

MINUTES

194th MEETING

**NEW YORK STATE BOARD FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

March 14, 2024

**Meeting held at
Peebles Island Visitors' Center
Waterford, New York**

**Virtual option for the public via WebEx webinar
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvsfbFjcJd0>**

The meeting was held in person at the Peebles Island Visitors' Center, Waterford, New York.

The following people attended the meeting (***denotes remote participation via WebEx**):

SRB Members

Doug Perrelli, Chair
Wint Aldrich
Carol Clark
Bryan Erwin*
Wayne Goodman
Kristin Herron
Erika Krieger
Jennifer Lemak
Gretchen Sorin
Charles Vandrei

OPRHP Staff

Virginia Bartos
Daniel Boggs
Chris Brazee
Olivia Brazee
Sloane Bullough*
Erin Czernecki
Beth Cumming*
Weston Davey
Molly Donahue*
Sara Evenson
Nancy Herter
Campbell Higle
Kathy Howe
Derek Rohde*
Bill Krattinger*
Leslie Krupa
Kathleen LaFrank
Aine Leader-Nagy
Daniel Mackay
Dan McEneny
Sara McIvor*
Leslie Krupa
Tabitha O'Connell
Katherine Raymond*
Cordell Reaves
Mike Schifferli*

Robyn Sedgwick*
Mariana Staines*
Chelsea Towers
Christina Vagvolgyi*
Jennifer Walkowski

Guests

Chris Brandt, Bero Architecture
Fabiana Chiu-Rinaldi, NYS Council on the Arts
China Clarke, NYS Department of State
Chris Cirillo, Ascendant Neighborhood Development
Ruth Doyle
Roseanne Gonzalez
Mike Hughes
Mary Kay Judy
Emily Kahn
Linda Mackey
Kevin McMahon
Editha Mesina
Nicole Marrocco
Lindsay Peterson, Higgins Quasebarth
Maggie Poxon
Jessie Ravage
Linda Santoro, Heritage Consulting
David Sundberg
Tatler Club, Niagara Falls
Mark Thaler

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Douglas Perrelli at 10:40 a.m. He welcomed everyone to the 194th meeting of the New York State Board for Historic Preservation. This meeting included guests participating in person and virtually through WebEx. The roll was called, during which the following responded as present and in-person and briefly described their role or function as it relates to their service on this board.

- Douglas Perrelli, Board Chair, Archaeologist, Clinical Assistant Professor of Anthropology, SUNY Buffalo; President of the New York Archaeological Council
- Wint Aldrich: Historian, former Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation
- Carol Clark: former Deputy Commissioner at NYS Parks, Adjunct Professor of Historic Preservation at Columbia University, Pratt Institute, and the NYU School of Professional Studies
- Bryan Erwin, State Council of Parks Chair*
- Wayne Goodman, Executive Director, Landmark Society of Western New York

- Kristin Herron: Program Director for Architecture and Design and Museums at the New York State Council on the Arts serving as proxy for the NYSCA
- Erika Krieger: Registered Architect representing the NYS Department of State
- Jennifer Lemak: Chief Curator of History, New York State Museum, State Education Department
- Gretchen Sorin:** Director of the Cooperstown Graduate Program in Museum Studies.
- Charles Vandrei: Archaeologist, Agency Preservation Officer, Department of Environmental Conservation.

There being **eight** members participating, a quorum was confirmed. (*Bryan Erwin participated remotely so he could not vote or be counted toward the quorum under the Open Meetings Law, which requires in-person attendance.) (**Gretchen Sorin arrived at 10:50 a.m. after the Call to Order, so was not counted until after the initial quorum count was made. With Gretchen's arrival the total number of participating members was nine.)

Absent was board member Jay DiLorenzo.

Doug introduced China Clarke, an architect at Department of State who is serving as a second proxy for DOS. Robert Rodriguez, Secretary of State, appointed China as his proxy to the SRB on December 15, 2023. China will be attending SRB meetings in those cases when her DOS colleague and fellow proxy Erika Krieger is unable to attend.

Approval of Past Minutes

Doug asked board members if they had any comments or questions regarding the past minutes; there being none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 4, 2023 SRB meeting.

Motion to approve: Carol Clark

Second: Charles Vandrei

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 8 in favor, 0 opposed

The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

National Register Nomination Reviews

Chelsea Towers welcomed the nomination sponsors and consultants who have worked diligently with National Register staff to prepare the nominations that are being presented today. She also welcomed property owners who have persisted through the nomination process to honor the historic significance of their properties. Today's roster includes an interesting mix of 15 nominations from 12 counties across New York State. The nominations recognize significance in a wide range of areas, including architecture,

commerce, industry, women's history, social history, and more. Ten of today's nominations are in support of commercial tax credit applications and six are honorary designations.

Chelsea noted that since our last SRB Linda Macky, longtime member of the Survey and National Register Unit, has left the NY SHPO for another opportunity. Staff have worked very hard to prepare the nominations and presentations you will see today and a special thank you goes to Virginia Bartos, who put together the Powerpoint presentation.

Nomination 1: St. Lawrence Government Complex, Canton, St. Lawrence County

Leslie Krupa

Criteria/Areas of Significance:

A: Politics/Government

C: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1860-1974

Discussion: Doug asked if this complex is nominated as a historic district. Leslie clarified that it is being nominated as an individual property and not a district.

Wint commented that it is exactly these kinds of remarkable government complexes that the Board should be concerned about; he added that we should help the state find a use for buildings like this.

Motion to approve: Wint Aldrich

Second: Jennifer Lemak

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Nomination 2: North Harpersfield Churches, Harpersfield, Delaware County

Erin Czernecki

Criteria/Areas of Significance:

A: Social History

C: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1857-1946

Discussion: After the vote was taken Wint asked about the ownership of the churches. Erin said that both buildings are owned by the same owner. The former Methodist Episcopal Church is used as a residence, while the Free Church is planned to be used for commercial space.

Motion to approve: Erika Krieger

Second: Kristin Herron

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Nomination 3: Graceland Cemetery Receiving Vault, Albany, Albany County

Erin Czernecki

Criterion/Area of Significance:

C: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1902

Discussion: Carol said that she noticed that generally there was only one receiving vault per cemetery and that they were no longer used after 1940 because of advances in technology. Is that the case as well at Graceland Cemetery? Erin said, yes, that that is the same case at Graceland.

Doug asked why this is being nominated at the state level of significance. Erin said that while we had originally proposed the state level of significance we have since changed it to the local level of significance. While initial research indicates that this is one of very few remaining above-ground receiving vaults in the state we are not sure that the National Park Service will agree that we have sufficiently documented this.

Wint wondered whether the identity of the African American architect might raise the vault to a higher level of significance. Erin said that though the vault is attributed to Garnet no documentation has been found to definitively link him to this vault. Though this receiving vault is very similar in design to one in the Town of Brunswick, NY, that was he designed, there is no definitive documentation as to who designed the Graceland Cemetery vault.

Motion to approve: Wayne Goodman

Second: Chuck Vandrei

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Nomination 4: House at 120 Balcom Rd, Mount Vision, Otsego County

Erin Czernecki

Criterion/Area of Significance:

C: Architecture

Period of Significance: ca. 1810-ca. 1912

Discussion: Wint asked for clarification as to what is meant by an “honorary” nomination. Erin responded that we simply use the term honorary to define those nominations that are not associated with a commercial rehabilitation tax credit.

Motion to approve: Doug Perrelli

Second: Wint Aldrich

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Update on the status of Papscanee Island Historic District

Doug asked Kath to provide an update on the current status of the Papscanee Island nomination, Towns of East Greenbush and Schodack, Rensselaer County, which was heard at the December 4, 2023 meeting of the SRB. Kath reported that we sent the nomination to the National Park Service for a determination of eligibility. The NPS officially determined that the proposed historic district is National Register eligible. So at this time the entire district has both the federal determination of eligibility and the State Register listing. Should any property owners change their minds in the future and remove their objections so that we no longer have the majority objecting, it would be possible to get the historic district listed on the National Register.

Nomination 5: Black Walnut Island 2 Site, Pine Island, Orange County

Discussion: Chelsea said that there has been a change in the agenda in that the Black Walnut Island 2 Site nomination has been tabled. Doug stated that this nomination be tabled as it requires additional review before the nomination is presented to the SRB.

Nomination 6: Tatler Club, Niagara Falls, Niagara County

Jennifer Walkowski

Criterion/Area of Significance:

A: Social History

Period of Significance: 1956-1974

Jennifer said that this nomination has received support from the City of Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Commission and the Mayor of Niagara Falls.

Discussion: Doug asked if the building has been locally landmarked. Jennifer said she was not sure if the building has been locally designated but the preservation commission does support the nomination. Doug asked where the social club met previously. Jennifer said she believes the club members met in the homes of local women before moving here. Although she thought that they may have had an earlier clubhouse before this one, she will have to check on that.

Motion to approve: Jennifer Lemak

Second: Wayne Goodman

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Nomination 7: Building at 216-222 South Avenue, Rochester, Monroe County

Virginia Bartos

Criterion/Areas of Significance:

A: commerce, industry

Period of Significance: ca. 1865-1974

Discussion: none.

Motion to approve: Erika Krieger

Second: Wint Aldrich

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Nomination 8: William W. Gorham House, Canandaigua vicinity, Ontario County
Virginia Bartos

Criteria/Areas of Significance:

B: Art

C: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1826-1961

Discussion: Kristin asked about adding a bit more to the nomination for its association with the art of illustrator Eloise Wilkin. She wanted to know if more research has to be done into Wilkin and her use of the spaces in this house or if that research is already in existence and simply needs to be added to the nomination. Virginia said that a lot is already known about Wilkin and is available on the internet and that the current owner of the house, who is a professor at RIT, has also done a lot of research and writing on Wilkin. We will be adding this information to the nomination.

Doug asked if the original owner of this house was the famous Gorham of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase. Virginia said, no, that the original owner of the house was William W. Gorham, who was the grandson of Nathaniel Gorham of Phelps and Gorham Purchase fame.

Motion to approve: Kristin Herron

Second: Wayne Goodman

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Nomination 9: Joseph's Parish Complex, Kingston, Ulster County
Chris Brazee

Criterion/Area of Significance:

C: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1832-1963

Chris said that we have received a letter in support from the Certified Local Government city of Kingston's Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission and this is a tax credit project with an approved Part 1 for the 1913 school and convent buildings.

Discussion: Doug asked if this is considered a district of six buildings. Chris responded that it is, indeed, considered a historic district. Wint asked if there had been any opposition voiced by any of the owners. Chris said that the school and the convent came to us for tax credit projects and the archdiocese has not submitted an objection. Wint said that it seems odd that there are four buildings and the interiors have been denied to us for documentation. He asked if this was a peculiar situation. Chris said he was not sure how the consultant went about asking permission to get into those buildings. Doug added that because it's a district you don't need documentation of the building interiors.

Motion to approve: Wint Aldrich

Second: Doug Perrelli

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Nomination 10: 821 Broadway, New York County

Chris Brazee

Criterion/Area of Significance:

C: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1906

Chris said he is presenting the nomination on behalf of former SHPO staffer Linda Mackey, who did all the hard work on the nomination. We have received letters of support from the certified local government - NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission -as well as the local community board. This is a commercial tax credit project with an approved PDIL.

Discussion: Carol said that this building is worthy of being listed on the National and State Registers. She mentioned, however, that the nomination's bibliography was not very complete having only eight sources. She asked that some attention be paid to expanding the bibliographic entries on this nomination to make it comparable with others that we're seeing today.

Motion to approve: Carol Clark

Second: Erika Krieger

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Nomination 11: Three Arts Club, New York County

Chris Brazee

Criteria/Areas of Significance:

A: Social History/Women

Art

Education

Period of Significance: 1927-52

Chris said that we have received letters in support of the nomination from the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission. This is a commercial tax credit project with an approved Part 1. He mentioned that the consultant and owners were joining the meeting virtually today and would like to speak in support of the nomination.

Discussion: Consultant Mary Kay Judy introduced herself as one of the tax credit consultants for this project. She said that joining her today are Nicole Marrocco from the Westside Federation for Senior Supportive Housing and Emily Khan, who tirelessly researched the Three Arts archives via the newsletters because, fortunately, they donated all of those to the Performing Arts Library.

Nicole Marrocco of the West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing said that they are the current owner of the Three Arts Club and they fully support its inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. She said that they plan to rehab the building to create 61 units of permanent supportive housing for low-income seniors who are earning between zero and 50 percent of the area median income in New York City, and about a third of the units will be set aside for seniors who are referred from the shelter system. Nicole added that in keeping with the spirit of the Three Arts Club they hope to partner with some local groups to provide arts programming for the residents.

Emily Kahn introduced herself as one of the consultants who worked on the nomination. She is also an Upper West Side resident. She said that this club was pioneering in enforcing the professionalization of women in the arts. Previously, the arts had been seen as a hobby for women and girls, and this club helped change that perception not only in New York City but nationwide. Emily said that they are very excited to present this nomination with the goal of having national significance.

Mary Kay Judy added that though she didn't know that the Tatler Club was also being presented today she finds it appropriate that both of these women's clubs are being nominated during Women's History Month.

Doug asked if the Three Arts Club is being proposed for the national level of significance. Kath responded that it probably is nationally significant because it is the first one and it did influence others that came later but we do not have the level of documentation required by the National Register staff in Washington to support national

significance. The NR staff in Washington would expect a full historic context on all of the other clubs, which we do not have at this time, so we feel that it is safer to call it locally significant.

Carol commented that the nomination was well-detailed and well-researched. She said that as a former West Side resident it is terrific that the West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing is going into this building.

Motion to approve: Carol Clark

Second: Gretchen Sorin

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Discussion of the Part 1 Commercial Rehabilitation Tax Credit Team

Before presenting the Metro North Plaza nomination, Kath gave a summary of the new Part 1 Commercial Rehabilitation Tax Credit Team that she heads up. Kath said 10 out of the 16 projects being presented today are commercial tax credits with approved PDILs. As of January, Kath was put in charge of the new Part 1 tax credit unit with staff members Jennifer Walkowski and Chris Brazee. This team handles all Part 1 applications and PDIL nominations for commercial tax credit projects. Kath reports to Beth Cumming who coordinates all Part 2 and 3 tax credit applications. Kath said that she, Jennifer, and Chris each have assigned territories. Jen has the entire western part of the state, Chris has the eastern part, and Kath has a territory that starts from Troy and goes westward along the Mohawk Valley to Syracuse. While the board will see the NR unit staff presenting some tax credit nominations today, these will start to taper off so that moving forward it will solely be the Part 1 Unit that will be handling tax credit nominations.

Nomination 12: Metro North Plaza, New York County

Kath LaFrank

Criterion/Areas of Significance:

A: Politics/Government

Social History

Period of Significance: 1971-1973

Kath said that we have a letter of support from NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Discussion: Gretchen spoke at length about her concerns over this nomination and other public housing nominations that have been presented of late. [Unfortunately, the audio recording did not fully pick up what she was saying so the following is a summary of her concerns.] Gretchen said that the history as provided in this nomination is too "Pollyanna." She said that we need to greatly improve upon the social history narrative

of this and other public housing nominations. She stressed that public housing is a form of “engineered segregation” that was only designed to protect the interests of white people and that public housing did not serve the needs of Black residents.

Kath responded that in the case of this complex, in East Harlem, community leaders were asking for this kind of development and then, as it went along, they found that it wasn't the solution and that history is in the nomination. Kath said that NYCHA actually worked with a group of residents from the neighborhood and the Reverend Eddie. [Inaudible question or comment from Gretchen.] Kath said that we tried to interpret this history and that, yes, it eventually ended up being very bad for East Harlem.

Gretchen said that she feels strongly that the nomination does not go far enough and that they [the consultants] need to get the *Color of Law* and read it. Carol agreed that yes, it would be good if they read this terrific book and that it would be a great way to bolster the nomination. Kath said that she had read the book. Gretchen then asked Kath if she thought that the information presented in the *Color of Law* is included in this nomination? Kath responded by saying that the *Color of Law* said that because the federal government had a rule that housing for Blacks could only be built in a neighborhood of Blacks, housing for whites could only be built in a neighborhood of whites, and housing that was integrated could only be built in a neighborhood that was integrated so, as a result, if they built housing for whites in a white neighborhood and if there were Black people in that neighborhood they would move to the Black neighborhood likewise it was built in a neighborhood where Black people lived and the white people lived they would move to white and therefore, it reinforced segregation of neighborhoods; that's what that book talked. Doug said, yes, this is the kind of information and context that should be included on this form and any other public housing nominations moving forward especially if this is the first of many more public housing nominations that will be coming before the SRB. He added that we've already shared this scholarship and there's a team of people working on revising previous Housing Authority nominations in light of that scholarship and that information should be making its way into nominations such as this and any that we see in the future; it's not enough to mention it in one sentence and it's completely overblown by all the architectural terminology of these nominations and that we must have better social history in these nominations.

Kath asked Carol if she agreed with Doug. Carol said that she absolutely agrees with Doug's comment regarding social history. She then provided some background on the architectural history side of the nomination. She said it was very interesting that Whittlesey & Conklin, when first hired by the client, worked very much with the community and one thing that wasn't presented is that William J. Conklin, the partner in that firm, worked very closely with Reverend Eddy, as Kath noted. However, the Housing Authority ultimately selected Lescaze instead of Whittlesey & Conklin for the job. Carol said that she knew Bill Conklin, working with him on a committee called the Historic City Committee in 1989, where there was discussion about changing the local landmarks law in New York City and it was a committee that bolstered the argument about not changing the landmarks law. Bill Conklin, as noted in the nomination,

continued to talk with Reverend Eddy and to the community even after such time as Lescaze had been chosen to take over the design of the complex. She thought that it was fascinating that it is, in fact amplifying her own personal understanding of the history of working with Bill Conklin, because he was indeed the kind of guy who stuck to his own guns and did what he thought was the right thing regardless of the consensus of any who may have reached around him.

Kath mentioned that Whittlesey & Conklin were responsible for designing one of other East Harlem NYCHA complexes known as White Houses. While she does not know why NYCHA ended up working with Lescaze on Metro North, Conklin did not “let NYCHA off the hook,” pushing them almost, continuing to work to get the design for Metro North that he wanted, which was this one [shown on slide]. He wanted lower, 6-story buildings, but NYCHA pushed for the taller buildings and that is what it got with Lescaze: 7, 8, and 11 story buildings. The complex did include a landscaped courtyard and I think Conklin was able to reduce the number of buildings. The rest of his proposal could not be built because of insufficient funding and the fact that it fell outside the designated Urban Renewal area. So I guess my interpretation was that NYCHA did work with the local community; however, in retrospect, the design was less than successful.

Doug proposed a motion to approve the nomination with the stipulation that the social history be expanded and that references that were shared previously be reconsidered and added to this nomination.

Motion to approve: Carol Clark

Second: Erika Krieger

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Following the vote, Daniel noted that as we will be seeing more public housing nominations coming to us from NYCHA as tax credit projects we look forward to reviewing a context statement/MPDF that is currently being prepared by NYCHA’s consultants. That context statement will be critical in informing our approach to future public housing nominations and we will be focused on getting that right. Gretchen said that the word segregation needs to be in the nomination. [Unclear audio from Gretchen.] Gretchen said that she is familiar with some of NYCHA’s housing projects and they are in poor condition and are disgusting places to live. Kath responded that the tax credit projects are coming in to address these poor living conditions. Gretchen agreed but said we should not be so “Pollyanna” in describing this housing which, though they said the intent was to provide good housing that was not true; the intent was all about protecting white neighbors. [Unclear audio from Daniel] Daniel said he appreciates that Gretchen has brought up these concerns to the board’s attention and he is sorry that we have not yet fully addressed the social history. We will focus on getting this right moving forward. He added that the Multiple Property Documentation Form that Kath referred to for NYCHA public housing and that the National Park Service has been somewhat insistent that the MPDF be in place before they consider any additional NYCHA nominations. We

understand the value of having this context statement, but we have said that the public housing crisis is such that we cannot hold up critical tax credit projects for public housing while we wait for a draft MPDF. Gretchen said that this is not a criticism of Kath, as she is the most amazing National Register writer in the state, but she feels that social history has not made it into the world of architectural history. [Gretchen's audio cut out again.]

Nomination 13: Miller, Hall and Hartwell Shirt Collar Factory, Troy, Rensselaer County

Kath LaFrank

Criteria/Areas of Significance:

A: Industry

C: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1880-1943

Discussion: none.

Motion to approve: Wayne Goodman

Second: Doug Perrelli

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Comment from Wint Aldrich re/Peebles Island History

Following a working lunch and a tour of the Peebles Island Conservation Labs, Wint Aldrich shared some interesting historical background on how Peebles Island came to be the location of the Division for Historic Preservation. He said that you may wonder how did all of this happen and why is historic preservation here on the island. He said it was thanks to a distant relative, Alexander Aldrich, who was the second Commissioner of State Parks and, as a great fan of the Erie Canal, he toured the whole canal in a boat and he was particularly fascinated by the then abandoned island at the junction of the Mohawk and Hudson rivers. Alexander Aldrich wondered what was happening with the old industrial bleachery buildings of Cluett Peabody Shirt Works. He knew that they were deteriorated and contaminated and that the rest of the island was kind of in a wilderness state and he thought why shouldn't this be a state park and why shouldn't a function of our agency which needs space repurpose the buildings. People said that the cleanup would be too costly and time-consuming but he said, "let it happen." So State Parks had to work with the Division of Budget and the State Legislature and so forth, and though it did take a long time, they put good people in charge here, and they moved forward with the Peebles Island Resource Center. Though the process is still continuing with the bleachery, which is closed but stable but it will be someday be put back in use, the scheme was a success and it was the imagination of one person who was in a boat passing by who put forth a good idea that came to fruition.

Nomination 14: Wallace Company Department Store, Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County

Tabitha O'Connell

Criteria/Areas of Significance:

A: Commerce

C: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1906-1971

This is a commercial tax credit project with an approved Part 1.

Discussion: none.

Motion to approve: Wint Aldrich

Second: Kristin Herron

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Daniel noted that almost every single agenda from the last several meetings has included at least one project in Poughkeepsie. Though Poughkeepsie has been a bit slow to take advantage of the historic tax credits it is now really nice to see an uptick in historic rehabilitation work in this Mid-Hudson Valley community.

Nomination 15: Fitzgerald Brothers Brewing Company Bottling Works, Troy, Rensselaer County

Tabitha O'Connell

This is an approved historic rehabilitation tax credit project.

Criteria/Areas of Significance:

A: Industry

C: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1892-1962

Discussion: none.

Motion to approve: Doug Perrelli

Second: Carol Clark

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Nomination 16: Empire Stove Works, Troy, Rensselaer County

Tabitha O'Connell

Criteria/Areas of Significance:

A: Industry

C: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1845-1914

Discussion: none.

Motion to approve: Wint Aldrich

Second: Chuck Vandrei

Abstentions: 0

Vote: Recommended 9 in favor, 0 opposed

Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation Report

Daniel Mackay

Daniel thanked Kath LaFrank for her report on the update on the status of Papscaanee Island, which is now listed on the State Register and has been determined eligible by the National Park Service. He also thanked Kath for filling everyone in on the new Part 1 tax credit unit and the good work that they are doing.

Commissioner Resignation: Commissioner Erik Kulleseid resigned his position, effective late February, to take the position as CEO of the Open Space Institute, an internationally active land conservation organization focused on land protection in the eastern US and Canada. He will be based in New York City.

Randy Simons, who previously served as Chief of Staff for OPRHP, was named by the Governor as Acting Commissioner. Randy has asked staff to maintain the momentum and pace developed in recent years; we should not treat this as a holding period for the agency.

The Governor's Office has launched a national search for the Commissioner position and we are hearing signals from multiple sources that there is strong interest in the position.

Commissioner Kulleseid stewarded the Division more consciously and effectively than any previous Parks Commissioner. The Division is more capable and more equipped than ever before to serve New York State.

Highlights of his five-year tenure include:

- 38 new hires since his tenure began

Bureau of Historic Sites:

- Authorized funding for decades-delayed Collections Management Database; that database is populated, staff is in training, and will have a public launch by early summer
- Approved establishment first-ever Interpreter of Native American History and Interpreter of African American History positions
- Launched and whole-heartedly promoted Our Whole History initiative
- Re-committed to Conservation Lab expertise and staffing
- Launched Rev War kiosk wayfinding project
- Supported record level of staffing at BHS

OPRHP Historic Sites System:

- Authorized establishment of BHS Capital Program for State Historic Sites
 - Allocated record level of funding for a historic site: Philipse Manor Hall SHS
 - Allocated superseding record level of funding for John Jay Homestead SHS
 - Authorized acquisition and preservation of battlefield lands at Newtown, Sackets Harbor, and Bennington SHS that were ranked as the most important and threatened Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Battlefields by the National Park Service.

Division for Historic Preservation:

- Supported renewal and enhancement of the state's HTC program
- Supported enhancement of 30 percent state credit for small projects
- QCT status for all NYS Park properties
- Extension of homeowner credit to entire municipalities
- Supported re-establishment of the NYS Historic Barn Tax Credit
- Established Grants Incentives & Planning Unit at DHP, resulting in successful applications for funding, with direct agency benefits:
- Semiquincentennial grants to Fort Niagara and Senate House
- Paul Bruhn Rural Revitalization grants to Genesee Valley
- Maritime Heritage Grants
- Supported establishment of Historic Business Registry Program
- Committed funding to Peebles Island facility investments
- Committed funding to CRIS enhancements
- Promoted the more consistent and effective inclusion of BHS and DHP expertise within the Agency, with emphasis on more effective integration with environmental, planning, capital and capital programs, allowing the Division to grow from reactive to proactive component of this agency.

Most importantly, the Commissioner consistently had our back:

- He was consistently curious and intrigued with the multi-faceted work of the Division
- He trusted our expertise and experience, our process, our thoroughness, our approach

- He consistently promoted his trust of that expertise before the Executive Chamber, other state agencies, and outside parties.

State Budget:

Governor Hochul's Executive Budget proposal allocates record level funding to the Office of Parks:

- \$300m capital fund (\$100m committed to Jones Beach facilities)
- Additional capital funding from Bond Act to re-open Sebago Lake in Harriman State Park and fully develop Sojourner Truth State Park in Kingston.
- Additional agency staff.
- Strong operations budget.

Details from the Senate and Assembly one-house bills indicate support for the Executive Budget proposal re ORPHP generally.

Federal Budget:

Dan McEneny and I were in Washington DC last week to advocate for funding and legislative priorities that would impact the work of the Division. We were joined by SRB member Jay DiLorenzo in his capacity as President of the Preservation League and Andrea Goldwyn of the NY Landmarks Conservancy.

FFY 23-24 funding: SHPOs were level-funded at \$61.5m; due to a change in the funding formula used by the National Park Service, this funding level allocates \$160k less to NY SHPO than in recent past. The proposed FFY 24-25 funding sought by NCSHPO and other advocates (NTHP and Preservation Action) would increase the aggregate funding awarded to SHPOs to \$70m annually, an amount which would compensate NY SHPO for the diminishment of funds due to change in formula.

The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), the dedicated funding source for SHPOs, TPOs, and virtually all federal preservation grant programs, was reauthorized for one year. We are seeking a ten-year reauthorization. The comparative funding line for open space acquisition funds (LWCF) was permanently reauthorized in 2022.

We also advocated for passage of the HTC-Go legislation that would enhance the federal rehabilitation credit program in numerous ways, including an increased incentive for small projects and the ability of not-for-profits to utilize the program.

Maritime Heritage Grant Program

NY SHPO was awarded \$294,000 in federal re-grant funds for interpretive and capital project funds for historic maritime resources. This was the largest award in the nation, but \$700k less than applied for. Staff has been diligent in designing and administering this new grant program. Fifty-three pre-applications were submitted for consideration; 41 final applications were received at the end of February. We received \$1.419 million in potential grant requests from the pre-application process. NYS is a 6-coast state (Atlantic, Long Island Sound, Great Lakes, St. Lawrence, Erie Canal, Hudson River) and this is the first time the agency has had a look at the demand for maritime heritage funding.

State Preservation Conference

The Statewide Historic Preservation Conference will be April 15-17 in Rochester, NY. I am hopeful that SRB members will be able to attend.

Conference registration includes an intensive, pre-Conference training session, tours, and Meet & Greet on Monday; a full day of breakout sessions, lunch, and Keynote on Tuesday; and a choice of four field sessions on Wednesday. For the first time in 2024, the New York State Historic Preservation Awards and Reception will take place on Tuesday evening during the Conference. The Awards recognize individuals, organizations, agencies, and communities for recent projects demonstrating outstanding achievements in historic preservation efforts in New York State. The program this year will feature a new award named in honor of former OPRHP commissioner Joan Davidson; Matt Davidson and his family will be attending.

Doug asked for an update on the status of filling the vacant seats on the SRB. Daniel said that we remain two seats short of full appointment and we do have a nominee who has been vetted and approved by the Governor's office and whose name now goes to the New York State Senate for confirmation. That person is Molly Garfinkel, who you met at last September's SRB meeting in Ganondagan, when she was presenting on behalf of a cultural resource survey related to the Puerto Rican Casitas that Kath has administered. Molly will be a great addition to the Board and brings another social history perspective, is quite accomplished, and she has made it through the Governor's vetting process. We are hoping that the Senate will approve her appointment before the end of the session in June.

Wint said that in his experience state agencies have not done national searches under the Governor's direction to find a successor to an office holder and this is a great compliment to not only our governor but also to this agency. He wished the agency the very best in its search and commented on the extraordinary report of former Commissioner Erik Kulleseid's accomplishments.

New Business

There was no new business to report.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Erika Krieger and seconded by Jennifer Lemak. The motion was carried by unanimous consent and the meeting was adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by board secretary Kathy Howe.