

**CITY OF NORWALK
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 25, 2026
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

ATTENDEES: Rich Stein (Chair), Mark Jackson, Lisa Wilson-Grant, John Cusano, David Westmoreland, Dana Laird, Diane Jellerette, Susan Gilgore.

STAFF: Michelle Andrzejewski.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Stein called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the March 25, 2026 Norwalk Historical Commission public comment meeting and regular meeting as well. Mr. Stein stated that a quorum was present.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Stein confirmed the presence of the quorum members listed above.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: February 25th, 2026

Mr. Stein asked if anyone had any comments on the minutes from the last meeting. Mr. Cusano noted corrections on pages 4 and 5 listing Kim or Kay as a woman when he is a man, including changes to personal pronouns, Mr. versus Miss, and the last name spelled M-O-R-Q-U-E. Mr. Cusano stated that other than those changes everything looked good. Mr. Stein agreed with the corrections on pages 4 and 5.

****MR. CUSANO MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES WITH THE CHANGES DISCUSSED.**

****MR. JACKSON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The minutes were approved as amended.

Mr. Stein stated that the minutes have been approved.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public participation.

V. REPORTS FROM BOARDS

A. Norwalk Historical Society; Diane Jellerette

Ms. Jellerette reported that the Historical Society had two very well-attended lectures in March. On March 7th, Alexandra Peters presented on History Revealed by Schoolgirl Samplers and was impressed with the needlepoint embroidery collection, leading to an invitation for a special exhibit proposal. On the past Saturday, Mark Albertson spoke on the 19th Amendment and women's right to vote for Women's History Month and will return in June to speak on the Declaration of Independence. The Registrar of Voters provided coloring pages and stickers on the 19th Amendment and Norwalk 250. Upcoming events include Earth Day on the Green on April 25th with a walk along the Norwalk River Valley Trail starting from City Hall at 10:30 a.m., a stop at the jail exterior, and Mill Hill open with a table on the green offering pollinator pathway flower packets. In May, a rendezvous with Rachel Rivera on May 17th at 2:00 p.m. with History at Play. On June 13th, partnering with Darien for Connecticut Open House Day and the Road Trip to Revolution using the Clio app with six sites each in Darien and Norwalk from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. On June 27th, Mark Albertson returns at the townhouse at 2:00 p.m. on the Declaration of Independence. Ms. Jellerette noted all events are listed on the website and MiddlesexParish250.com. Mr. Cusano asked if the Declaration of Independence talk was on the website yet, and Ms. Jellerette confirmed it would be posted soon with the title provided yesterday. Mr. Stein thanked Ms. Jellerette for the report.

B. Lockwood-Mathews Mansion Museum; Susan Gilgore

Ms. Gilgore reported that the new exhibit The Journey of Hope: The Irish American Immigrant Experience opened with over 170 guests including Senator Bob Duff and Mayor Barbara Smith, supported by O'Neill's Irish Restaurant, Guinness, and Leary Liquor Cabinet. The loan from Quinnipiac University and the Irish Great Hunger Museum has been extended through September due to high demand from group tours. The lecture series launches with Eric Chandler on Connecticut in the American Revolution on the provisions, state, and arsenal of the Revolution. A spring tea is scheduled for May 3rd featuring Jana Milbacher on Gilded Age Gardens. A new exhibition Revolutionary Roots: Generation of Change opens, curated by Stacey Danielson, highlighting the Lockwoods and Matthews ancestry tied to the Revolutionary War, with key items loaned by D'Angelo Rent and the Norwalk Historical Society. The mansion will participate in the June 13th Open House Day with \$5 mini tours. Ms. Gilgore thanked Ms. Jellerette and the Historical Society for collaboration on marketing. Mr. Stein asked about the boom in tourism and any numbers. Ms. Gilgore stated that through staff research, ticket sales and group tours have raised an average of \$20,000 every couple of months. Mr. Stein thanked Ms. Gilgore for the report.

VI. REPORTS

A. Buildings

Mr. Westmoreland reported that the bid opening for the interior of the jail restoration is scheduled for this coming Friday, with hopes for multiple good bids on a project underway since 2010. He noted that a proposal from David Scott Parker Architects for the next step in fixing the conservatory at the mansion was emailed to members just before the meeting and would be discussed further in new business.

B. Cemeteries

Mr. Westmoreland stated that Ms. Laird had an item regarding a tree limb. Ms. Laird reported that a widowmaker limb needs cleanup at Brookside Cemetery at 411 Rowayton Avenue. Mr. Westmoreland suggested getting it done before the Darien Middlesex visitors arrive and noted that the City Arborist Sarah Cruz would be asked to look at it. Mr. Stein asked about the past process for procuring cleanup at cemeteries. Ms. Laird replied that sometimes a group of them does it or they ask DPW to pick up sticks if scouts cannot be organized in time.

C. Financials

Mr. Westmoreland reported that the expense budget is proceeding well. The Board of Estimate requested a 10% reduction across the board, but working with the Economic Development Director, the reduction was achieved without affecting the Historical Commission budget. The capital budget review is scheduled for April 1st with the Economic Development Committee of the Council, where he will defend the projects. Mr. Cusano asked if the budget review meeting was really on April 1st, and Mr. Westmoreland confirmed it.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Demolition Delay Ordinance (open public participation)

Ms. Andrzejewski noted one hand raised, Diane Cece. Ms. Cece introduced herself from Olmsted Place and expressed appreciation for the deliberate pace on the ordinance without pressure to rush. She noted concerns with timing elements such as 14 days after something and 21 days after deemed complete for pre-applications, questioning how the public would know without legal notices. She also questioned the 10-day appeal period and how the public would know of decisions without notices. On the objections section, she hoped the onus was not solely on the public or objector to prove architectural or historical significance and suggested an automatic trigger for the Historical Commission review on every pre-application. Ms. Cece referenced a legal notice for partial demolition of a 1715 house in Silver Mine as a good example to test the ordinance flow and offered to share the notice. She forwarded it to Mr. Bill and Ms. Andrzejewski. Ms. Wilson-Grant noted a special permit application in today's paper for 204 Flax Hill Road involving historic preservation development for a multifamily property and recalled a 2020 presentation by Workforce on the same address. Ms. Laird confirmed noticing the same address and the back building. Ms. Wilson-Grant asked if the Commission had any ongoing say or if approvals had already been signed off. Ms. Andrzejewski stated that her coworker Brian is handling the project and would advise if a referral to the Commission is needed, noting it may be a reapplication after possible expiration or project changes. Discussion continued on past presentations, exterior appearances from the road, and follow-through on historic preservation aspects. Mr. Stein suggested considering a future ordinance on ownership changes for historically significant properties and proactive communications. Mr. Cusano noted that would require an inventory of significant buildings. Mr. Westmoreland referenced the significant inventory at the library history room with hundreds of properties and discussed challenges with plan changes and administrative approvals at PNZ. Ms. Wilson-Grant emphasized the need to monitor other aspects beyond demolition delay. Mr. Stein agreed and noted work remains. Mr. Westmoreland stated it was good discussion to get items on the record. Mr. Stein appreciated the public comments and set a goal for a clean final copy at the next meeting. Ms. Andrzejewski agreed and noted she would pull in Brian Candela from the law office for review. Mr. Cusano

requested a timeline document for the public to scan the process. Ms. Andrzejewski stated it was a great addendum idea but would check permissibility in the charter with Brian. Mr. Stein asked for any other comments on the draft. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Cece for her comments.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Westmoreland presented two attachments emailed earlier: the proposal from David Scott Parker Architects for the first step in fixing the conservatory at the mansion in the amount of \$55,000 (\$50,000 design fee plus \$5,000 reimbursables) and his cover letter to the Land Use Committee. He explained the unique nature of the conservatory, originally metal-framed with glass, rebuilt incorrectly after a 1970s tree fall with yellowed plastic panes and rotting wood. The scope includes research at Columbia, New York Botanical Garden, and the successor company in Ohio; cataloging remaining original glass panels; and preparing a formal request for qualifications for pre-qualified historic conservatory fabricators. He noted the Council already approved a \$275,000 special appropriation for this phase. Mr. Stein confirmed the \$55,000 would come from the existing \$275,000 allocation. Mr. Cusano asked if money would need to be raised for full implementation and if David Scott Parker was the only proposal. Mr. Westmoreland confirmed sole-source due to their long-term knowledge of the mansion since 2008 or 2009 and stated \$1.25 million is in the proposed capital budget. Mr. Cusano stated it would be fabulous to restore the conservatory to original condition.

****MR. WESTMORELAND MOVED TO RECOMMEND FORWARDING THE PROPOSAL FROM DAVID SCOTT PARKER ARCHITECTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$55,000 FROM THE NOTED ACCOUNT TO THE LAND USE COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMON COUNCIL.**

****MR. STEIN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IX. DISCUSSION

Mr. Stein asked for an update from Council on the commission's council member representative. Ms. Andrzejewski stated she had not heard updates but would touch base with the mayor's office again. Ms. Laird noted 100 days until July 4th per the MiddlesexParish250.org site. Ms. Wilson-Grant stated she would be stationed at the Nathan Hale Monument for the event and hoped it could be repaired. Mr. Westmoreland reported he would re-letter and repaint the cannonball monument nearby and clear-coat it. Ms. Laird suggested gold leaf. Ms. Wilson-Grant noted multiple monuments related to the American Revolution should be refreshed. Discussion turned to the Founders Monument moved near the train station and the need to ensure its proper placement during renovations. Ms. Wilson-Grant mentioned the 60th anniversary fundraiser for Roten Middle School and the loss of the planetarium now used for in-school suspension, suggesting it should return. Mr. Jackson recalled details from when he worked there. Ms. Laird noted Roten Middle School is named after Robert Oliver, the last holdout wanting to tear down the Lockwood Mathews Mansion. Mr. Westmoreland joked in jest about tearing it down to save restoration costs. Mr. Stein asked to strike that from the minutes. Mr. Westmoreland recalled owing Mr. Stein letters Dana sent to DOT and FTA about the walk bridge and the need for a

specific update on the monument's location and involvement. Mr. Stein suggested adding it to the next agenda. Ms. Laird noted Mr. Jackson appeared in slideshow photos at the Roton event.

X. ADJOURNMENT

****MR. JACKSON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

****MR. CUSANO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Stein stated the next meeting is April 22nd and thanked everyone.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

April 22nd, 2026

Respectfully Submitted

Courtney Baldwin

Recording Secretary