

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
May 5, 2015
Delancey Hall**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gail Pantezzi
Marcia Rockwood

ALSO PRESENT: Amy Rosmarin, Town Board Member
Susie Thompson, Town Historian
Janice Will, Recording Secretary

PUBLIC HEARING:

Application for historic landmark designation of Cat Ridge Cemetery

Chairman Francis Tuoti opened the public hearing. He noted the presence of Amy Rosmarin of the Town Board and also that no members of the public were present.

The HPC members were all already familiar with the application, so the Chairman closed the public hearing and called for a motion.

To recommend to the Town Board that the Cat Ridge Cemetery/Baptist Church site be designated a North Salem historic landmark.

Motion by: Linda Gracie

Seconded by: John Malone

All in favor.

REGULAR MEETING:

Set date for public hearing re designation of western Mills Road

Amy Rosmarin acknowledged a suggestion from Gail Pantezzi re wording of the designation; Ms. Rosmarin consulted Roland Baroni who thought it better to keep the consistent wording that is normally used. She said that, also at Mr. Baroni's suggestion, she made a change in the proposed designation from "to the stone walls" to "to and including the stone walls". She read a draft resolution to the HPC.

Everyone approved of the wording of the draft resolution. It was noted that the next scheduled HPC meeting would be on June 2, 2015.

To hold a public hearing of the application for historic designation of western Mills Road on Tuesday, June 2, 2015.

Motion by: John Malone

Seconded by: Linda Gracie

All in favor.

Ms. Rosmarin gave the secretary a copy of the public hearing notice, and she said she will speak to Mills Road property-owners to make them aware of the public hearing. She said the secretary should send a copy of the public hearing notice to the DEP (Certified/Return Receipt Requested), as owners of the property.

It was agreed that the notice should be sent to both the property-owner address on file and also to the people Ms. Rosmarin has had dealings with about the proposed designation.

Ms. Thompson suggested holding the public hearing in the Annex, because a number of people may decide to attend the meeting.

Everybody thanked Ms. Rosmarin for her efforts in pursuit of the designation.

Croton Falls Presbyterian Church and NYS CLGP

Marcia Rockwood and Gail Pantezzi were absent; the Chairman said the items would remain on the agenda to be discussed in June.

Beyond the Gravestone

Ms. Thompson explained that this organization has been consulted by a group in Bedford to document and repair their gravestones. She said they offered to come to North Salem at no charge to look at Cat Ridge Cemetery, and John Malone met them.

Mr. Malone said they are from Storrs, CT and very knowledgeable. They proposed to do an assessment of the cemetery/see what needs doing for each stone and explained that repairs can be dealt with one at a time over a period of years if necessary to spread out the cost. Beyond the Gravestone also offers classes for up to 20 volunteers at a time to teach them how to clean and repair gravestones. Mr. Malone suggested that the HPC take these 2 steps first.

Ms. Thompson handed out copies of the BTG proposal, explaining that their assessment (including a report and photographs) will cost \$75 per hour, and they estimate needing 6 hours, so the total bill would be \$450. The class will run up to 4 hours/cost \$300. Ms. Thompson thought they should get the assessment report before committing to the course. She said the investment of \$750 investment would be worthwhile, adding that the HPC can use what they learn going forward/taking on additional cemeteries.

Chairman Tuoti was uncertain that this would come under the HPC's budget.

Ms. Thompson said it would, because the cemetery will be a Town historic landmark. She added that there is money in the HPC budget, and she would be willing to commit funds from the Historian's budget as well.

The Chairman asked how the HPC will access the funds to use, and Ms. Thompson explained that they will receive an invoice which will be submitted to the Town Board for payment.

Ms. Thompson stated that Bedford created a non-profit organization, which is how they raised the money to tend their cemeteries, but the NS HPC may find that they can reasonably right the over-turned stones and repair some, making the cemetery look much better without spending any more than the cost of the assessment and the class. She commented that the cemetery is in shameful condition, adding that well-tended cemeteries are less likely to be vandalized. She said the Lions Club is interested in helping and maybe some people from the Historical Society would help out as well as those HPC members with time to take the course and do the work.

Ms. Gracie said looking into this and learning how to fix up the cemetery is interesting.

Mr. Malone commented that some of those buried in the cemetery have descendants still living in Town.

Ms. Thompson asked if the HPC wants to think about the proposal/look at the Beyond the Gravestone website or go ahead and commit to the first step. She added that she thought they would have time to come now.

Mr. Malone said that was right, so they should vote to go forward.

Chairman Tuoti remarked that he felt the \$75/hour was very reasonable for professional advice.

Ms. Gracie said she didn't know where else the HPC would begin to do anything, adding that it is wonderful to have historic cemeteries but sad to see them neglected.

Ms. Thompson thought historic designation coupled with a professional assessment of what is needed in the cemetery might help the HPC apply for grant money.

To appropriate \$450, based on the estimate provided, to have Cat Ridge Cemetery assessed by Beyond the Gravestone.

Motion by: John Malone

Seconded by: Linda Gracie

All in favor.

Ms. Thompson said the HPC can go along when BTG comes to do their assessment; she will call and see when they are available. She noted that the Town Board has not officially designated the cemetery yet (meeting May 12), but it was reasonable to believe they will. She added that the HPC can try to preserve the cemetery/gain knowledge about caring for cemeteries even if Cat Ridge Cemetery is not designated.

The HPC discussed putting in for funds for both the assessment and the class at once, and Ms. Rosmarin offered to submit the estimate from BTG to the Town Board with a draft resolution.

The secretary asked if they couldn't just submit the bill with a voucher when it comes.

The Chairman was in favor of requesting funds for both things at once.

Ms. Thompson thought the HPC might like to see the report before they plan to go right ahead with the course. She added that they have the funds in their budget/they may simply submit the bill with a voucher and it will be paid.

Ms. Gracie said she looks forward to working on the cemetery project.

Ms. Thompson will let the HPC know when Beyond the Gravestone is available to come and do the assessment.

Historic Designation of 329 Mills Road

Ms. Thompson stated that Steve LaRocca (architect) is not in favor of designating the house.

Mr. LaRocca explained that the house at 329 Mills Road is not an example of a particular style or type of construction/is not really special. The house is quite nice, but not architecturally significant.

Ms. Thompson said the land is significant for having been part of the Thompson/Decker dairy farm, but she added that she does not know if the owners even want to have their property designated a landmark.

Ms. Gracie asked if it wouldn't be interesting as a general example of how houses were built in the late 1800's. She remarked that another house on Mills Road (the Dayton property/397 Mills Road) is quite interesting because it was a Sears house.

Ms. Thompson thought it was a Purdy design.

Ms. Rosmarin commented that she had heard that the wood in the basement of the house has numbers on it, perhaps indicating some kind of kit-construction like a Sears house.

Mr. LaRocca asked if Ms. Thompson checked the date of the house.

She said she thinks it is from the 1850's or 1860's, and she added that she will see if the Pooleys are really interested in historic designation or not.

Mr. LaRocca said the house was constructed by a local builder, but he is not sure if it was heavy-timber construction. He said he will think more about the house.

Purdys Hamlet

The secretary described an e-mail she received from Barbara Santorelli, explaining that she was distressed about the appearance of some signs and also some buildings right in the middle of the hamlet and wanted to know what could be done. One of the signs is scheduled to be cleaned up/repainted by the Historical Society, but the secretary did not know who is responsible for/put up the second sign.

Ms. Moore said one of the buildings is hers; the winter was hard on it and she is working to have it repaired.

The Chairman asked why Ms. Santorelli had written to the HPC.

The secretary explained that Ms. Santorelli thought maybe they could do something, but she had told her that the HPC does not make repairs/conduct clean-ups.

Ms. Moore said the Purdys Hotel and McKeel's Market buildings are also in disrepair. She added that she believes a sale of the Market building is in the works. Ms. Moore asked what the law says about maintenance of historic buildings.

Ms. Thompson said it states that the buildings/properties are supposed to be kept up/maintained in good repair.

Ms. Moore said the sign by the deli listing the businesses in the hamlet was made by a Purdys resident, Kate Bartsch. She said perhaps Ms. Bartsch would repaint the sign/change the information on it (there would be much less to list on such a sign now).

Chairman Tuoti said maybe they could just take the sign down if it looks bad and is out of date.

Ms. Moore said she will see if the Improvement Society will either take it down or update/repaint it.

The HPC discussed the appearance of some of the buildings in the hamlet.

Ms. Moore said she imagined the new owner of the Market building will eventually fix it up some and she (Ms. Moore) will take care of the Hotel. She added that the sale is a rumor/she does not know if it has actually been sold or not.

The Chairman said the HPC could send a letter to the current owner of the Market.

Ms. Moore stated that the owners of the Spur Street Cottage painted the bottom part of the porch white, but it was meant to be red. She asked if Francis will write to them, telling them they must either restore the red trim or request permission to change it.

Approval of April 7 meeting minutes

Motion by: Linda Gracie

Seconded by: John Malone

All in favor.

Other

The Chairman asked to be reminded what the wording change was that had been recommended for the Historic Roads law.

Ms. Thompson said that she most recently suggested just using the phrase "previous inhabitants" (having previously suggested "native Americans/pre-Columbian explorers"), where it currently reads "Celts/Irish Monks".

Everyone agreed that "previous inhabitants" was the best choice.

Chairman Tuoti thanked Ms. Rosmarin again for her work on Mills Road, commenting that she had made a big effort.

Ms. Rosmarin said she was glad to do it/enjoyed going out and meeting the people who live on Mills Road.

The Chairman said he was pleased with the wording of the designation.

Ms. Thompson agreed, saying it seemed to answer all the objections received.

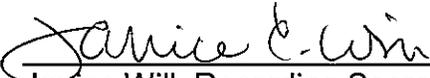
Chairman Tuoti asked how the Town could repair the section of stone wall across the street from Town Hall, and Ms. Gracie answered that she assumed they would need the permission of the DEP.

Next meeting/public hearing: June 2, 2015.

To adjourn at approximately 6 pm.

Motion by: Linda Gracie

Respectfully submitted,



Janice Will, Recording Secretary