

Capitol Preservation and Restoration Commission
July 25, 2006 Meeting Minutes
Capitol Old Judiciary Room

Members Present: Benny Auger, Sen. Joseph Crisco, Jr., James Fleming, Robert Harris, Jr., Charles Higgins, Dr. Walter Woodward

Members Not Present: Rep. Emil "Buddy" Altobello, Raymond Collins, Jr., Lorraine Guilmartin, John Ruffalo

Others Present: Gerry Caughman, Eric Connery, Liz Conroy, Dana Crompton, Jill Cromwell, Linda Voghel, Tina Mohr

Robert Harris called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. He suggested postponing the vote on the approval of the 5/17/06 meeting minutes until the next meeting due to a lack of a quorum.

Status of battle flag conservation project

Eric Connery is working with the financial department to award contracts to the three conservators identified at the last Commission meeting. They are matching the restoration work that the flags require with the technical abilities of the restorers. Contracts will be going out in the near future. Senator Crisco asked for a comment on the insurance coverage of the flags. Eric replied that an appraisal was completed five years ago and the flags had an estimated value of \$4,000,000. In light of the recent sale of historic flags there are concerns our collection is undervalued. We are working to have another appraisal done. The state policy does cover losses over \$1,000,000. Dr. Woodward asked why the 29th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry Regiment flag was still displayed in the basement. Eric replied that when the next restored flag arrives, this flag will be moved to the Hall of Flags.

Status of the project to return the Genius to the Capitol dome

Eric Connery met with two engineering companies to discuss the feasibility of returning the Genius statue to the dome. One company rejected proceeding on the project because it did not have the structural engineering expertise required. The other company, BVH Engineers, is in the process of preparing a scope of work report to work with two additional engineers. This scope of work will address what type of structure will be necessary to support the Genius and wind tolerance issues. Research on the current Connecticut seismic code will also be completed. Dr. Woodward recommended contacting Mary Donohue and Susan Chandler with the State Historic Preservation Council for a list of contacts that might be useful. For the record, Robert Harris mentioned that he received a letter from Representative Michael Cardin thanking the Commission for allowing him to make his presentation at the last meeting.

Projects on-going and planned for the Capitol and grounds

Eric Connery reviewed the status of the projects.

- Schoenhardt Architecture has submitted the design and specifications for replacement of the North Steps. They will be submitting a proposal for the best process to clean the steps, utilizing the services of B.C.A., a conservation consulting group. We expect to wash the exterior of the Capitol during the summer of 2007.
- There is a study underway of the lighting of the capitol grounds. When submitted, it will also address the issue of lighting of the Capitol dome.
- We are going to move forward with installing lights on the north side perimeter of the grounds. The wiring is in place and materials are on order.

- The new maintenance contract with Guardian Services will become effective August 1, 2006. Legislative Management will work with them on procedures for maintaining and cleaning the Capitol.
- We have noticed new stains in a portion of the dome. This issue has moved up on the priority list.
- The refinishing of the exterior doors of the Capitol will begin July 26, 2006. The process will take two or more months because no power tools are being used.
- Schoenhardt Architecture has submitted a scope of work proposal to study the restrooms at the Capitol. While not historic, they are the source of periodic complaints regarding access for people with disabilities. We will take a look at the whole building for accessibility issues.
- The Prudence Crandall statue project is progressing. It is still on schedule for a completion date of March 2007.
- The issue of re-lighting the stained glass in the Old Judiciary Room still needs to be addressed.

Report on the displays in the Capitol basement and mechanism for acceptance of donations.

Eric Connery stated that the displays are not on the regular tour because the basement corridors are narrow, but we can work with the League of Women Voters to see if they can include this area. Jill Cromwell stated that it is a time-challenge to cover the current areas on the tour. Eric suggested re-writing the self-guided tour book to include this area. Other areas were suggested for possible rotating displays, including the Old Judiciary Room, the wall outside of Room 310, and the area at the end of the concourse. Eric mentioned that in the past, the Commission was reluctant to place the collections in a non-public area or add display cases, but it would be a topic for the Commission to address. At the time of the restoration there were many areas cluttered with items, and it was decided to clear many of these locations. James Fleming asked for a recommendation at the next meeting of how to incorporate a rotating display at the end of the concourse. Dr. Woodward suggested we try to partner with the Old State House and the Science Center that will be opening as there should be many school buses coming to Hartford for these groups' new exhibits.

The Commission discussed the procedure for acceptance of donations. Eric Connery explained the new gift ban prohibits "regulated" donors from making donations. The interpretation of this law is available on the Office of State Ethics website. Robert Harris stated that historically the General Assembly has been generous in the funding of projects, but the statute does allow the Commission to accept donations and grants.

Additional business

Robert Harris presented members with a copy of the 1886 Monographs of American Architecture featuring 22 plates of the State Capitol.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.


Eric Connery


Elizabeth Conroy