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Derby, CT Town Clerk's Office

Sterling Opera House Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Date: Monday, August 11, 2025

1. Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at **6:02 PM** by the Chair.

2. Pledge of Allegiance - All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

The Clerk called the roll. Present were:

•Dana Florenza, Carleigh Paecht, Karleen Guluzzy, Gino DiGiovanni.

A quorum was declared.

- Brian Coppolo - absent

4. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to **table the approval of the minutes**.

- Motion: Dana Florenza
- Second: Karleen Guluzzy

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Portion

The Chair opened the public portion of the meeting.

Mark Garfalo, Town Clerk for the City of Derby, addressed the Commission regarding Item #6 and requested that the report include an update on who was interviewed as part of the Steinberg Hart study.

No additional speakers came forward.

The public portion was closed.

6. Report on Meeting with Steinberg Hart / Feasibility Study Update

The Chair reported that a progress meeting with **Steinberg Hart** had taken place and that materials from the meeting had been distributed to the Commission by email.

Interviews Conducted for the Study were reported to include:

- Brian Coppolo, Karleen Guluzzy, Matt Welander, Dave Condon
- A representative from Center Stage (Shelton)

Extensive discussion followed regarding the **preliminary recommendation not to include a fly system** in the feasibility study.

Key discussion points included:

- Concerns that omitting a fly system could limit future programming and touring productions
- The importance of making long-term decisions during initial construction rather than retrofitting later

- The need for further clarity once stage dimensions, structural design, and elevator placement are finalized
- Recognition that the current document is a feasibility study and not a final design decision

It was emphasized that **no final determination has been made** regarding the fly system and that further evaluation and expert input will occur as the project advances.

7. Committee Updates

a. Osbornedale Kellogg Museum

The Commission reported that the Osbornedale Kellogg Museum plans to feature the Sterling Opera House in a November exhibit, and artifacts are being gathered for temporary loan.

A large Sterling Opera House display located on a resident's property will also be evaluated for potential inclusion in the exhibit.

b. Survey Update

Funds have been transferred for surveying services. **Freddy D'Amico** has been retained as the surveyor and has obtained the necessary documentation.

The survey results will help guide final decisions regarding elevator placement, access points, and stage layout.

c. Upcoming Site Visit

Steinberg Hart staff, including mechanical, HVAC, and structural engineers, are scheduled to return to the site to take additional measurements and continue planning.

d. 501(c)(3) Status Update

The Commission reported that **Sterling Opera House Restoration, Inc.** has:

- Filed for 501(c)(3) status
- Received a new EIN
- Opened a bank account
- Been certified as a registered charity by the State of Connecticut (valid through August 2026)

The organization will serve as the fundraising arm for the restoration project while remaining legally separate from the Commission.

8. Discussion of Upcoming Events

- **Ansonia Harvest Festival (October 4, 2025):** General support expressed for participation; follow-up required.
- **Citywide / All-Class Reunion (August 30, 2025):** Discussed as a potential outreach opportunity; concerns raised regarding feasibility, timing, and suitability for tours.

Proposed Walking Tour Fundraiser (October 11, 2025):

- Route beginning and ending at Twisted Vine
- Guided walking and Opera House tours
- Tentative ticket price: $20
- Limited attendance and timed entry proposed
- Strong support expressed for concept pending approval and logistics

Future use of third-party nonprofit ticketing platforms to minimize fees was discussed.

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at **6:57 PM**.

- Motion: Brian Coppolo
- Second: Karleen Guluzzy
- Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jennifer Desroches