

PLANNING DEPARTMENT PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

With support by a State Preservation Grant administered by Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC), the Town of East Greenwich is finally set to start the slate roof replacement project at 125 Main Street, being the c.1804 Old Kent County Courthouse in the coming weeks!!

Home to East Greenwich's municipal offices since 1996, this National Register of Historic Places historic structure and irreplaceable community resource has been threatened over the last decade by its original but deteriorating slate roof. The existing slate shingles and roofing underlayment are in very poor condition; the shingles are breaking apart, becoming loose, falling to the ground and endangering the public. For liability purposes a covered walkway was installed along the north elevation and a temporary picket fence was installed in front of the building to minimize the impact of falling slate.



Figure 1 The Old Kent County Courthouse is set to get a new slate roof in the coming weeks.

The East Greenwich Planning Department, along with past and present Town Council members, recognized the importance of preserving and renovating the architecturally significant building. Knowing the Town did not have the necessary funding to undertake the extensive repairs required, the Planning Department Staff applied for a highly competitive State Preservation Grant in August of 2016 to help defray the costs. State Preservation Grants provide funds to cities, towns, and nonprofit organizations to preserve, renovate, and improve public and nonprofit historic sites, museums, and cultural art centers in Rhode Island. This money originated from the Rhode Island Creative and Cultural Economy Bond question which Rhode Island voters overwhelmingly approved on November 2, 2014.

In late December 2016, the Planning Department was notified by RIHPHC that our project was accepted to receive the maximum large capital preservation project grant of \$150,000 to replace the Town Hall slate roof. Over the course of two fiscal years the Town has been appropriating Capital Improvement Project funds to cover the \$438,000 total cost of the project. Although there is a major upfront financial commitment to using a slate roofing system, slate tiles will easily last over 100 years, which is at least double of what other roofing materials can offer in terms of longevity.



Figure 2 Former RIHPHC Executive Director Edward F. Sanderson presenting Assistant Town Planner, Lea Anthony Hitchen, with a State Preservation Grant in the amount of \$150,000 at Linden Place Ballroom in Bristol, RI on January 19, 2017.

On January 19, 2017 Assistant Town Planner, Lea Anthony Hitchen, accepted the State Preservation Grant award. Since the grant announcement Town Staff has been diligently working with Simpson Gumpertz & Heger and Architectural Preservation Studio to refine the project and get all design elements and scope of work approved by RIHPHC. After the required bidding process the Town Council awarded the project to Alden Bailey Restoration Corp. from Ridgefield, CT, an excellent contractor who also produces exceptional quality work. The construction schedule is dependent upon the availability of slate but the Town anticipates Alden Bailey to mobilize mid to late May and the project to take place over the course of the summer months.

The roof restoration project will temporarily inconvenience visitors as Town Hall's rear parking lot will be closed for the duration of the project. Town Hall will remain open during normal business hours and access can still be obtained from Main Street and Peirce Street.

Please refer to the Town's webpage and Facebook page in order to stay up-to-date with the restoration progress. For more information contact Lea Anthony Hitchen at lanthony@eastgreenwichri.com. Additionally, the Town is always looking for ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle...stay tuned as to how you can obtain an original slate tile from the c.1804 Old Kent County Courthouse!