer W. replied that the parish was mostly Irish and St. Stephen was the patron of bricklayers and stone masons.

Motion to approve: Doug Perrelli

Second: Jay DiLorenzo

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

**Buffalo Public School #57 (PS 57), Buffalo, Erie County**

Presented by: Jennifer Walkowski

Discussion:

Doug Perrelli inquired if it were a tax credit project and Jennifer responded in the affirmative; she explained that it was owned by a non-profit and that it would be used to house that organization's programs.

Motion to approve: Chuck Vandrei

Second: Jay DiLorenzo

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

**Buffalo Public School #44 (PS 44), Buffalo, Erie County**

Presented by: Jennifer Walkowski

Discussion:

Doug Perrelli raised a question about something mentioned in the draft: the idea that other residences had been demolished to construct a playground for the school, asking if that had really happened? Jennifer assured him that it had and that the former playground site was now part of the nominated site. Doug added that the concern for having a safe place for children to play was an interesting part of the building's history.

Motion to approve: Jay DiLorenzo

Second: Wint Aldrich

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

Daniel Mackay noted copies of two articles that had been distributed to the board ["Trio of Projects Shine on Upper Niagara," *Buffalo Rising*, June 6, 2016 and "How 3 minority developers broke ground: 'this is not for the faint of heart,'" by Deidre Williams, *Buffalo News*, June 6, 2018], noting that the latter featured contractors who were doing tax credit work.

Daniel pointed out that Buffalo now has more completed investment tax credit projects than any other upstate community, with over 100 completed and another 40 or 50 projects pending. He noted that the work of the board and the work of the staff is playing a critical role in Buffalo's redevelopment and reinvestment and he thanked the board for its work.

**Fiddler's Green Historic District, Springville, Erie County**

Presented by: Jennifer Walkowski

Discussion:

At Doug Perrelli's request, Jennifer explained the boundary again, showing the locations of the previously listed properties and explaining the rationale for the district. Wint Aldrich inquired if it were unusual to have a "New England green" in western New York. Jennifer explained that while not typical, it was also not uncommon, providing several examples from other western

New York communities. Tom Maggs noted that Pop Warner had been born in Springville, and Jennifer reminded the board that his residence had been listed in an earlier Springville district.

Motion to approve: Tom Maggs

Second: Jennifer Lemak

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

### **Mooers Cemetery, Mooers, Clinton County**

Presented by: Bill Krattinger

Discussion:

Wint Aldrich inquired about Bill's statement that the cemetery was "filled up," and Bill explained that the lack of space for new burials had led to the site's semi-abandonment.

Motion to approve: Tom Maggs

Second: Wint Aldrich

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

### **Stevens Hill Farm, Greenville, Greene County**

Presented by: Bill Krattinger

Discussion:

Doug inquired about the owner's plans for the property and Bill explained that they hoped to capitalize on the expansive views of the Catskills to develop some kind of bed and breakfast.

Motion to approve: Chuck Vandrei

Second: Jay DiLorenzo

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

### **Queensbury Hotel, Glens Falls, Warren County**

Presented by: Bill Krattinger

Discussion:

Mark Thaler, from Lacey Reilly Thaler Wilson Architects, project sponsor, noted the owner concern for keeping the hotel's historic details and observed that he had done a nice job so far.

Motion to approve: Tom Maggs

Second: Wint Aldrich

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

**Valley Falls Historic District, Valley Falls, Rensselaer County**

Presented by: Bill Krattinger

Discussion:

Wint asked Bill to clarify a few points about the nomination boundary and Bill explained them using the map.

Motion to approve: Jay DiLorenzo

Second: Wint Aldrich

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

Daniel Mackay pointed out to the board that without the changes to the NYS Homeowner's Tax Credit recently approved by the legislature, the owners in this district would have been deemed ineligible for the credit just as State Register listing made them eligible to apply. Based on new census data, their census tract was about to be re-classified as ineligible; however, thanks to the legislative changes, owners would now have two years to continue to apply for credits.

**Fuller Shirt Company Factory, Kingston, Ulster County**

Presented by: Jennifer Betsworth

Discussion:

Lee Riccetti, of Heritage Consulting, project sponsor, thanked Jennifer for her assistance and discussed the future use of the building as residential and commercial space.

Motion to approve: Jennifer Lemak

Second: Tom Maggs

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

**Amagansett U.S. Life-Saving Station and Coast Guard Station, Amagansett, Suffolk County**

Presented by: Jennifer Betsworth

Discussion:

Jennifer introduced Charles C. Savage, project sponsor, who told the board that as they began to restore the Amagansett Light Saving Station, Ben Krupinski a prominent local builder, had been especially supportive and helpful through the entire process. Sadly, Mr. Savage reported, Ben, along with his wife and grandson, had died in a small plane crash only last Saturday [June 2, 2018].

Wint Aldrich agreed that it was a heartwarming project thanks to all the local volunteers who assisted and noted that a World War II memorial near the New York State Museum in Albany notes every engagement in which a New Yorker was involved. There, equal to Normandy is "The Battle of Amagansett," a reference to the interception of four would- be German saboteurs sent by the Nazi regime in 1942 by a patrolman at the light station.

Motion to approve: Wint Aldrich  
 Second: Tom Maggs  
**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

**Pine Hollow Cemetery, Oyster Bay, Nassau County**

Presented by: Jennifer Betsworth

Discussion:

Jennifer introduced the Rev. L.B. Vanager, who stated that the church was blessed to have this cemetery in an affluent North Shore community. She discussed how the cemetery had needed the community's help and how the Boy Scouts and others had responded with aid. Several boys earning Eagle Scout badges had done projects in the cemetery, cleaning it up, putting in benches, helping with the landscape. Another church had held a fundraiser to help buy a new sign.

The Rev. Vanager stated that this cemetery was not reserved only for church members but was available for all those who could not afford to have their loved ones buried elsewhere, noting that they regularly received calls from funeral homes seeking assistance. She conclude by stating her happiness at being here today.

Motion to approve: Tom Maggs  
 Second: Wint Aldrich  
**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

**Immanuel Union Church, Westerleigh Richmond County**

Presented by: Jennifer Betsworth

Discussion: none

Motion to Approve: Chuck Vandrei  
 Second: Jay DiLorenzo  
**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

**Wardenclyffe Lab, Shoreham, Suffolk County**

Presented by: Jennifer Betsworth

Discussion:

After Jennifer's presentation, she introduced Mark Thaler, from Lacey Reilly Thaler Wilson Architects, who spoke about the restoration project. Mr. Thaler said that it was one of the most interesting project he had worked on in more than thirty years, first because of the importance of Tesla, stating that we wouldn't be the society we are today without some of his contributions. In terms of the property, he remarked that the great thing is that it's all there, within the context of all the things that were added to lab and the many partitions within original spaces. He noted that all of the additions were scheduled to be removed and that without them the original materials are mostly all there. He noted that the Tesla Science Center had done an amazing job

of cleaning up the site and of getting support, noting the 9,500 signatures that had been received, and that they were moving forward to apply for grants.

Wint Aldrich noted that it was an ambitious project and that he'd received several phone messages from former assembly member Marc Alessie seeking ideas for funding.

Motion to approve: Wint Aldrich

Second: Paul Stewart

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

**Camillus Cutlery Factory, Camillus, Onondaga County**

Presented by: Virginia Bartos

Discussion:

Doug Perrelli noted that he had really enjoyed the social history aspect of the nomination and that he found the idea of building housing for the workers around the building interesting.

Motion to approve: Tom Maggs

Second: Chuck Vandrei

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

**Wollensak Factory Building, Rochester, Monroe County**

Presented by: Virginia Bartos

Discussion: none

Motion to approve: Jay DiLorenzo

Second: Paul Stewart

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

**First Congregational Church, Fairport, Monroe County**

Presented by: Virginia Bartos

Discussion: none

Motion to approve: Tom Maggs

Second: Erika Krieger

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

**Taylor Flats, Watertown, Jefferson Counties**

Presented by: Kathleen LaFrank

Discussion: none

Motion to approve: Jay DiLorenzo

Second: Jennifer Lemak

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous****W. E. Dietz Company Building, Syracuse, Onondaga Company**

Presented by: Kathleen LaFrank

Discussion: none

Motion to Approve: Jay DiLorenzo

Second: Erika Krieger

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous****Elmira Civic Historic District, Elmira, Chemung County**

Presented by: Virginia Bartos

Discussion:

The board gave this proposal substantive discussion, particularly the issues of its significance in urban renewal, its documented exceptional significance, and its chances for success at the National Park Service. Kath LaFrank explained that “exceptional significance” need only be demonstrated to be exceptional in a local context, giving several examples from other nominations (such as the Uncle Sam Atrium in Troy) and noting that the flood following Hurricane Agnes was well documented as an exceptionally significant event in Elmira’s history that had a significant effect on the city’s physical and economic structure. For example, following the flood, the city refocused its entire economy on banking (which accounts for a number of the buildings in the district). As for the nomination’s chances of success, Kath responded that it was hard to say; however, she noted that she had already done some substantial editing to the nomination but that it could use some additional work, and that we were prepared to continue to improve it before submission. She noted that it contained a good history of urban renewal in Elmira, but that the new material was awkwardly appended to the existing information. She noted that the nomination’s own history was very interesting, that the earlier nomination was written by Roger Reed, now an experienced reviewer at NPS in Washington [but not for New York] when he was a student in Cornell’s preservation program. She observed that preservation continues to change, and if you make a decision in 1980, you can’t expect that decision to hold up in 2018; you have to reevaluate it – the city has changed, preservation has changed, and attitudes toward preservation have changed. She added that we can continue to refine the argument in the nomination and especially produce a much better map before submission. She concluded by asking board members if they had concerns about the district or the draft nomination?

Jay DiLorenzo responded that he was quite comfortable with it and that he had no concerns at all, and Jennifer Lemak said that having grown up in Elmira, she felt that the district was desperately needed.

Daniel Mackay noted that about a month ago, he had had the opportunity to join Sen. Gillibrand in Elmira for a press conference specific to this pending nomination. They were joined by the city manager and city planning and business development officials, all of whom saw great potential from this nomination. He added that while this was not a determining factor in these deliberations, the senator has a strong interest in this nomination.

Motion to Approve: Tom Maggs

Second: Jennifer Lemak

**Vote: Recommended, Unanimous**

The meeting of the New York State Board for Historic Preservation was adjourned at 2:41 pm on a motion by Tom Maggs and seconded by Chuck Vandrei and unanimously approved by the board.