

Grange Update from 1st Selectman

On Wednesday, September 5th, 2018 representatives for and from the Town of Bridgewater went to Hartford to attend a meeting of the Historic Preservation Council (see below) wherein it reviewed the planned demolition of the old Grange structure.

Bridgewater was represented by: Curtis Read (1st Selectman), Susan Wilcox (Treasurer), Lorry Schiesel (Town Attorney), Kevin Archer (structural engineer), Bartosz Toczyłowski (Architect) and Kevin McQueen (Architect).

The opposition to the planned demolition came from the CT Trust for Historic Preservation (Brad Schide), their contracted architect and structural engineer. Other speakers opposing the Grange demolition/rebuild option from Bridgewater were: Lisa Burns (co-chair of the Bridgewater RTC), Richard Monda, Linda Abbett and David Sposato.

After some short testimony by the parties, the Council decided to recommend to the CT Attorney General that a stay be issued immediately to stop demolition. This is common when a building is listed as “contributing” to a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. In Connecticut the Attorney General has the authority to prevent or permit the Grange demolition.

The Town will now be afforded the opportunity to explore renovation options with the CT Trust and their representatives to see what can be done realistically with promised grant monies and tax credits to cover the added expense of renovation over and above the lesser projected costs for a demo/rebuild option. Meeting dates with the AG and CT Trust representatives have yet to be scheduled.

Historic Preservation Council is established within the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) by state law. The Council, which includes 12 citizen-volunteer members appointed by the Governor for a maximum of two four-year terms, advises DECD on 16 critical historic preservation functions. It is also tasked with working directly with the Office of the Attorney General to prevent the "unreasonable destruction" of properties listed on, or under consideration for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places; reviewing and approving requests to perform work on properties on which DECD holds preservation restrictions; providing a model ballot for use by clerks of municipalities considering the establishment of local historic districts; and placing and maintaining suitable markers, memorials or monuments to designate places or sites of historical significance in Connecticut. In performing these functions, the Council relies on staff support from the State Historic Preservation Office.

Historic Preservation Council Members

Sara O. Nelson, Chair
Karyn M. Gilvarg, Vice Chair
Dr. Margaret M. Faber
Dr. Leah Glaser
Katherine D. Kane
Kathleen Maher
Dr. Jeffrey F. L. Partridge