

MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MONDAY, JULY 18, 2011
7 P.M
LARGE ROOM, SENIOR CITIZEN'S CENTER
MARKET STREET

Present: Josh Randall, Michael Sullivan Smith, Susan Puretz, Myles Putman, Barry Benepe

Ex Officio: Audrey Klinkenberg, Town Historian

Liaison: Jimmy Bruno, Town Councilperson

Guests: E. Mark Smith, David Kaminsky, Elizabeth Stegmayer, John Stegmayer, Marian Vail, Allen Bryan, Ann Krupp, Lowell Thing, Peter Roberts (the last two are members of the Friends of Historic Kingston) Gil Hales, Bob Karcy, Walter Hegener.

The meeting was called to order by the chair, Josh Randall at 7:10.

1. Approval of June 20, 2011 Minutes, moved by Susan Puretz, seconded by Michael Sullivan Smith. Action: Josh, aye; Michael, aye; Susan, aye; Myles, aye; Barry, aye. Unanimous approval.

2. Opus 40 "Public Conversation". The Town of Saugerties has declined a \$400,000 matching grant from New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, sponsored by the U. S. Department of Environmental Preservation.

The Committee to Create the Opus 40 Museum continues to function as a separate entity from the town. According to an email received by Josh, the Committee has received their not-for-profit status.

The Historic Preservation Commission seeks to designate the 4 lots of land on Harvey Fite's Opus 40, which were not previously designated, i. e. the house, the museum, 2 quarries and a woodlot, (the view shed) of Harvey Fite's Opus 40.

Josh opened the floor for comments from the assembled group. Alan Bryan asked for a definition of the words "View Shed". Josh responded that it means the view and the surrounding area .

Lowell Thing stated that he believed that the Commission is doing this for more than the town of Saugerties, it is being done for the whole area. Opus 40 is an integral part of the quarrying arena and very unique . Josh stated that Opus 40 is one of the three major attractions to the town of Saugerties. The others major attractions are the Esopus Bend Conservancy and the

Winston Farm. Mrs. Stegmayer added that the Saugerties Lighthouse is also a tourist attraction.

Mrs. Stegmayer, who lives near Opus 40 stated that there are people coming from New York City and even from foreign shores. The area should be the concern of more than just our town, at least at the county level. Josh responded that he hoped that what we are doing may attract money from the state and even federal grants. A question was asked as to whether we might be able to reapply for the money from the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, SHPO. This will have to be a decision made at a later point in time, after the Opus 40 Museum is officially sanctioned by both the State and Federal Governments.

Jimmy Bruno stated that the Opus 40 Board may be doing just that. Bruno indicated that the Committee to Create Opus 40 Museum, will probably attempt to revitalize the grant through their auspices.

David Kaminsky stated that he has had an interest in the area for the last 3 to 4 years. He thought that the site is national or international installation, largely under-recognized, Persons from around the world visit the site. He spent time making a film of the area. The area is beautiful and makes it reasonable to attempt to designate the view shed. He has seen tour buses on the property, bringing many persons to see the area.

Michael Sullivan Smith gave a history lesson on how some of the roads in Saugerties were directly connected to the blue stone industry and that the bluestone from this area was very strong. The stone was used in New York City and as far away as South America. Michael would like to celebrate this and bring in people to celebrate. After Harvey Fite died there was a bed and breakfast on the site. The visitors experienced the art of the area. Harvey Fite collected artifacts and tools of the quarrying industry and has displayed them for all time.

Gil Hales stated that he loves Opus 40. The New York Times has praised it. (Jun 2, 2006) He has kept a file of the letters to the editor. No other place in the US like it. It is very unique. He would hate to see it disappear and hopes it can be saved.

Allen Bryan asked if there were any plans for a larger district. Josh responded that our role as a Commission is to designate the area, not to operate the site. The Commission is in an oversight role, and before anything can be done to the outside of the site, the change must be approved by the Commission. The overall district would be a boundary which would be an overlay on the town map to show where the quarrying was and where the quarries are today. Wikipedia states that the first quarry in Saugerties started in 1820. Michael stated that Silas and Nelson Brainerd, came to Veteran, and purchased property from William Van Valkenburgh, who then took the money to Quarryville in 1835 and began to quarry in competition with the Brainerd's. Blue stone from our area has a certain color and texture.

David Kaminsky stated that in general the idea of a quarrying district could be very positive. The goal is to add value to the property. Josh responded that designating property does not take rights from the owner. The Commission's designation has, as its goal, the maintenance of the exterior façade in a manner which is keeping with what was there when the building was built. Susan stated that when owners want to make a change, they must apply for a certificate. The Commission works with the owner and the owner can apply to the Zoning Board of Appeals if there is not an agreement. The Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Law, (soon if not now), have certain rules for mining, regarding how much can be removed from a quarry before it is considered mining.

The Commission is tasked to do designation which could ultimately become a national designation.

E. Mark Smith went to the original meeting of the Opus 40, Inc. on March 12, 2010. What is the goal for the committee at this point? He is for the designation. Michael responded that the only part for sale is the house and the museum areas. There is also a 15 acre lot, sold to Harvey by Jean and Bert Wrolsen, which has a stipulation that the land not be sold for profit. The majority of the property belongs to Opus 40, Inc. a not for profit organization, and can only be sold to another not for profit. Elizabeth Stegmayer does not know who the members of Opus 40, Inc. are. John Stegmayer has asked for information as to the next meeting of Opus 40, Inc. and has not received a reply. Barry asked that the current Opus 40, Inc, could run the site, without any other entities.

Mark Smith asked whether the town board has any say in the designation. There is Town Board oversight, however, they have 45 days in which to either modify the designation with findings of fact, vote to approve, or deny designation, again with findings of fact. They may also not take a vote at all.

John Stegmayer asked if we had the support of Opus 40, Inc. No response was made.

Allen Bryan suggests an educational project with signs discussing the history of the particular site. Barry mentioned the signs for the Carriage Road on the Esopus Creek Conservancy, discussing the importance of the road. Josh also mentioned that the Commission wants to have plaques for the historically designated properties.

David Kaminsky mentioned that Google Earth has some interactive capabilities, with the possibility to add a "bubble" to the maps with information about the various locations.

Josh spoke of the pamphlet: A Guideline on Historic Preservation for the Town and Village of Saugerties. Michael spoke regarding the pamphlet. One section of the pamphlet will be centered around Opus 40.

Josh told the assembled audience that the Public Hearing will begin at 7:30 on August 15, 2011 at the Frank Greco Senior Citizen's Center.

The public portion of this meeting was completed at 8:30. Conversation continued for several minutes.

3. Budget Discussion/Investigation: The questions from last month's meeting regarding the budget have been resolved.

4. Old Business: Susan gave copies of the 2011 Saugerties House Tour booklet to the Saugerties Public Library. Letter is on file.

5. New Business: The supervisor called Josh about the Jeremiah Russell House. The persons involved do not exactly know who owns the property. The Keegan's and at least 20 others are involved. The Commission felt that the Town should take over the property for non-payment of taxes. Future uses of the property were not discussed.

CLG monies are available for training, grants will be in the \$1,500 to \$8,000 range.

Michael Campbell is now the webmaster for the town/village web site.

Myles went on the Greene County Historical Society House tour, which he shared with the members of the Commission. Susan attended the Stone House Day in Hurley. She plans to change the role of the docents at the next house tour.

Myles gave out a CD of maps. They included the map of the Flatbush walking tour and several others.

Adjournment: 8:55 pm

Audrey Klinkenberg, Secretary