

Minutes of the Historical Preservation Committee

June 27, 2005, 7 pm to 10:30 pm

Members Present:
Venues Present:

Barry Benepe
Saugerties Town Board

Susan Walker
Saugerties Town Historian

Josh Randall

Bill Trumpbour

Michael S. Smith

Members From Other

Leanne Thornton,

Karlyn Knaust Elia,

Guests:

Eliner Trumpbour

Jeannine Ricketesen

Lee Walker

Pat Richards

Tad Richards

Peter Sinclair

Secretary for the meeting: Blanche Duffy

1. The meeting began with an announcement by Barry Benepe that the HPC had hired a new secretary – Blanche Duffy – who would be paid from the annual budget. Discussion ensued over the hiring of a secretary without the discussion and approval of the entire commission since an expenditure for salary would be made from the HPC budget. Since several questions were unanswered, i.e. salary, term, job description – a motion was made by Josh and seconded by Michael to table the appointment until the next meeting when Leanne will report on what the secretaries of the Planning and Zoning

Appeals Boards are paid and what are their job duties. Leanne also reminded the members that unused funds in the budget must be returned at the end of the calendar year, they cannot be carried over.

2. She also suggested that a tape recorder be purchased to record the meetings, particularly when important testimony or information is given during a meeting. The tapes would be archived for future reference. No immediate action was taken on the suggestion.

3. The minutes of the previous meeting were read. Minor corrections were made and Josh moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Michael.

Andrea Cunliffe

4. Barry read a letter he received from Ron Naar's sister regarding the uses of Winston Farms. Copy of letter attached.

Byrnes

5. Jeannine Ricketson was welcomed and she proceeded to give information on Burns Corners. She had a copy of a page from the 1875 Beers Atlas. The map shows Michael and John Burns owning property. John Burns was a veteran of the Civil war and moved to this area after the war. Michael already lived in the area.

Four corners – Route 32 North, Churchland Lane, Route 212 to Woodstock

The Germong House is now the Land and Sea Restaurant on 32/212.

NY Thruway wiped out much of Kings Highway, taken over by eminent domain.

Manhattan Hotel was destroyed. John Burns house was moved to Churchland Lane, now Tods house.

The location of the houses on a hand drawn map were from Pat Fuller's memory.

Michael interjected that the story is that Frances Woven was traveling from Kingston to Saugerties he had to cross the railroad tracks 5 times.

Barry did not believe that it was feasible to designate a Burn's Corner Historic district because so much of the road network, landscape and buildings had been eliminated by construction of the Thruway. .

Josh thought it would be good to incorporate the history into the designation of Augusta Savage Road.

Michael; Burns Corners not named in the Beers Atlas, it was named later. Hamlets existed around churches and schools. Why in the area around Winston Farms? Were there more houses on Niger Road?

Karlyn: 2 of the schools were moved prior to 1883 when the railroad came through.

Michael: 1963 lists Pine Grove School...why? Was there a congested population in an area that was historically a large farm community?

Eliner: whose farms were Parr is? Henry Kemps

Jeannine is going to have copies made of the backup material she used and a copy will be made part of the minutes.

6. The next topic of discussion was Opus 40. Karlyn opened the discussion with comments about the value of the thesis Kim Backer prepared for her Master's Degree.

Sensitive local landmark protection is crucial but does not guarantee that stonework will not be changed.

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Tod Richards, owner of Opus 40 was present as was Pat Richards and Lee Walker, the 3 of whom comprise the entire staff of Opus 40.

Opus 40 is already on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. The question was raised on how the HRC can help in it's preservation.

Tod discussed many of the current problems facing the landmark, not the least of which is money. The pools need to be cleaned, there are bulges in the walls, acid rain is affecting the outdoor sculptures, some of the stones need to be replaced. It is impossible

to move the sculptures indoors in the winter. But all of the problems get back to lack of money.

Discussion ensued about how to raise money to get the work done or to enlist volunteers to do the manual labor needed. Suggestions included: use of boy scouts – possibly an Eagle Scout project; perhaps request the fire department to help with the pools; obtain grants; run benefit concerts; contact Congressman Hinchey, contact Senator Bonacic; rent it for photo shoots; possibly sell the “stuff” in the pools to an organic farm? Tod said the Metropolitan Opera once showed some interest but nothing came of it.

Tod was requested to prepare a list of what needs to be done at Opus 40, with an estimate of the costs involved. Josh offered to assist in grant writing, and also said he would speak with person in the Parks Department in Washington, D.C. on his upcoming visit to try to assist.

Tod said the primary concern at present is the condition of the pools which will take a great deal of manpower to clean properly.

The HRC advised that they would do whatever they can to assist Opus 40 in its preservation since it is such a treasure for the town.

7. History Day is October 22, 2005. The public will be asked to bring in information, memorabilia, etc. on History Day and the members were requested to be present to evaluate what is brought in that day.

Karlyn in budget for Town Historian. Marie Post will come next time.

8. The discussion went to Winston Farms. The owners currently pay taxes of \$112,952 on the contiguous pieces. It is important for the Town to maintain this tax base in its budget. It is estimated that the owners are asking \$25 million for the 840 acres.

The issue of preservation easements was brought up and whether the value of the land could be reduced since there would be major restrictions on the use of the land. Leanne said it would be necessary to have a statewide resolution on easements.

When asked about designating Winston Farms at that meeting Michael said he was not yet comfortable with the amount of information he had and needed more on the history.

It was agreed that positive press is necessary for dealing with the Winston Farms issues.

Comment was made that the material Michael had sent out previously encapsulated the history of Saugerties.

Comments are summarized below:

Not much history on the quarrying done in the area. Ashokan quarried blue stone. Saugerties blue stone was shipped to New York City and ended up in the sidewalks there. Malden and/or Smith Landing Lane had a depot on the Hudson River and shipped the blue stone on barges. The stone docks were located primarily at Malden.

There were also ports in Glasco where the barges were loaded.

Many of the names of the quarries are no longer known. One was Goldrick on Ulster Landing Road.

In 1830 there was a kiln on Mower Mill Road.

Question was asked if Snyder Farm should be included in the Winston Farms designation. What about Wynkoop Cemetery? Include Nigger/Nigger/Road to Blue Mountain in the designation? In 1968 it was called Nigger Road – the Augusta Savage designation is recent.

Comment was made that Donald Trump has an option on Kukuk Lane, Ulster Landing. Rumor has it that he bought the Dietrich Farm property on route 32 for a 500 room hotel.

Letter from the Town Attorney, George Redder, was introduced regarding getting onto the Winston Farms. Owner Kilbride keeps increasing the conditions for access, adding one at a time possibly for the purpose of stringing out the actual consent to walk the property.

The members agreed that there is a need to walk the property of Winston Farms, look into the house. Discussion centered on various means of legally getting onto the property since the owners have been reticent to give permission for such a walk. The Town Historian can get Town approval to go on any property without the owner's consent if there is the probability of historical or archaeological significance. It is also possible for the Town Building Inspector to take someone onto the property in the course of inspection. Town Planning Board can enter property without permission. Leanne said she would look into whether the Town Board can approve a visit to the property by the HRC members without the consent of the owners. She has also been in contact with Nicholas Robertson of Pace University regarding means of getting onto the property without the owner's consent who said it was legal for the members to tag along with someone who does have permission.

Josh gave out a package including a map of the area Buffalo Road, #17.7 and the appropriate tax information of the homeowners. He pointed out a long, slender parcel about midway down on the map, .69 acre, owned by Joseph and Ann Dengler.

Map shows a road that goes from Snyder Farm to Lodge Road. Woodenspoon Road off Hommelville Road. Lodge Road dead ends into Buffalo Lane.

Barry repeated that Snyder Farms should be designated along with Winston Farms. Lane connects 2 farms. There is access to Winston Farms from Snyder Farms.

Discussion of designation included: New York City designates landscape for its own sake and allows designation for esthetical value, or can designate land around a building – even large parcels. Pawling has designated large tracts of land.

Barry introduced aerial photos he obtained from Alvah Weeks, of the building department, which show a second cemetery on the Wynkoop property, and a barn south of the mansion on Winston Farms.

The need for additional information was discussed as was the difficulty in tracing the history of the property. What were the original boundaries?

Pat DiPerno, Byrnes Corners

Letter from Patricia DeFerio was read and is in possession of Barry. (Barry please make copies to be included in minutes.)

Some members think there is enough information to designate immediately while others want to obtain more. Josh wants to go over to the county offices and pull up the transfer deeds. Meals and Hay patent important, have original Beaverkill 200 to 250 acres. Many large lots to be traced.

Bill explained that Kingston Commons was formed prior to 1804 when the land was divided to give land to troops who served in the Revolutionary War. Prior to the Revolutionary War land was obtained by grants from King George. Land was also given to officers from the French and Indian war which overlaps Winston Farms.

Barry went over what would be necessary to designate property and would like a public hearing on the designation in the very near future. Comment was made that the Winston Farms house looks like a Myron Teller house but the architect is not known for certain.

Feola
9. Barry and Peter visited the *Feola* house at 501 Kings Highway. Peter does not agree that the house was built in 2 sections even though it is not a symmetrical house. But the face stone looks identical on both sides of the house.

10. Training manuals were given to members, Daniel McKay will teach on a Monday.

11. Others comments during the evening:

With Congressman Hinchey opposed to a casino it could be held up in congress for several years.

Don't see Wilmot doing anything with Winston Farms without a casino.

Buyers are looking for 40 to 60 unit buildings in Ulster and Greene Counties. Over the past 4 years many properties have sold for as much as 4 times the original purchase price. In a real estate office of 10 agents each receives at least 2 queries of interest in the area per week.

No one wants to see a casino on Winston Farms but there will almost certainly be something going there. Need to give this some thought.