

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 2, 2014
Delancey Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Debby Moore
John Malone
Linda Gracie
Marcia Rockwood
Francis Tuoti, Chairman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gail Pantezzi
Steve LaRocca

ALSO PRESENT: Susie Thompson, Town Historian
Janice Will, Recording Secretary

Chairman Francis Tuoti opened the meeting. Noting that the October meeting is scheduled for October 7, he said he would not be able to attend and asked the secretary to ask Gail Pantezzi (if she is available to attend) to chair the October meeting.

Update: Croton Falls Presbyterian Church

Marcia Rockwood said she e-mailed Reverend Hallundbaeck today, and he said he and some Church elders are interested in exploring historic designation further but must consult with the Presbytery, after which they will get back to the HPC. Ms. Rockwood noted that earlier on it had sounded as though the church might be sold.

Chairman Tuoti said that if the church were sold after being historically-designated, the new owners would really only be restricted in terms of the appearance of the exterior.

Debby Moore asked if someone hadn't said there is grant money available for churches.

Susie Thompson remarked that the church would have a better chance of getting grant money for restoration if it is a designated landmark, adding that it really needs the work done.

Update: cemeteries

Ms. Thompson said she has not had time to do anything about the cemeteries.

Chairman Tuoti asked what needs to be done.

Ms. Thompson said all the cemeteries need to be designated (one at a time or all together), adding that it won't be difficult because all the research has already been done by others. She said there is also a lot of time-consuming restoration work needed on the markers. She suggested that perhaps once they are designated, groups could be formed

to work on broken and fallen markers. She said she feels that the Mills Road and Cat Ridge Road cemeteries are in the worst shape/should be designated first.

Debby Moore asked why not designate all the cemeteries at once.

Ms. Thompson remarked that they could do this, and they'd only have to hold one public hearing that way. She said she will start gathering the research information available to write up the application.

The other HPC members present all expressed interest in helping Ms. Thompson.

Chairman Tuoti suggested that rather than re-write the background information on all the cemeteries for the application, Ms. Thompson could cite the sources directly.

Ms. Thompson noted that the Town owns all the cemeteries already, but the restoration work needed is very expensive if professionals are brought in. She said most of the stones in the Mills Road cemetery are very worn-down, and in the Cat Ridge Road cemetery many markers need to be stood back up/some are probably halfway buried.

The Chairman commented that stones that are no longer legible cannot really be restored.

Linda Gracie asked if the HPC would have any say in how the cemeteries may look if they designate them.

It was noted that some people like to decorate the markers of loved ones with a lot of different kinds of things.

Ms. Thompson said that if the Town didn't set any kind of restriction when they took the cemeteries over, it would be difficult to institute rules retroactively. She offered to see what Ward Hannaburgh, Highway Superintendent/Superintendent of Cemeteries, thinks.

Ms. Gracie said she already spoke to him, and he told her the Town has no say in the matter.

Ms. Thompson thought this was wrong as the Town owns the cemeteries, but she also thought instituting rules now might be very unpopular with people already tending graves.

John Malone asked if there are any size limitations on gravestones. He said there should really be some rules/marker height is commonly limited to 36 in. and even what materials may be used is often dictated. He was in favor of putting rules in place for future graves.

Ms. Thompson said there is a list of all the grave-owners. She will talk to Mr. Hannaburgh.

Ms. Moore asked if all the plot-owners for all the cemeteries would have to be notified of the public hearing, but Ms. Thompson said she didn't think so because the Town owns the cemeteries.

Chairman Tuoti wondered if plot-owners pay any kind of annual fee.

Mr. Malone said that people usually pay for perpetual care at the time when the plot is purchased. He added that it would not be difficult to set limits/make rules for cemeteries, and he noted that the Town could do so whether the cemeteries are landmarked or not. He wondered if there may be something already that they just don't know about.

Ms. Thompson commented that the Town's cemetery records are very poor. She will try to get some questions answered/see how the Town feels about historic designation of the cemeteries and send everyone a memo.

NYS Certified Local Government Program

The Chairman said that first the HPC should decide if they want to participate in the CLGP, and he asked for a couple of volunteers to work on changing the local law. Chairman Tuoti explained that participation does offer the opportunity to be eligible for grant money, but he wasn't sure what else it might do for the HPC.

Ms. Thompson said it seemed to her as though they lost interest the last time they looked into it/maybe the HPC doesn't want to bother. She said there is a little more stature accorded a State designation and added that there are just a few changes to the local law required.

Mr. Malone asked how the HPC would go about changing the local law.

Ms. Thompson explained that they would first ask the Town attorney to look at the changes being proposed, and then it would be sent to the Town Board.

Ms. Moore said she thought they had almost finished with the changes/they should continue on.

The secretary will send around Ms. Thompson's 2009 e-mail with the changes in the law.

Ms. Thompson said she didn't know if a more recent update from Julian Adams at State Parks & Rec would require further changes or not.

Ms. Thompson or Chairman Tuoti will forward the update letter from Mr. Adams to the rest of the HPC.

NPS Display/Rochambeau

Ms. Thompson said she e-mailed the others the most recent update on this project, and the talk by Jinni Jones at the Library will take place on October 5 as scheduled. Ms. Thompson said she asked someone at NPS for large copies of the final revisions of the art and text for the display which she hopes to have for October 5, and it was promised to her. She remarked that everything should be finalized by the end of the year.

Next Historical Study

Chairman Tuoti asked if the others felt there is enough to work on already, i.e. designation of the Town's cemeteries.

Ms. Thompson said there are a couple of houses in Town she would like to see landmarked, and Ms. Moore said she would like to designate the silos.

The Chairman said this could be looked into.

Ms. Gracie said she had one when she lived on Dingle Ridge Road; they really can't be used for anything, and it is a very big expensive job to paint them.

Ms. Thompson offered to speak to Barbara Howard of Chase Meadows Farm, but she also added that once designated, structures may not be taken down unless the owner is experiencing hardship in keeping/maintaining them.

Ms. Gracie suggested keeping the HPC's inquiries informal for the time being.

Other – Town Website

Susie Thomson passed around copies of an update she has worked on for the HPC section of the Town website, mainly bringing the list of historic landmarks up to date and removing the designation dates. She said Gail Pantezzi suggested inclusion of a lot more information, but people won't read long entries/she thought it best to keep it short.

Chairman Tuoti said a statement that further information is available should be sufficient for those who do want to know more.

Ms. Thompson asked how the HPC wants to handle pictures of historically-designated properties in the future/do they want to continue to commission drawings.

The Chairman remarked that it would be hard to know what to do with an ever-larger collection of framed pen-and-ink drawings.

Ms. Thompson suggested they consider just getting better-quality photographs, adding that she has struggled to figure out where to take a photo of Mills Road.

It was noted that the photograph of Apple Hill (Bloomer House) taken by Steve LaRocca is quite good.

Ms. Gracie wondered if the Weisblatts should be approached about designating their house on Mills Road.

She re-capped that the HPC will read the CLGP information re changes to North Salem's laws, think about designating local silos, and review the web page updates prepared by Susie Thompson.

Chairman Tuoti asked if the HPC wants to stop commissioning drawings in the future, and the group said they do.

It was thought that a book could be made up of photographs of North Salem landmarks.

Everyone thought Ms. Thompson's work for the web page was good.

Ms. Thompson said she would like to have better photographs/still needs one of Mills Road. A couple of the existing photographs are also too dark.

Ms. Gracie suggested someone she knows who does a lot of photography for realtors. She said Will Secor does excellent work and is not very expensive.

It was agreed to contact Mr. Secor about taking some photographs.

Ms. Moore commented that she has recently noticed historic district signs in Brewster or Southeast; she thought the signs were nice.

Someone said at least some of the districts are not newly-designated; only the signs are new.

Ms. Gracie said such signs do make one stop and look around.

To approve the minutes of the June 3 meeting minutes with one correction noted.

Motion by: Linda Gracie

Seconded by: John Malone

All in favor.

Next meeting: October 7

Secretary to see if there will be a quorum. Meeting to be moved to November 4 if there is no quorum for October.

Webpage update: cont.

Ms. Moore and Ms. Thompson will see if they have better photos of Spur Street Cottage and the Purdy Schoolhouse; otherwise, Will Secor will be contacted.

Chairman Tuoti asked if the landmarks' descriptions should include, Purdys, Croton Falls, Salem Center, etc.

Ms. Thompson said there is room to include that information/she will insert it, and she invited the HPC to look the paperwork over and let her know if anything needs to be changed/corrected.

To adjourn the meeting at approximately 6 pm.

Motion by: Linda Gracie

Seconded by: Debby Moore

All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,


Janice Will, Recording Secretary