

Historic Preservation Commission  
17 November 2014  
Building Department Conference Room  
Minutes

Present: Barry Benepe, chair; Michael Sullivan Smith, Susan Puretz, Stephen Shafer, Stefan Yarabeck  
Town Board Liaison: Bill Schirmer  
Secretary: Audrey Klinkenberg, Town Historian, Deputy County Historian  
Guests: Richard Frisbie, Neil Larson

The meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order by the chair, Barry Benepe.

1. Minutes of 20 October: It was moved by Steven and seconded by Michael that the minutes of October 20, 2014 be approved as written, Michael, aye; Barry, aye; Susan, aye; Stephen, aye. Unanimous.

2. Minutes of 30 October regarding the proposed 2015 Budget. It was moved by Michael and seconded by Susan that the minutes of the budget meeting of Oct 30, 2014 be approved as written. Michael, aye; Barry, aye; Susan, aye; Stephen, aye. Unanimous.

3. 2015 Budget

a. Barry reported that the line item placed in the budget for 2015 for the HPC is \$1,500; however, this town budget is still to be approved. Barry noted that there was a discrepancy between our request for 2015 (see the Oct. 30, 2014 minutes) and what the Town Board allocated to us.

b. Susan reported on her meeting with Supervisor Greg Helmsmoortel, who stated that \$1,500 has been allocated for 2015 for the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Helmsmoortel took a copy of the budget, prepared by the Commission, for review.

c. Revised 2015 Budget: Barry discussed possible changes to the Commission's proposed budget. For example:

1. the Commission plan for electronic data storage will have to be put on hold for 2015.
2. Regarding consultants: Barry has signed an agreement with Neil Larson which outlines the cost for his services at \$90.00 per hour plus travel time.
3. Regarding printing the survey: Michael reported that the Historic Resources Survey is now on-line and suggested that hard copies of the Survey do not need to be printed. Susan stated that the Building Department and the Tax Assessor office should have a hard copy.

d. Barry reported that presently the Commission has a budgetary balance of \$2,617 according to Julie the bookkeeper. Susan questioned that amount but indicated that the House Tour amount is \$2,173.70.

e. Discussion about the HPC special account. The money in the account, according to Bill, will remain in the account into 2015.

4. Priorities for 2015:

a) Susan recommended that one of the priorities for 2015 should be the updating and expansion of the Historic Resource Survey of the Town. The update should include structures that were not included in the 2005 survey but were considered to be historical. Barry indicated that it must be decided whether the Commission wants to update the survey. The discussion with Mr. Larson, would be to determine what grants might be available. Susan said that she believes that Jeanne Goldberg is willing to help write a grant.

b) A second recommendation is to include the village within the Historic Survey. Mr. Frisbie stated that SHPO would be able to fund the village to update their survey of the Historic District and add the Southside district to the survey.

c) The Honoring Historic Houses Event is a priority for 2015.

Mr. Larson arrived at this time, 7:50 pm.

d) Potential Designation of properties: Examples included: the ruins of the brickyard in Malden; the Thruway interchange; the railway overpass abutments in Mt. Marion over Old Kings Highway; the Herrick Bridge abutments, which are owned by the state.

e) Signage for various sites along the road.

f) Clarification of the status of the sites which the Commission has designated and the Town Board has rejected. Mr. Frisbie suggested that the Commission resubmit the rejected applications.

Stefan Yarabek arrived at this time, 7:55 pm.

5. Preliminary Discussion with Neil Larson on updating the Commission's Historic Resource Survey. Neil stated that he is not sure where to suggest beginning. He explained that his understanding was that he was coming to talk to the Commission about setting priorities and approaches to things the Commission might want to do. Some discussion followed about what the purpose of his invite was. Susan saw it more as beginning the ground work that will lead to getting a grant to update and expand the 2005 Historic Resource Survey. A conversation ensued about the survey and its methodology. Mentioned was that: each home had a state survey sheet; there were volunteers who visited each property, took pictures and wrote the descriptions; and the criteria used to initially identify possible candidates was the date the house was built –with a cut-off date of approximately 1945.

Further information included the fact that there are 155 properties in the survey. The houses involved had field surveys, only using the exterior of buildings. When the photographs were taken for the survey, the outlying buildings and even ruins were included.

Regarding the 2005 survey, Mr. Larson asked whether there is a data base for the Survey and Michael answered that he has a data base of the Surveyed houses, with section, block, lot numbers, address, etc which can be sorted.

Susan said that there is a list of every house built within the town before 1940 and each

property had a ranking assigned to it. Apparently, the only homes field verified were the homes which were selected (usually with a number 1 ranking).

It was mentioned that 1. there are two online ways of looking at properties, Google Earth and Bing, and that both are good for visualizing properties that are already identified, and 2. That the county web site has aeriels and property bundles.

### **Uses for the Survey**

Neil asked whether the Survey has been used to select properties for designation. The answer is no. It was noted that Town planning needs to have a handle on the whole context, looking at what has already been done and adding more thru maps and town assessor records to identify properties which were left out, classifying them and adding inventory of farmsteads or houses of a certain period, or commercial buildings.

### **Miscellaneous other points made were:**

- a. Surveys need to be updated every ten years, according to the State Historic people.
- b. Reconnaissance surveys are used to develop properties for designation.
- c. Neil noted that the State does not require owner consent for local or state designation. The state does not list anything not nominated to the National Register.
- d. Publication and public education are important. It was suggested that we map the roads and let people know how important their history is. Barry mentioned that there were non-public historic roads, e.g., Powdermill Road, Echo Hill Road, Yaeger Road and others, that needed to be documented.

### **Funding the project:**

About specific funding issues, Barry asked whether Neil would be able to identify possible income sources and Susan asked whether what Neil has said would be an introduction to a grant application. Susan inquired whether a CLG grant would preclude other grants, Neil said no. Stefan stated that the state likes to see combined applications, i.e. from joint municipalities Susan told Mr. Larson that she hoped he would be able to help the Commission find a grant.

Mr. Larson said there are only two possible sources, the CLG and NY Preservation League. Mr. Larson said the CLG is the best shot for a grant. Part of applying for a grant to do this and for the future, is to have the support of the Town Board.

Mr. Frisbie said that the Village Planning Board can hire consultants to assist with the issues of history.

Susan asked that Mr. Larson provide the Commission with the particulars for the grants that might possibly be available. Barry asked whether Mr. Larson could write the grant and be paid from it. Neil answered that the Preservation League wants the consultant to do the application.

Mr. Larson will do a little background checking to see what is to be done and, Mr. Shafer gave

Mr. Larson his copy of Volume 2 of the survey. Mr. Larson would like to see Vol. 1 to give him a handle on what might be done and Susan offered to loan her volume one to Mr. Larson.

Susan asked if the writing of the grant counts as in-kind hours. Mr. Larson thought that that time would not be counted. CLG will allow match with administrative costs, donated services, etc. Mr. Larson does not like to work with volunteers, as the work is not as complete as it could be. Mapping and photography might be done by a volunteer. Mr. Larson would discuss with the Commission how volunteers may be used.

### **The new survey**

The new survey would be a database, not looking like the Survey does today, more context orientated, historic and architectural, very comprehensive, pertinent information about the properties and historic integrity.

Mr. Larson mentioned the stages of a survey, a reconnaissance comes first, to look at everything, create a listing, classify the properties. With that information decisions can be made about the amount of information collected about a particular property.

Barry stated that it seemed as if the Commission was ready to ask Mr. Larson to develop a strategy for the Commission and the village, whatever entity is in charge.

Mr. Larson said that he would not be billing for this meeting. Mr. Larson left at 9:07 pm.

### **6. Other Old Business:**

None

### **7. New Business**

a. Susan told the Commission that Lifespring received some money as a memorial for one of its deceased members. Susan would like to see that Marti Randall get a new computer so she can use it to produce a book about the Winston Farm and would like the Commission to be able to receive money for this. There was some question as to whether such a grant could be made, but that will be handled once the fund is created.

Susan moved that the Commission open a Josh Randall memorial fund. This was seconded by Stephen Shafer. Michael, aye; Barry, aye; Susan, aye; Stephen, aye, Stefan, aye. Unanimous.

b. A motion of sympathy was extended to Stefan Yarabek on the death of his mother. Seconded by Susan. Michael, aye; Barry, aye; Susan, aye; Stephen, aye.

c. Certificate of Appropriateness (C of A) for a designated property. Stephen brought up the situation at his home, where a wall is collapsing and needs repair.

He asked whether a C of A to build a buttress to stabilize the wall was necessary. Stefan Yarabek stated that there is no need for a C of A to stabilize the wall. Barry suggested that documentation be brought to the next meeting so it would be available for review.

d. Honoring Historic Houses event: Susan reported about the meeting held earlier today by

the Honoring Historic Houses committee. The event has finally been formalized. It will occur on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> for the possible 300 owners of identified historic properties from the 2005 survey. It will go from 10-7 and include a tour of Barry's house, and a presentation and reception at SPAF at 4:00. The following Saturday, the displays that will be created for May 9th will be open to the general public. A preliminary letter is being sent out by Susan in the next week to the property owners in the 2005 Historic Resources Survey, asking for input on the event. More details to the Commission will follow.

Moved by Stephen and seconded by Stefan that the meeting be adjourned. Michael, aye; Barry, aye; Susan, aye; Stefan, aye; Stephen, aye. Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20.  
Audrey Klinkenberg