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Derby, CT Town Clerk's Office

Sterling Opera House Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2025
6:00 PM

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1. Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at **6:04 PM**.

2. Pledge of Allegiance - The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Roll Call

- Dana Florenza, Gino DiGiovanni, Carleigh Paecht

Members Absent / Late:

- Brian Coppolo (arrived at 6:10 PM)
- Karleen Guluzzy - absent

A quorum was declared.

4. Approval of Minutes - No prior meeting minutes were available.

Motion: To table approval of minutes
Moved by: Brian Coppola
Seconded by: Karleen Guluzzy
Vote: Unanimous – Motion carried

5. Public Portion

Paul Stefano – 57 Academy Hill

Mr. Stefano discussed an opportunity to use a podcast on a Roku channel as a avenue to inform the public about Sterling Opera House-related topics, including Commission updates. The Commission expressed interest in exploring the platform as a communication tool while noting the importance of remaining mindful of fundraising restrictions during the early phases of the campaign.

Dave Condon (Public Comment)

Mr. Condon discussed best practices for large fundraising campaigns, emphasizing the importance of conducting a **silent phase** to protect major donor strategies. He advised that fundraising goals should not be discussed publicly until campaign plans have been finalized.

The public portion was closed.

6. Report on 501(c)(3) Status – Dave Condon

Mr. Condon reported the following:

- Corporate documents for **Sterling Opera House Restoration, Inc.** have been filed and approved by the State of Connecticut.
- The required annual state report was filed on June 1, 2025.
- A new EIN has been established, and prior EIN issues have been resolved.
- A professional firm, **Bright Bridge**, has been retained to complete the 501(c)(3) application.

- Expenses to date include filing fees and professional services; some costs were donated or deferred for later reimbursement.
- IRS approval is expected within **5–7 months**.
- Contributions may be accepted during the review period, with tax deductibility retroactive upon approval.
- The nonprofit will not file a 2024 IRS Form 990 because there was no financial activity; 2025 will be the first filing year.
- The nonprofit board will need to be expanded in the future.
- Further clarification is needed regarding the respective roles of the Commission, the Board of Aldermen, and the 501(c)(3).

The Commission thanked Mr. Condon for his work.

- Coordination continues with **Steinberg Hart** regarding design concepts and feasibility planning.
- An updated property survey (estimated at approximately $1,800

8. Discuss Upcoming Events

- Harvest Festival in Ansonia on October 4th
- Pumpkin Festival (waiting on).

9. Adjournment

Motion: Can I have a motion to adjourn at 6:28
Moved by: Dana Florenza
Second by: Carleigh Paecht
Vote: Unanimous – Motion carried

Respectfully submitted by:
Jennifer Desroches