HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
March 1, 2016
Delancey Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: **John Malone**
Debby Moore
Gail Pantezzi
Marcia Rockwood
Steve LaRocca
Francis Tuoti, Chairman

MEMBER ABSENT: **Linda Gracie**

ALSO PRESENT: **Susie Thompson, Town Historian**
Jeanette Gerfin, Croton Falls Presbyterian Church
Janice Will, Recording Secretary

Chairman Francis Tuoti opened the meeting and welcomed Jeanette Gerfin to the meeting.

Historic Designation of Croton Falls Presbyterian Church
Susie Thompson explained that the discussion would be a follow-up to a meeting she and Marcia Rockwood had with Pastor Hallundbaek a while ago.

Jeanette Gerfin said interest in historic designation was precipitated by the possibility of applying for grant funds to repair the church. She explained that the church/congregation is small but solvent; they would like to have the church exterior painted, but the estimated cost is more than they can manage without going into reserve funds which they may not use. She commented that the pastor has said it is less than 50% likely that the Hudson River Presbytery would support historic designation. Ms. Gerfin asked the HPC if they thought hisitoric designation was possible for her church.

Ms. Thompson said she did not think there would be any problem, but she added that the HPC can't help with getting grants. She noted that Gail Pantezzi attended a seminar on grants, but it was very general.

Ms. Pantezzi said she learned that it is difficult to get grant monies for historic preservation; there is a better chance of getting some sort of local funding (individual or foundation), than from the State. She said the State has a very limited amount of money available for historic designations, and Croton Falls Presbyterian Church would be very unlikely to receive any of it, as would any other historic landmark in Town. Ms. Pantezzi remarked that individual fund-raising among local people with the wherewithal and the interest would be more successful. She asked Ms. Gerfin if the congregation owns the church and if they are a certified non-profit organization.

Ms. Gerfin said the Presbytery owns the church and they are a certified non-profit organization. She added that her church would be interested in applying for anything they might be eligible for and asked if the church would need to be a State-designated landmark in order to be eligible for funds.

Ms. Pantezzi said that was correct, although she didn't know anything specific about funding for church groups. She asked Ms. Rockwood if she knew anything about it.

Ms. Rockwood said the original memo from Cynthia Curtis indicated that there was funding available in 2014. Ms. Curtis said she spoke to someone at the New York Landmarks Conservancy, which administers 2 matching grant programs for religious institutions.

John Malone asked if the Landmarks Conservancy is a State organization.

Ms. Pantezzi said she did not think so.

Ms. Gerfin asked what level of historic designation would be required.

Ms. Pantezzi and Ms. Rockwood both said they did not know what the requirements would be/Ms. Gerfin would have to look into it.

Ms. Thompson remarked that the church would need a benefactor's help to get a matching-funds grant.

Ms. Gerfin said the church does have its reserve fund; the Presbytery might allow some of it to be used for a matching grant. She explained that a new furnace would cost $9,000 and the exterior painting would be $20,000; there is $50,000 in the reserve fund. She explained that they are just looking ahead to things they would like to do.

Ms. Pantezzi asked if the church was just beginning to feel out where sources of help may be.

Ms. Gerfin said they were. She explained that the pastor keeps at it, and he asked her to follow up with the HPC to see what she could find out.

Ms. Thompson thought church leaders would want to know how much landmark status would limit the church in terms of what could be done in the event of a sale.

Ms. Gerfin said she spoke to the head of the Mahopac Landmarks Preservation group about the Walter Brewster house. Her understanding of the North Salem law was that a structure could even be demolished.

Ms. Thompson said that was true, under certain conditions.

Ms. Gerfin said the Presbytery is concerned as to what they may do with the building. She added that the woman in Brewster told her that under State and National landmark laws, almost anything may be done within reason.

Ms. Thompson said the North Salem law is much stricter than the national one.

Ms. Gerfin said she wanted to know about when demolition would be permitted.

Ms. Pantezzi stated that no one on the HPC has researched church properties specifically and noted that there is reluctance within Ms. Gerfin's church group to pursue historic designation. Ms. Pantezzi suggested that Ms. Gerfin speak to someone at the State level (Linda Mackie); perhaps she would be given examples/models to look at.

Ms. Gerfin asked if anyone knew if it would be necessary to research the original color of the church before having it painted (it is white now).

Ms. Pantezzi replied that if the church were to be historically-designated now, the designation would include its current color, unless someone wanted to look into the original color.

Ms. Gerfin said the people at her church are of the belief that historic designation only applies to the front of structures.

Ms. Pantezzi said that was not strictly speaking true, but the front façade is the most important part. She went on to say that sometimes changes must be made, under which circumstances the HPC would help people try to find appropriate changes in an effort to preserve as much of the façade as possible. Ms. Pantezzi stated that landmark status under the local law provides the best protection, not State or national designation, but it also requires the approval of the HPC to make changes in color or materials.

Ms. Pantezzi thought Ms. Gerfin should work with the church hierarchy to see where else they might get funding.

Ms. Gerfin said they have done that; she came to the HPC for understanding of the limitations/requirements of North Salem historic designation.

Ms. Thompson commented that very few requests for alterations/changes have been denied; the HPC works with landmark-owners to make appropriate changes.

Ms. Rockwood noted that several changes were made at the Farmer and the Fish.

Ms. Gerfin asked, for example, if installation of a handicapped entrance ramp would be permitted.

Steve LaRocca said that would have to be allowed and could be done appropriately.

Ms. Gerfin asked if the church would need the HPC's permission to have the exterior painted.

Ms. Pantezzi stated that to paint the church the same color or make repairs, the HPC would not need to be consulted; a change of color or material would require a Certificate of Appropriateness application.

Ms. Gerfin remarked that the church definitely needs to be painted and asked what the HPC thought about its appearance.

Ms. Thompson agreed that the church needs painting, but the HPC would not require that it be done. She went on to say that the church is lovely inside, although interiors are not part of historic designations.

Ms. Pantezzi said that if a building is landmarked and then neglected, there could be a penalty levied, although that has never happened. She added that if there is hardship, it is considered differently. She said it will be critical to the future of the church to find sources of funding; old buildings are expensive to maintain/there is less public funding available every year.

Ms. Rockwood asked if finding a local benefactor and matching funds would be a more practical way to go than applying for grants.

Ms. Pantezzi said she thought it would be best to speak to Linda Mackie at the State and someone at the Landmarks Conservancy and explain that she is inquiring about help for a church.

Ms. Gerfin said that the contractor she has spoken to painted the Walter Brewster house for free; her church has a few pledges totalling $12,000, so she might see if he would be willing to take that amount.

Ms. Thompson said the HPC will help if the church decides to pursue historic designation.

Chairman Tuoti asked if the church has tried to increase its membership.

Ms. Gerfin said they have attracted some people, although they are not Presbyterian/do not join the church. She commented that there are much larger Presbyterian churches down-County.

The Chairman suggested that the prestige of being a designated historic landmark might help the church get a grant somewhere.

Ms. Gerfin agreed, saying she had wanted to hear what the HPC had to say about it. She thanked the HPC for their time and left the meeting.

<u>Appearance of Mills Road</u>
Chairman Tuoti said he had not yet spoken to Highway Superintendent Ward Hanaburgh, but he noticed that the stones along the side of the road are none too neat.

Ms. Thompson thought they were probably being kicked loose by cars.

The Chairman said the same stones have been used along sections of Starr Ridge Road in Southeast, within a designated historic district, so it seems to be an accepted use.
Ms. Pantezzi said it is probably the easiest solution.

Mr. Malone said he had noticed that the stone on Mills Road is darkening.

Ms. Pantezzi thought it would still be good to speak to Superintendent Hanaburgh, because Mills Road is not the only problem. She said the Balanced Rock has experienced a lot of erosion around it, and the Cable Barn is due for renovation but she does not know what the status is (both are Town-owned landmarks).

Ms. Thompson said Superintendent Hanaburgh should also be asked what can be done about Baxter Road (historic), which is becoming very muddy and wider in the area where people park near the kennels/the NS Open Land Foundation property.

Ms. Pantezzi said it is hard to tell whether people are parking on the Town road or on the property at the side.

Ms. Thompson said the NSOLF did surveys recently, so she will ask Gloria Stein about it.

Mr. LaRocca and the Chairman both thought the Highway Department might put down a border of stones for ballast like those on Mills Road.

Mr. LaRocca also thought a gravel parking area could be put on the NSOLF property.

Ms. Moore thought employment of top soil and seed would be better, but Ms. Pantezzi said that has been tried and failed/it washes out.

Mr. Malone commented that it is hard to maintain dirt roads/Turkey Hill Road is also in bad shape.

Chairman Tuoti said he will speak to the Superintendent.

Ms. Rockwood said the erosion around the Balanced Rock sounded most critical to her, and Ms. Thompson agreed.

Ms. Pantezzi thought Superintendent Hanaburgh might be unaware of the conditions at the Balanced Rock/Cable Barn because Highway doesn't use the Cable Barn any more.

<u>Repairs to Delancey Hall Side Door</u>
Steve LaRocca handed out sketches of 2 different options drawn on photographs of Delancey Hall; a small hood/roof over the door and a covered porch including both the door and the window next to it. He explained that he included the window under the porch for scale. Mr. LaRocca also noted that it was hard to make everything look right, because the house is not straight.

Ms. More said she liked the porch.

Ms. Thompson remarked that Superintendent Lucas had asked that the stone step be protected because rain/snow drip onto it and freeze. She noted that a porch would help with that.

Mr. LaRocca said a gutter and leader could be put on. He added that he tied the side window into the porch because the window is out of alignment with the door and also smaller than the other windows. He noted that installation of a full gutter leading to the existing downspout would manage the water.

Everyone agreed that covering/obscuring the window was a good idea, and also that the porch mimics the appearance of the front porch.

Ms. Thompson asked if the HPC wanted to recommend the porch; she will fill out a C of A form.

Chairman Tuoti asked if architectural drawings will be needed, and Mr. LaRocca said they will be.

Ms. Pantezzi thought the uneven appearance could be camouflaged to some degree with landscaping. If the hood is to be used, she would suggest putting down some sort of mat to prevent people from slipping on any ice.

Mr. LaRocca reiterated that a little gutter could be put on/he will look into that.

Ms. Moore said she recently had a new porch roof put on and new gutters all around the house; she thought the gutters had been forgotten/not put on because she could not see them.

Mr. LaRocca said that was normal when putting gutters along something level. He added that the copper contrast will make a gutter more noticeable, but he can try to tuck it in.

Ms. Pantezzi asked if a synthetic product (Bolar) would be used for the posts to prevent rot.

Mr. LaRocca said he would recommend that a composite wood like Bolar be used.

Ms. Thompson will email the Supervisor about the HPC's thoughts on the 2 types of door cover, and the secretary will see that he gets copies of the drawings.

<u>To recommend to the Town Supervisor that a covered porch be constructed for the side door of Delancey Hall as designed by Steve LaRocca.</u>
Motion by: ***Debby Moore***
Seconded by; ***John Malone***
All in favor.

<u>Certified Local Government Program</u>
Ms. Pantezzi stated that everyone has been focused on how to get certified/qualify and changing the local law for compliance. The HPC first considered applying for the program in 1989 and made changes to the local law in 1995. Last year, the State changed the model law, and the local law was changed again. Ms. Pantezzi said it is good for the Town to be in line with the best practices legally, and now all the HPC members have submitted their resumes/personal histories. Currently, the Town Board interviews people who are

interested in serving on boards, commissions, etc., but has no resume requirements for eligibility. The CLGP also requires a survey of the Town's historical properties, and that was done in 2011.

Ms. Pantezzi said she has now read to the end of what is required for CLGP certification, and there are big obligations. She explained that the CLGP is a Federal (National Park Service) program administered by the State. She said she is not sure the HPC should participate, and no other group in Town has Federal oversite. Ms. Pantezzi said the Town Supervisor has to sign an agreement/contract re what the Town would do to support the mission; three-quarters of HPC members must attend workshops and seminars annually; an annual report must be sent to NPS including a lot of detail about how the HPC has promoted historic preservation to the public and any issues that have arisen; historic properties must be re-surveyed/inventoried every 5 years. Ms. Pantezzi said that after all that, if the NPS is not satisfied with what the HPC has been doing, the certification may be revoked. She remarked that the benefit of certification is small, and there is really very little grant money to be had; it would take many hours to write up a CLGP-approved proposal for funding, only to receive a small portion of the amount needed (if anything), and she thinks it would be better to work locally.

Ms. Thompson thanked Ms. Pantezzi for reading through all the paperwork and alerting everyone before the HPC went further.

Ms. Pantezzi said she felt disappointed, although she did not feel anything had been lost; the changes to the law were good, for example.

Mr. LaRocca added that some of the CLGP goals are good (annual report, updating inventory periodically, education, etc.).

Ms. Pantezzi said she thought they had learned much from the experience of meeting some of the CLGP requirements.

Ms. Moore commented that she feels the North Salem HPC is ahead of other towns in terms of sites designated.

Ms. Pantezzi said she made a call to the Yorktown Landmark Preservation Commission recently, but the chairman has not called back yet (she thinks they are certified); they have 14 historic properties, whereas North Salem has about 30. She added that the NS law is substantial also. Ms. Pantezzi said she would like to explain to Supervisor Lucas that the HPC no longer wants to pursue CLGP certification and why.

Everyone thanked Ms. Pantezzi for her work.

Chairman Tuoti offered to go with Ms. Pantezzi to see the Supervisor, but she said she will do it alone.

The Chairman asked if the HPC should wait to vote about dropping their pursuit of certification.

Ms. Pantezzi was in favor of voting at this meeting.

To cease pursuit of CLGP certification, due to possible excessive Federal demands and intervention and potential costs.
Motion by: ***Debby Moore***
Seconded by: ***John Malone***
All in favor.

Other – Fund-Raising for Cat Ridge Cemetery Work
Ms. Thompson stated that Friday, March 4 is the Historical Society's party/fund-raiser, and 75 people will be attending. She said that after the party, she will see how much money is still needed. She added that although there is still no estimate for the restoration of the vault, the mason has suggested doing the work in stages.

Ms. Thompson pointed out that both the Historian's office and the HPC have money in their budgets, which they can use to repair some of the gravestones if they want to. She noted that over $3,000 has already been donated for the cemetery work. She said work is needed in the Vail's cemetery also.

To appoint Francis Tuoti as Chairman and Gail Pantezzi as Vice Chairwoman for 2016
Motion by: ***Debby Moore***
Seconded by; ***John Malone***
All in favor.

Next Meeting: April 5, 2016

To adjourn at 6:20 pm.
Motion by: ***Debby Moore***

Respectfully submitted,

Janice C. Will

Janice Will, Recording Secretary