Sterling Opera House Commission

Regular Meeting

Minutes

April 13, 2026

1. **Call to Order -** Chair called the regular meeting of the SOHC to order at 6:01 PM
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** – The Board stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **Roll Call**

Commission members present: Gino DiGiovanni; Dana Florenza; Carleigh Paecht; Karleen Guluzzy (via Zoom). Commission members absent/excused: Brian Coppolo (excused). The Clerk noted four (4) members present; a quorum was established.

4. **Additions/Deletions to the Agenda -** No additions, deletions, or corrections were made. The agenda was approved as presented by unanimous consent.
5. **Approval of Minutes**

Motion: To table approval of the prior meeting minutes.
Moved by Dana Florenza;
Seconded by Carleigh Paecht.
Vote: Aye (4) – DiGiovanni, Florenza, Paecht, Guluzzy; Nay (0); Abstain (0).
Motion carried.

6. **Public Portion**

Gary Collins, 273 Derby Avenue, addressed the Commission regarding the existing windows at the Opera House. He stated that, based on his research, retaining the windows preserves the building's historic aesthetics and may be less costly than boarding or otherwise removing/altering them. He noted that in the late 1800s windows provided daylight for afternoon performances and were beneficial for fire response at a time when fire resources were more limited. Mr. Collins suggested considering fireproof curtains/shutters as a way to address safety, sound control, and winter heat retention while keeping the windows intact. Commission members discussed that they were not in favor of removing the windows and considered the concept of heavy curtains and additional soundproofing measures. No further public comment was offered (including via Zoom), and the public comment portion was closed.

7. **Old Business**

Steinberg Hart update: The Chair reported that Steinberg Hart had previously provided a project status update and that Evan (Steinberg Hart) advised by email that the grant application work was approximately 99.9% complete, including the market analysis/study. The Chair stated the intent to place Steinberg Hart on the May meeting agenda to present final findings, with the goal of having a completed report available for the Commission and the public and to inform next steps.

Received
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Derby, CT Town Clerk's Office

8. **New Business**

Cabaret fundraiser at Twisted Vine (June 6, 2026): Karleen Guluzzy presented planning details for a proposed fundraiser "cabaret night" to be held at Twisted Vine on Saturday, June 6, 2026, from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. She outlined a program featuring three acts (approximately 30 minutes each) and noted that the Commission had already secured a magician (Brian Lizette) and a musician/organist (Gary Harger, St. Mary's). The remaining need is to book a comedian for a shorter (30-minute) set, which narrows the available pool; suggestions from Commission members and the public were invited. Ms. Guluzzy discussed capacity and ticket pricing assumptions. She stated the venue could comfortably accommodate approximately 75 attendees, with a potential maximum of around 80 depending on table configurations. Proposed ticket prices ranged from $20 to $25 per person. She provided revenue estimates of approximately $1,500 if 75 tickets are sold at $20, and approximately $1,875 if sold at $25. The Commission discussed a pricing structure that encourages group seating, such as $25 for individual tickets and a discounted price (e.g., $20) for parties of four (4) or more. Food and beverage: It was discussed and clarified that the ticket price would cover the entertainment event; food and alcoholic/non-alcoholic beverages would be available for purchase through the restaurant (cash bar/regular restaurant service). Event flow: Ms. Guluzzy described a draft schedule including a brief opening period for attendee arrival and introductions, intermissions between acts to allow table service and clearing, and a closing period for wrap-up activities. Ticketing/seating logistics: The Commission discussed using the Commission's Zeffy account for ticket sales to ensure funds are deposited directly to the Opera House account. Concerns were raised about managing seating for groups when individuals purchase tickets separately. Options discussed included (a) configuring Zeffy to allow purchase by table/party size (e.g., "party of 8"), and/or (b) collecting party information via a separate sign-up form (e.g., a QR code leading to an online form) prior to payment, with the Zeffy payment link provided afterward. Ms. Guluzzy agreed to research Zeffy configuration options and report back. Raffle/door prize: The Commission discussed adding a door prize (e.g., a restaurant gift card) and a 50/50 raffle to increase fundraising and attendee participation. It was noted that raffle participation would be limited to event attendees on the night of the fundraiser. The Chair stated that the Police Department would be contacted to confirm any requirements. Consensus to proceed: By unanimous consent (no objections stated), the Commission agreed to move forward with the June 6, 2026 fundraiser at Twisted Vine, with details to be finalized as planning continues. Next steps included confirming raffle requirements, finalizing ticketing/seating logistics, completing a flyer, and coordinating promotion including social media, The Patch, and the City newsletter.

9. **Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn.by Dana Florenza (no second.)

Vote: Unanimous by voice vote; no opposition heard. The meeting adjourned at 6:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Jennifer Desroches