

Town of Stockbridge Historical Commission
Minutes of Meeting
February 15, 2024

The Town of Stockbridge Historical SHC (SHC) held a hybrid meeting at the Town Offices on Thursday, February 15, 2024, beginning at 10:42 AM. Present were Chairman Linda Jackson, Maria Carr, and Clerk Peter Williams, constituting all members of the SHC. Ms. Jackson presided over the meeting. The meeting's agenda, date, time and place were duly posted at the Town Offices at least two business days in advance of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting, as stated in the public notice, was for the SHC to review the FY24 applications to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for funds relating to Town historic resources.

Prior to the meeting, individual SHC members had reviewed the Community Preservation Act (CPA) as amended most recently on August 11, 2016, and the CPA's relevant procedures as summarized in the Community Preservation Coalition flow chart entitled "Qualifying Historic Projects for CPA Funding" (the "Flow Chart," attached hereto). The SHC also had reviewed a statutory language excerpt entitled "Excerpts from CPA re Preservation of Historic Resources" (attached hereto) that was prepared by Mr. Williams and which quotes relevant excerpts from the CPA.

As a preliminary matter, the Commission approved the draft minutes of its most recent meeting, held on August 23, 2023 that Mr. Williams had circulated prior to today's meeting.

Returning to the CPC applications, Ms. Jackson noted that we have ten proposed historic project applications to consider. The goal is to determine whether each project qualifies under the CPA. The SHC then reviewed (in alphabetical order) the current CPA applications.

Berkshire Theater Group (Organizing and cataloguing archival materials): The Commission began its review of this application pursuant to the three steps in the attached CPC Flow Chart and concluded that the first two steps are satisfied, i.e., the application involves (a) a building, which is the Berkshire Playhouse building, which is individually listed on the National Register (Steps 1 and 2) and (b) "documents or artifacts," namely archival materials and records dating from the 1928 founding of the Playhouse (step 1). Turning to the Step 2 as to the archives, the question is whether the SHC finds that the subject archives are significant to the history, archeology, architecture or culture of Stockbridge. The SHC considered that question and found that the archives are significant to the history and culture of Stockbridge. The SHC based its findings upon the fact that the Playhouse has since 1928 been a unique and historic cultural center in Stockbridge, hosting summer theater for nearly a century, including some of the nation's leading actors and actresses for theater productions that

have been essential to the cultural history of Stockbridge. The third question (Step 3) requires a two-part analysis: first, as to the restoration work on the Playhouse itself with respect to creating space for archival material, this work is part of a proposed major rehabilitation and/or restoration of the Playhouse building, and so it satisfies step 3 (so long as work shall comply with the Standards for Rehabilitation stated in the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties codified in 36 C.F.R. Part 68 ("Secretary's Standards")). Second, as to the engagement of the consultant, the SHC does not believe that that work is recoverable under Step 3; however, the SHC understands that the CPC might fund up to \$5,000 from its administrative funds.

Beerksire Waldorf High School (Rehabilitation/Restoration of Old Town Hall): This application is year 2 of a 3-year application. The project, reviewed by the SHC last year, seeks funds in connection with the rehabilitation of the Old Town Hall located in the Main Street National Register Historic District, to which it is a contributing building (steps 1 and 2). The SHC next considered step 3. In general, the proposed work for which funding is sought in the application is to rehabilitate and/or restore both the exterior and interior of the Hall. According to the presented drawings, the exterior is to be restored with no significant changes except to enable compliance with the ADA, while the interior is to be rehabilitated in part, with some changes. In last year's application, the estimated cost of the entire project was \$4.2 million. An \$8 million estimate is included in this year's application. Last year's application included a \$292K bid to remove asbestos and other toxic interior features, as well a \$264K bid for ADA and accessibility upgrades. The SHC found that proposed work to constitute rehabilitation and/or restoration of the Hall as defined in the CPA. This year's application seeks \$232,576 in funding for creation of a community room in the Old Town Hall as part of the overall rehabilitation/restoration of the building. The SHC has previously inspected the Old Town Hall in its current state, and there is no question that the building requires very substantial capital improvements or extraordinary repairs in order for the building to be rendered functional for use as a school or for any other purpose. The proposed capital expenditures for creation of a community room within the Old Town Hall are part of the overall rehabilitation/restoration of the building. Accordingly, so long as the work shall comply with the Secretary's Standards, the SHC finds that the proposed work constitutes rehabilitation and/or restoration of a historic resource and so satisfies step 3 under the CPA.

- Guerrieri Block: This application seeks funding for the rehabilitation/restoration of the building at 40 Main Street. As is the case with the Old Town Hall, the Colonial Revival Guerrieri Block building is located in the Main Street National Register Historic District, to which it is a contributing building (steps 1 and 2). The SHC next considered step 3. In general, the proposed work for which funding is sought in the application is to rehabilitate and/or restore both the exterior and interior of the building. According to the application, the exterior is to be restored with no significant changes. The applicant appears to be familiar with the Secretary's Standards and has itemized the proposed

work that it believes would qualify under the CPA and would conform with the Secretary's Standards. The total planned work on the project is estimated to cost \$251,600; the applicants asserts that \$152,100 of that work will be done in conformity with the Secretary's Standards, and the applicant asserts that all such work is fundable under the CPA. The application seeks funding of that full \$152,100. The SHC did a search for guidance regarding whether some or all of the work sought to be recovered in this application is recoverable as rehabilitation or restoration under the CPA. The search uncovered the Department of Revenue's April 3, 2014 letter to Massachusetts Representative Cantwell, which advises that such work "that is an integral part of a larger eligible rehabilitation or restoration project, i.e., painting after substantial repair or restoration of walls, woodwork, trim or siding (etc.)" is recoverable under the CPA. See <https://www.mass.gov/doc/workshop-c-2018/download> (final page of DOR letter). Accordingly, the SHC believes that the rehabilitation/restoration work proposed in the application satisfies Step 3 of the CPA.

Riverbrook: This project involves removing and rebuilding three chimneys at the Riverbrook building on Ice Glen Road. Regarding step 1, the project involves a building. Turning to step 2, the Commission found that the building is significant to the history, architecture and culture of Stockbridge in that it is a contributing building to the Ice Glen Road potential historic district (STO.L) listed in the MHC Area Form for that district (the building is historically known as Konkapot Cottage or Crowninshield Cottage (STO.516)). Regarding step 3, the Commission found that the proposed work, so long as it is done in compliance with the Secretary's Standards, meets step 3 under the CPA in that the work involves capital improvements or extraordinary repairs to the historic building and so constitutes "rehabilitation" as defined in the CPA.

Saint Joseph Cemetery: This project involves rehabilitation/restoration of the 150-year-old stone arch and pillars (collectively, the "arch") at the entrance to St. Joseph's Cemetery on Church Street. Step 1 is satisfied, as the arch is a "structure." The arch is not listed on the Register of Historic Places, and so to satisfy Step 2, the SHC must find that the arch is "significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture" of Stockbridge. As to this step, the SHC found that the arch is significant to the history and culture of Stockbridge because the arch is a highly visible monument on Church Street that is the entrance to a cemetery where a large number of townspeople have been buried for the past 150 years. Finally, Step 3 is satisfied, as the proposed work involves capital improvements or extraordinary repairs to the arch.

St. Paul's Church: This project involves proposed rehabilitation/restoration of the slate roof on the church building, as well as some related work to remediate water infiltration issues. As is the case with the Old Town Hall and the Guerrieri Block, the church is located in the Main Street National Register Historic District, to which it is a contributing building (Steps 1 and 2). The work involves capital improvements or extraordinary repairs to the church building, and that work is to be overseen by noted historic preservation firm, Preservation, Inc., and so it appears that the work will be done in

accordance with the Secretary's Standards; thus, Step 3 is satisfied as well.

Stockbridge Cemetery Commission (first application): The application involves plans to replace damaged posts in the cemetery's historic border fence with historically accurate marble posts. The Cemetery is within the boundaries of the Main Street National Register Historic District and is listed as contributing thereto. The stone and iron border fence is cited in MHC STO.B as important to the historic cemetery, and the SHC found that this structure (Step 1) is part of the listing on the State Register of Historic Places (Step 2). Finally, the proposed work constitutes rehabilitation or restoration of that historic resource (step 3).

Stockbridge Cemetery Commission (second application): This application involves restoration of the old hearse house on the grounds of the Cemetery. As noted previously, the Cemetery is listed on the Main Street National and State Historic Registers, and the hearse house is a building (Steps 1 and 2) that appears to date from the late nineteenth century and reflects an important part of the early history of the Cemetery. The proposed work constitutes rehabilitation or restoration of the historic building that will be conducted in accordance with the Secretary's Standards, and so the SHC found that Step 3 is met as well.

Stockbridge Library, Museum and Archives (SLMA): This project involves the proposed purchase of a museum-quality archival table case with LED light bar to secure display of historic artifacts and documents. The SLMA collection contains numerous priceless artifacts and documents that are significant to the history and culture of Stockbridge. Indeed, in regards to a 2023 CPA application by the SLMA, the SHC found that the preservation of certain 19th century daguerreotypes in the custody of the SLMA was fundable under the CPA. Because this application is for funds to purchase a museum-quality display case for safe display of important historic artifacts, the SHC found that the proposal involves "protection" of the items "from injury, harm or destruction" and so constitutes "preservation" thereof under the terms of the CPA, thus satisfying Step 3. See <https://www.communitypreservation.org/historic-documents>.

Town of Stockbridge/Soldiers Monument: This application derives from a cost overrun regarding work needed to preserve and repair the Town's historic Soldiers Monument approved for FY20 CPC funds. This project was previously approved by the SHC.

These minutes were reviewed and unanimously approved by the SHC prior to the close of the meeting.

The SHC adjourned the meeting at 12:15 PM.

Dated: Stockbridge, Massachusetts
February 15, 2024

Peter C. Williams
Peter C. Williams
Clerk

Attachments:

**Excerpts from CPA re
Preservation of Historic Resources (emphasis added)**

Section 5(b)(1): The community preservation committee shall study the needs, possibilities and resources of the city or town regarding community preservation, including the consideration of regional projects for community preservation. **The committee shall consult with existing municipal boards, including the conservation SHC, the historical SHC, the planning board, the board of park SHCers and the housing authority, or persons acting in those capacities or performing like duties, in conducting such studies.**

Section 5(b)(2): "The community preservation committee shall make recommendations to the legislative body [the Town Meeting] ... for the acquisition, **preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources**"

Section 2 (Definitions):

"Historic resources", a building, structure, vessel, real property, document or artifact that is *listed on the state register of historic places or has been determined by the local historic preservation SHC to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture of a city or town.*

"Preservation", protection of personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction.

"Rehabilitation", capital improvements, or the making of extraordinary repairs, to historic resources, open spaces, lands for recreational use and community housing for the purpose of making such historic resources, open spaces, lands for recreational use and community housing functional for their intended uses, including, but not limited to, improvements to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal, state or local building or access codes; provided, that with respect to historic resources, "rehabilitation" shall comply with the Standards for Rehabilitation stated in the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties codified in 36 C.F.R. Part 68....

[**"Restoration"** is not defined in the CPA.]

Prepared by PCW, 2/4/15

Qualifying Historic Projects for CPA Funding

