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NEWS

Amid Stamford development, an effort to protect history emerges

By **Robert Marchant**, Staff Writer

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 Gift Article



The Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC) is set to work on the "Reimagine Bedford Street" initiative, along with other projects to bolster preservation in the community.

Robert Marchant / Hearst Media

STAMFORD — When city leaders approved a [new comprehensive plan](#) last year to guide future development in Stamford, the goal of saving historic buildings and sites in the city was given a high priority.



The Historic Preservation Advisory Commission is now looking to take on that mandate with a number of new initiatives.

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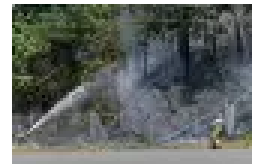
"Stamford is growing and changing city, but we also want to maintain some of the historic character, and preserve its history," said John Verni, the commission's vice

chairman, at a recent meeting on the new initiative the advisory panel is planning.

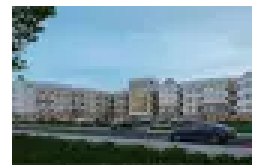
The commission is working on the creation of new and uniform historical signage in the city, and it is planning to put out a brochure later this year that would be sent to developers and builders in the community. The brochure would inform developers about the local organizations involved in preservation and the resources available.

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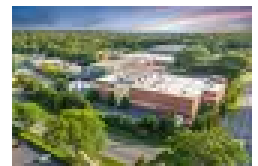
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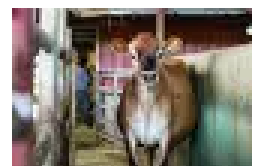
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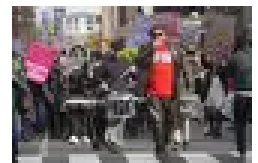
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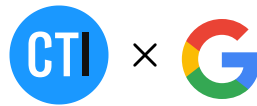


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The brochure would let developers know about incentives for historic preservation, including tax credits and measures "that permit higher density residential development" on parcels where a historic building stands. The commission is putting

the final touches on the brochure and expects to approve it at its next meeting, which has not yet been scheduled.



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The brochure will get the word out about the value of historic preservation in a concise format, the commissioners said. "Unfortunately, we find sometimes that we come at the end of the process, and we want to get into it sooner," Verni said.

A review of signs designating historic areas is also underway. "We need some examination on what exists now, and what would be appropriate to do throughout the city," said Verni.

Commission member Brian Gaudet said that New Haven and Hartford had extensive historical-markers programs, and he would gather information from those

two communities to share with the Stamford commission, "to see what they've done," he said. The others commissioners said the input from other cities would be welcome.

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The commission is expected to collect more data on what historic markers have been erected in the community and what kind of signs might be placed in future. "There's a little more homework to be done," said Verni.

The commission will also work on the ["Reimagine Bedford Street"](#) initiative, [a project that has been ongoing with city leaders and local businesses](#). The aim is to make Bedford Street, which has numerous restaurants and businesses lined along its thoroughfare, more pedestrian friendly.

"There are many historic assets there, and HPAC would be concerned about making sure those assets are preserved," Verni said. "I think there's a role for us there, and we should step up and take a role."

The commission was also introduced to Kendall Richey, a city planner hired last year who will be assigned to work with HPAC. Richey has worked in the private and

public sector before being hired by the city of Stamford, and she has developed expertise on "urban branding and identity," data analysis and mapping software. Richey earned a master's degree from the London School of Economics with a concentration in urban studies.

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"I'm hoping to help identify some strategies we can use to further bolster the downtown," she told the commission, "I'm all about sense of place."

HPAC was established in 2013. Much of its workload is devoted to reviewing applications to demolish buildings in Stamford.



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