

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
June 2, 2015
Delancey Hall**

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

MEMBER ABSENT: Steve LaRocca

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

PUBLIC HEARING:

Application for historic designation of Western Mills Road

Chairman Francis Tuoti opened the public hearing. He noted the presence of Amy Rosmarin of the Town Board.

Ms. Rosmarin said she brought a copy of a resolution for the Town Board (in the event that they accept the HPC recommendation and vote to make the historic designation).

Gail Pantezzi asked to read the resolution and said that if there were no comments, the public hearing could be closed.

There were no comments or questions.

To close the public hearing.

Motion by: Gail Pantezzi

Seconded by: John Malone

All in favor.

REGULAR MEETING:

To recommend to the Town Board that the western section of Mills Road be designated a North Salem historic road.

Motion by: Linda Gracie

Seconded by: Debby Moore

All in favor.

Ms. Rosmarin said she spoke to nearly all the people living along Mills Road (from Bogtown Road to Titicus River Road), and everyone was happy about the designation. Linda Gracie asked if the DEP had been heard from, and Ms. Rosmarin said no.

Chairman Tuoti thanked Ms. Rosmarin for all her work to help get Mills Road designated a historic road.

Ms. Rosmarin gave the Chairman a draft of a letter to be sent to the Town Board, recommending historic designation of western Mills Road and said she would e-mail it to the secretary.

Croton Falls Presbyterian Church

Marcia Rockwood said her last note from Reverend Hallundbaek stated that an internal group of church members interested in historic designation of the church had been formed, but they needed to speak to the Presbytery before going ahead with any pursuit of historic designation of the church. Ms. Rockwood recently sent a note stating her desire to help the church.

The Chairman said the HPC will wait to hear from Ms. Rockwood if there are any updates/changes.

NYS Certified Local Government Program

Ms. Pantezzi said she has not been able to work on this project for the past 3 weeks. She stated that Julian Adams of the State thinks the HPC's proposed changes to the local law are in line with what the State is looking for. She said she will draft a letter to the Town Board and attorney Roland Baroni and send it around to the HPC via email for comments.

When the contents of the letter have been agreed upon, Ms. Pantezzi will email it to the secretary who will print it for the Chairman to sign.

Chairman Tuoti stated that he was very glad Ms. Rosmarin had suggested splitting the historic designation of Mills Road into 2 sections/it had worked out well that way.

Ms. Rosmarin remarked that a third short section, from the dam to Main Street, is still undesignated.

Debby Moore thought this last section should be designated also.

The Chairman asked Ms. Rosmarin if she will look into this, and she said she will.

The Chairman asked Ms. Moore to help Ms. Rosmarin, because she knows the people who live there.

Cat Ridge Cemetery

Susie Thompson suggested that in the future, any time the HPC has a recommendation before the Town Board, someone from the HPC should attend the meeting/be available to answer questions. She then said the assessment by Beyond the Gravestone is done/they are working on their report now. Ms. Thompson stated that the \$450 estimate is the actual cost of the assessment/report. She added that BTG put some gravestones down flat on the ground that are broken or otherwise in danger of falling, and she asked the Highway Department to be careful when mowing the grass. She suggested that if the HPC is satisfied with the report, she can set a date for the BTG course.

Ms. Pantezzi asked how the Highway Department is about mowing and weed-whacking.

Ms. Thompson remarked that they are good but always in a hurry/weed-whacking has probably caused some of the damage..

Ms. Pantezzi said she had noticed some damage from snow-plowing. She went on to say that there is no maintenance of Town-owned landscaping and buildings, and the appearance of both is a disgrace. Ms. Pantezzi stated that the Town needs to spend the money necessary to properly take care of buildings and landscaping and added that someone should speak to the Highway Department people who do mowing and plowing about the need to work carefully.

Chairman Tuoti thought it inappropriate for the HPC to say anything to the Town about this, adding that it is the Highway Superintendent's responsibility.

Ms. Pantezzi said someone needs to make sure work is done properly/a list of what is being done wrong should be made for the Superintendent. She suggested speaking with Supervisor Lucas/Town Board members about maintenance of Delancey Hall and Cat Ridge Cemetery, both historic landmarks/appropriate for the HPC to bring up.

Ms. Moore suggested asking Ms. Rosmarin to raise the subject, but the Chairman thought they should have specific points to raise first.

Ms. Thompson said the cemetery may be an opportunity/she told Highway Superintendent Ward Hanaburgh that she hopes Doug Bleakley will be well enough to attend the BTG course. She added that she does not think the problem is that Highway Department employees don't care what they do; it is just that there are not enough of them to work more carefully.

Ms. Pantezzi said it is a maintenance issue and Warren Lucas is Town Supervisor/he is the person to speak to.

Ms. Gracie said she understood Ms. Pantezzi's point, but it is difficult to work in a cemetery full of stones, and the HPC should go forward with a positive attitude.

Ms. Moore said she thinks the cemeteries, triangles, etc. are done by young summer help and not the fulltime Highway Department people.

Ms. Gracie added that expense is an issue also; for example, the Town no longer plants flowers. She said some of the Town buildings are to be renovated.

Ms. Thompson said that neither Lobdell House nor the Annex is a historic landmark, but the condition of both is appalling.

Ms. Pantezzi said she came and scrubbed 2 of the campus signs clean herself because they looked so bad.

Ms. Thompson said she thought the Town was considering changing from the current cleaning company to a maintenance person, and she asked Ms. Rosmarin if this was correct.

Ms. Rosmarin said there has been talk about changing to another service.

Ms. Gracie said the HPC should take time to really think about the concerns they have and how they can be effective by making comments.

Ms. Pantezzi said she brought the subject up because BTG said stones in Cat Ridge Cemetery were damaged by weed-whacking.

Ms. Thomson said that is only part of it; there was no maintenance at all for years, and there has been vandalism as well.

Ms. Pantezzi remarked there is a right way to do weed-whacking.

Ms. Rockwood said maybe the course will be a positive way to bring people together and learn about care of the cemetery, or information from the course can be shared with others who do not actually attend.

Mr. Malone said the weed-whacking damage to the gravestones may have occurred years ago/they should not seem to be blaming Mr. Bleakley.

Chairman Tuoti stated that once the date for the course is set, Ward Hanaburgh should be asked to send someone from Highway to attend and the HPC should prompt Beyond the Gravestone to mention weed-whacking and other practices that may be damaging.

Ms. Thompson said there is not a lot of grass in Cat Ridge Cemetery; she has seen cemeteries where grass has been replaced with ground cover like ivy that doesn't require mowing. She said maintenance of Town buildings/properties is a serious issue, but she does not feel the HPC should take it on.

Ms. Pantezzi felt that the HPC could make statements about the care of Delancey Hall because it is a historic landmark, and she pointed out that they did write a letter about the Cable Barn, although nothing came of it. She noted the neglect of plantings around Delancey Hall and added that the new meeting building will require a lot of maintenance.

The Chairman said the HPC must really limit their comments to historic landmarks.

Ms. Pantezzi said they can start by stating their concerns for Delancey Hall and the Cable Barn.

Ms. Rockwood asked if Lobdell House is a historic landmarks.

Ms. Thompson replied that neither Lobdell House nor the Annex is, and it is unlikely they ever will be designated landmarks.

Ms. Rockwood remarked that the Town buildings should be maintained whether they are landmarks or not.

The Chairman agreed, but felt it was not the place of the HPC to bring it up.

Ms. Pantezzi stated that when she raises issues with the supervisor, she expresses her concerns and also asks how she can help.

Ms. Thompson thought the letter should go to the Town Board and not only to the Supervisor.

Ms. Rosmarin suggested some HPC members come to the Town Board meeting when maintenance is to be discussed.

Ms. Moore suggested writing to the Town Board to ask to be put on the agenda.

Ms. Gracie thought the HPC should meet to walk around and see exactly what they want to say to the Town Board.

Chairman Tuoti thought that would help and also suggested taking photographs of problem spots.

Ms. Pantezzi offered to take photographs.

Ms. Gracie asked if there is a buildings and grounds line in the Town Budget.

Ms. Rosmarin said there are some line items like that; she added that part of the problem with having anything done is that the Town is forced to pay prevailing wage which drives the cost of jobs way up.

The Chairman reiterated that it is not up to the HPC to worry about what the expense of maintenance of landmarks will be; they can submit photographs and state that these buildings have been neglected/ask that they be taken care of. He asked if Ms. Pantezzi would head up a group of HPC members to have a look.

Ms. Pantezzi asked if Ms. Thompson would look into budget lines for maintenance.

Ms. Pantezzi suggested the HPC take a half hour before their next meeting to walk around and look at the condition of all 3 buildings on the Town office campus.

Ms. Rockwood commented that the past 2 winters have been brutal which would contribute to maintenance needs.

Ms. Pantezzi didn't disagree, but she said maintenance needs to be kept up to prevent even bigger problems. She stated that rain water falls 3 stories from the roof/down the back of the Cable Barn because there are no gutters/leaders (because the Town Supervisor is opposed to them on all buildings), the water splashes back up against the building, and the doors are rotted away at the bottom as a result.

Chairman Tuoti asked Ms. Pantezzi to organize a group to look at the Cable Barn and Delancey Hall (and also Lobdell House and the Annex if she wants to) and take photographs. He asked Ms. Rosmarin to get the HPC on a Town Board meeting agenda.

Age of Mills House

Ms. Thompson said the listed date of 1726 is wrong and needs to be corrected, adding that there are no houses standing from that time. She remarked that most of the land in the vicinity was leased at that time/no one leasing it would have built such a grand house. Ms. Thompson noted that architects think the house was probably built in the 1780's with additions up to the early 1800's, and she would like to do more research.

Ms. Pantezzi suggested that someone named Tanya Werbizky at the NYS Preservation League would be helpful.

Ms. Thompson said there is no documentation in the Mills House file to support the 1726 date (or any other date), and she would like to look into getting the right date.

Ms. Moore said she had always heard that the Thaddeus Crane House is the oldest one in Town.

Ms. Pantezzi stated that another opinion is needed and suggested calling the State, the Westchester Historical Society, etc. for assistance. She wondered if the owner of the property would hire a consultant.

Ms. Thompson said she will email the architect's comments to the HPC members and also look into having someone else look at the house.

329 Mills Road

Ms. Thompson said this property should be taken off the agenda; the owners are not interested in historic designation.

Approval of May Meeting Minutes

Motion by: Linda Gracie

Seconded by: Debby Moore

All in favor.

Next Meeting: July 7, 2015

To adjourn at 5:50 pm.

Motion by: John Malone.

Respectfully submitted,


Janice Will, Recording Secretary