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Jim Cameron Appointed to Merritt Parkway Conservancy Governing Board

Author : David Gurliacci

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Tagged as : [Jim Cameron 2018](#), [Merritt Parkway Conservancy](#)[Merritt Parkway Conservancy 2018](#)

Date : October 14, 2018

The Merritt Parkway Conservancy has named Jim Cameron of Darien as one of two new members of its governing board. The organization has also appointed a new executive director.

Cameron, a Darien resident and longtime commuter advocate, authors a weekly column on transportation issues for Darienite and Hearst CT Media newspapers and websites.

— *an announcement from the* [Merritt Parkway Conservancy](#)

"I'm grateful to First Selectman Jayme Stevenson for my nomination to the Merritt Parkway Conservancy's Board," Cameron said in an announcement on Saturday. "Though my passion to date has been for rail commuters I'm anxious to contribute what I can to the MPC's efforts to preserve this amazing parkway from

encroaching development.

"Connecticut was so prescient in this road's design and we must do what we can to keep it as the beautiful roadway that it is," he said.

Cameron has been a Darien resident for more than 25 years. He is the founder of the Commuter Action Group and also serves on the Darien RTM and as program director for Darien TV79.

Wes Haynes, the new executive director, replaces Jill Smyth who held the position for 12 years before relocating to Colorado for family reasons. Haynes took over the position on Sept. 15.

"We were sad to lose Jill Smyth after so many years of her hard work," said Peter Malkin, chairman and co-founder of the conservancy.

"Under her leadership we made great strides in preserving the character and history of this wonderful parkway. While she is leaving Connecticut she will still serve as a consultant to the Conservancy."

Haynes, a native of Stamford, has 40 years of experience in historic preservation having held previous senior staff positions with the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, New York [City] Landmarks Conservancy, and other non-profit organizations committed to the stewardship of historic places



Merritt Parkway
Conservancy

"The Merritt is exceptional among Connecticut's historic places and a refreshing greenway that I have never grown tired of driving," Haynes said. "I'm thrilled to join the Conservancy and add to Jill's great work in building a working relationship with the State to ensure that we hand it down to our grandchildren to enjoy the way we have."

Also named to the conservancy's board of directors at its September meeting was

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Mary Elen Lemay, a Trumbull resident, brings to the conservancy experience in preservation and remediation of native plant species, calling from her work as coordinator for the Hudson to Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership.

Founded in 2002, the Merritt Parkway Conservancy is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of the parkway's flora and historic structures, working with the Connecticut Department of Transportation which is responsible for the parkway's maintenance and operation.

Constructed beginning in 1934, the Merritt Parkway was the first of its kind in the U.S., offering passenger cars a bucolic, 37-mile ride through Fairfield County, uninterrupted by stop signs in a native landscape carefully blended into its surrounding environment.

It runs 37 miles from Greenwich to Stratford CT. Each of the 72 original bridges designed by George L. Dunkelberger is unique in design, representing a range of 1930s architectural styles, such as Art Deco, Art Moderne, French Renaissance, Gothic and Neoclassicism.

The entire parkway was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991, and in 2010 was named one of America's Most Endangered Historic Places by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.