

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
June 5, 2012
Delancey Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Debby Moore
Linda Gracie
John Malone
Steve LaRocca
Francis Tuoti, Chairman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gail Pantezzi
Marcia Rockwood

ALSO PRESENT: Janice Will, Recording Secretary

Chairman Francis Tuoti called the meeting to order.

Possible historic designation of Mills Road

The Chairman informed the others that Amy Rosmarin sent a letter to the DEP, spelling out what limitations the Town would want if Mills Road is designated an historic road, but she has not had a response from them yet.

Rochambeau's march through North Salem

The HPC looked at a copy of a Historical Society booklet and a map on this subject which were provided by Susie Thompson.

Linda Gracie said she will make copies of the map for everyone and leave them at the secretary's office where people may pick them up.

Debby Moore said she will check the Historical Society office for additional copies of the booklet.

It was agreed to read through the booklet/look at the maps and discuss the subject again in the future.

Mile markers

Ms. Gracie stated that Highway Superintendent, Ward Hanaburgh, would be willing to place a marker at the mile marker on Dingle Ridge Road, but they may not mark the ones on Routes 121 and 116 without permission from the NYS Department of Transportation, which could be difficult to get.

Ms. Gracie asked if there is a template available for a marker/plaque to use.

The Chairman remarked that something like the stone-anchored plaque for the stone chamber at the Purdy homestead would be appropriate, commenting that they have to worry about theft/vandalism.

Debby Moore said perhaps it would be better not to use plaques/draw attention to the mile markers.

Ms. Gracie suggested that the HPC provide something once a year for the Town newsletter, including an update about what they are working on and listing any new historic designations.

Steve LaRocca said he would still like to see the mile markers designated landmarks.

Chairman Tuoti asked if it would be necessary to place a plaque at the mile marker, and Mr. LaRocca said he did not think so.

Everyone thought designating the mile marker a landmark without placement of a plaque was a good idea.

The Chairman asked whose property the marker is on, adding that the HPC could fill out the application paperwork and send a recommendation to the Town Board.

Ms. Gracie said she thought it was on land owned by the Open land Foundation.

Mr. LaRocca said that given its proximity to the road, it is probably on Town property.

Ms. Gracie offered to take photographs and see what information the Historical Society has on the markers.

Mr. LaRocca commented that he would assume the mile markers were placed by the postal company that used the route at the time.

#1 Vail Boulevard, O'Loughlins

Gail Pantezzi is looking into the possible historic designation of this property.

Clark Scott Mill, 4 Keeler Lane

Ms. Gracie said she had spoken to Sharon Brownridge, owner of 4 Keeler Lane. Ms. Gracie said Ms. Brownridge had some questions about possible negative aspects of historic designation, but she thinks she is seriously considering it.

Chairman Tuoti said the only negative to historic designation is the need to fill out a Certificate of Appropriateness form before making exterior changes. He added that the current HPC has moved fairly quickly to process these applications.

Ms. Gracie agreed, saying that the HPC should try to find ways to be more vocal about how historic designation is a positive thing.

Ms. Moore said people think it will be an additional expense and/or take too long.

It was noted that there is no application fee for historic designation or Certificates of Appropriateness.

Mr. LaRocca asked where the name "Clark Scott" came from.

Ms. Gracie admitted she did not know. She said that when she lived at 8 Keeler Lane, the previous owner gave her a lot of papers including old certificates for that house and another indicating that they were cider mills. Ms. Gracie added that, unfortunately, the certificates were stolen by someone doing work in the house. She noted that one can see where the mill wheel would have been, and there is an odd, big tank in the basement.

Mr. LaRocca said the building is an important part of Town history as a mill/part of Mill Hollow.

Chairman Tuoti commented that creation of the reservoir actually saved the Town, resulting in a return to agriculture/a move away from industry.

Ms. Gracie said Susie Thompson has spoken to Ms. Brownridge also.

Other-elephants

The Chairman said he received a phone call from someone with a Bedford magazine, wanting to know about elephants on the Gotham property in the past.

Ms. Gracie said there was an elephant walk between the former Pinto farm (Gotham) and the Sweeney property.

Ms. Moore added that there should be a huge rock with a hook in it that the elephants were chained to.

Mr. LaRocca said the Titus (Dr. Newman) house is connected with elephants, and the HPC has tried, unsuccessfully, to get it designated in the past.

Ms. Moore said the Newmans' daughter (Fran Sweeney) is the owner now, so maybe she could be approached.

Ms. Gracie said she would look for an opportunity to talk with Ms. Sweeney.

The Chairman said the reporter wanted to know if elephants had been kept on the Gotham property.

(At this time, Supervisor Warren Lucas came into the conference room)

Other-stone walls

Supervisor Lucas asked what can be done to protect the Town's stone walls. Pointing out the condition of the wall across the street from Delancey Hall, he said that once a wall begins to fall apart, the stones are taken.

Ms. Gracie said a lot of capstones have been taken from walls on Keeler Lane, and now the walls are falling apart.

Ms. Moore said she had seen an article about a town in Vermont that has a law to protect stone walls.

Supervisor Lucas said he doesn't think the Town has anything on the books at present. Noting that the walls were mostly built by the WPA, he said more and more stones from the walls are being stolen and it would be extremely expensive to re-build them. The Supervisor asked the HPC to look into whether other towns have any sort of ordinance to protect stone walls and recommend something to the Town Board, adding that he would like to be able to at least levy a fine for taking the stones.

Ms. Gracie said she hoped that if there was some sort of law, people at least would know that they could be arrested or fined for taking the stones.

Ms. Moore stated that as part of designating Mills Road an historic road, the HPC will be looking to have the stone walls included in the protected area (on DEP property).

Supervisor Lucas remarked that the DEP would never go to the expense of re-building walls. He said he would like people to know that removing the stones is against a local law and they could be fined, although he was not sure how such an ordinance could be enforced.

Ms. Gracie suggested they check with South Salem and Bedford re laws to protect stone walls.

The Supervisor said he would like to have an article in the Town newsletter stating that people have been stealing stones from the WPA walls and if caught, they will be fined.

Ms. Moore said the Historical Society program for October will be about stone walls.

Ms. Gracie remarked that there are beautiful walls past the Taylor property on Keeler Lane.

Chairman Tuoti said he has a beautiful wall on his property, too.

John Malone commented that the walls on Keeler Lane weren't tossed together; the WPA built them with care.

Chairman Tuoti said the workers were masons, whereas the old farm walls are true rubble walls/just piled stones. He asked Mr. Malone to research stone wall protection ordinances, and Mr. Malone agreed.

The Chairman remarked that he attended a meeting in Scarsdale a few years ago, and he thought one of the towns or villages in lower Westchester had a stone wall ordinance. He said he will look into that also.

Refocusing HPC activities

Chairman Tuoti said he had felt the HPC was wandering around for a while, but now they have some specific projects to focus on. When those are completed, they should review the survey of potential historic landmarks that they compiled for the Comprehensive Plan Committee 3 years ago.

Other: potential Purdys historic district

Ms. Moore asked what the status of the district is.

The Chairman commented that he saw Judge Ralph Mackin that evening. The Judge asked him about the possible historic district, saying he was against the idea (Judge Mackin has property on lower Route 116).

Ms. Moore said most people in the Purdys hamlet are in favor, and others don't understand that it would not be the same as designating an individual house/property.

The Chairman asked who had been working on the district, and the secretary said it was Bruce Buchholtz.

Chairman Tuoti said he thought they had decided they were just going to designate an area where people want to be included and allow others to opt out.

Mr. Malone asked what the restrictions would be.

Ms. Moore answered that the purpose of establishing the district would be to protect the character/atmosphere of an area but not to prevent people from painting their houses or putting on additions.

Mr. LaRocca said the HPC had been struggling to come up with verbiage to cover an historic district.

Ms. Gracie said the concept needs to be defined more clearly.

The Chairman said the district boundaries can be adjusted. He will speak to Bruce Buchholtz and see if he has a file to turn over to the HPC.

Mr. Malone asked if 50% approval of property-owners would be required.

Ms. Gracie said she didn't know how an historic-district resident could be forced to maintain their property, especially if it was a financial hardship to do so.

Other-elephants (cont.)

Chairman Tuoti returned to the subject of the phone call about elephants in North Salem. He said he told the caller that he did not have information about it, but the Town Historian and/or the Historical Society might be helpful. The Chairman thought there might have been a Historical Society bulletin on the subject.

Ms. Moore said there was a bulletin on the circus and about a plane crash in the same farm's field.

The Chairman asked the others if they thought he should call the reporter back.

Ms. Gracie said that sometimes one does a lot of research to assist a reporter, and then the reporter uses very little of the information provided. She said she thought research on this subject would be interesting for the HPC.

Chairman Tuoti said he suspected the reporter was mainly interested in information about the owner of the property. He said he had given him phone numbers for Cynthia Curtis and Susie Thompson, so perhaps that was sufficient.

Approval of May 1 meeting minutes

Motion by: Linda Gracie

Seconded by: John Malone

All in favor

Next meeting: Tuesday, August 7 (no July meeting)

Motion to adjourn: Chairman Tuoti

Respectfully submitted,



Janice Will, Recording Secretary