

Meeting Notes

COSTEP-CT met Sept. 15, 2010 at the Connecticut State Library, Van Block Facility.

Present: Kathy Craughwell-Varda (Conservation ConneCTion), Jane Cullinane (Conn. State Library, Preservation Office), Mark Jones (Conn. State Library, State Archivist), Rich Malley (Conn. Historical Society), Robert Novak (Derby Historical Society), Lizette Pelletier (Conn. State Library, Public Records Office), Ryan Potosnak (FEMA, field services, currently in Conn.), Meredith Vasta (Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center). Note taker: Jane.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lizette Pelletier will have a brief opportunity to speak about COSTEP-CT at the October meeting of the New England Archivists. Kathy Craughwell-Varda will have a more formal opportunity when she speaks to that group next spring.

Thirteen people have signed up for the ICS 100 class being offered on Sept. 23 at the State Library Van Block Facility.

Mark Jones distributed copies of the poster for Archives Month, in October.

NEW MEMBERS

Elizabeth G. Shapiro, Interim Director of the Connecticut League of Historical Organizations, will join the Steering Committee and hopes to be at our next meeting.

VALUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Kathy and Robert Novak presented a new version of the Value Statement which is intended to help explain the value of cultural resources to emergency responders and to our communities. After some discussion, this is the statement we approved:

In a disaster, the first and foremost priority is saving lives.

In the aftermath of a disaster, cultural resources can help restore a sense of identity and normalcy, and provide an economic anchor during the long-term recovery of ravaged communities. Cultural resources include irreplaceable artifacts, such as buildings, documents, books, photographs, artwork, furniture, decorative arts and much more. These artifacts are found in a wide range of community locations, from libraries, museums, and archives, to parks, historic sites and public buildings.

Just as it is human nature to save our personal history, so too must our communities' cultural and historic resources be preserved, to help rebuild lives and families, to continue to remind us of what we've done and who we are, and to provide inspiration for what we will become.

We also created a one sentence "tag line" to describe what COSTEP-CT is trying to do.

Connecting first responders and cultural heritage organizations during emergencies to protect and save our cultural treasures.

WEB SITE AND COMMUNICATION

The first version of our web site is up at <http://costep.cslib.org> and has the mission statement, goals, notes of past meetings and training announcements. Kathy, Jane Cullinane, Tara Kennedy and Lizette, met by conference call to consider whether we could use Google tools to create three things, a public web site, a private workspace (such as a wiki) and a listserv. It seems that the public website would be better if it stays in the present form. Tara reported by email that she will continue to work on the possibility of a private workspace and listserve via Google.

LOGO FOR COSTEP-CT

Kathy and Lizette provided photographs of the fallen Charter Oak tree as possible images for a logo for our group. Rich Malley told the story of the significance of the tree to Connecticut history, in order to explain why it would make a good image for COSTEP-CT. If we decide to use an image of the fallen tree, Rich will give us a paragraph about the hidden charter and the tree.

Jane felt that, although the image of the fallen tree was a good one for our purposes, the photographs were not the right kind of graphic. We agree that a line drawing would make a better image. Kathy, Rich and Lizette will look for other images of the tree.

DISASTERS IN CONNECTICUT

Rich remembered that a few years ago an arson fire destroyed the Canaan railroad station, an architectural gem. And the Roman Catholic Cathedral burned in Hartford in the mid-1950s. Rob recalled that the flood of 1955 washed away the Seymour Public Library and all its treasures.

These events can be added to the list that Jane started. There is a list of declared federal disasters in Connecticut at www.fema.gov. Perhaps the state Dept. of Emergency Management and Homeland Security also has a list. Jane's list can be posted to the COSTEP-CT web site and then we can seek more incidents and pictures.

MUTUAL AID

Because Kathy and Mark submitted a grant application to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) for a series of focus groups on the topic of regional mutual aid agreements, Jane suggested that the group add a goal related to Mutual Aid Agreements.

Even though the current goals include a goal to establish stockpiles of supplies and another goal to create community emergency response teams, we agreed that a new goal regarding mutual aid was appropriate. Here is the new goal and the changes to the community response team goal.

Coordinate local and/or regional mutual aid agreements for sharing supplies, human resources and expertise.

Create a statewide emergency response team, consisting of persons from Connecticut who could respond and help any cultural resource organization in the state, in the recovery phase of an emergency.

SURVEY ON DISASTER RESPONSE SKILLS AND SUPPLIES

Jane and Tara drafted questions for a survey on what resources and skills cultural heritage organizations have. Kathy will transform this into something that can go out on SurveyMonkey. The group commented on the layout, merged some questions, added other questions and added to the checklist of supplies.

Members of the group are asked to think about one or two sentences to use at the beginning of the survey about what COSTEP-CT is and what the survey intends to accomplish.

The survey will ask if there has been a collections emergency (minor, major or catastrophic), what occurred, if there is a disaster plan, what type of supplies and equipment are on hand, what services and/or training does the institution have or need, and if there is a contract with a disaster recovery company.

NEXT MEETING

We'll meet Oct. 14, 2010, at 10:00-12:00, at a location to be determined.