

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission of the Town of Saugerties was held August 22, 2005.

Present: Barry Benepe, Josh Randall, Michael Sullivan Smith, William H. Trumbour, Susan Walker, Leeanne Thornton

Additional Attendees: Eliner Trumbour, Ken Snyder, Bill Cloonan, Paul Comeau, Carolyn Specht

Barry opened the meeting. Leeanne reported that she'd talked with Karlyn about the Woodstock commemorative sign for Winston Farm; she's almost done with the wording and is thinking about where the sign will go.

Josh reported that Steve Winkley presented a draft of the Aquifer Protection overlay District at the last Conservation Advisory Committee meeting. The boundaries run from the Greene County Line to Old Kings Highway corridor south to Plattekill Creek to the Town of Ulster line. Leanne said that the CAC will discuss the Aquifer Overlay at their September meeting. Michael pointed out that the aquifer was the basis for the early grazing and planting areas.

The Minutes of the meeting of July 25, 2005, were read and adopted with minor corrections: History Day is October 9, not 22; and the Ulster County Historical Society has (not may have) an 1827 map of Saugerties.

Bill Cloonan said that he was present as a member of the interested public. He remembers Winston delivering milk to his family when he was young. He said that Randy and Earl Winston sold the dairy farm to Babcock around 1947 or 1948.

Winston Farm

There was some discussion about how UCCC considered buying the farm in the mid 1950s but decided against it because the location was too far away from the rest of Ulster County. In 1994, Maurice Hinchey wrote a letter (Barry read the letter aloud) recommending that the Winston Farm be designated by New York State and be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The application was never pursued. Barry also read aloud some notes that Michael had made in 1994 about the site. The earliest recorded deed in Saugerties describes the property in connection with the King's Highway; Niger Road continues west through the entire site to People's Road. The predecessor to Kings Highway would have gone alongside the creek, north through the Augusta Savage House site, crossed the Beaver Kill at a ford, then come up on the west side of the Wynkoop House.

Ken Snyder said that he had always understood that Niger Road was the main east-west route from the Village to West Saugerties. He said the original turnpike fording of the Beaver Kill is where the bridge is now (on Old 212 by his barns).

Barry asked Ken about the strip of level land partway down the sledding hill, whether it had been an early road; Ken said no. Barry then read from notes he made while researching buildings and houses shown on early maps; all show Niger/Nigger Road running east-west through the site. According to Vernon Benjamin, the road is an early Indian route. A 1934 map shows Morse Road running north-south along the west edge of the Winston Farm to Hommellville Road.

Barry stated that the reason for designating both the Snyder farm and the Winston Farm is that they are next to each other and that there was once a road that went from the Snyder farm to the Winston Farm.

Ken showed those present his arrowhead collection, all found (over 7 generations) on his and the Winston farms. There are 16 pounds altogether. Ken said his farm consists of former separate parcels.

Michael said that the deed from Winston to Schaller describes Niger Road as a road to Blue Mountain, in the context of describing one of the properties.

Barry asked Paul Comeau and Carolyn Specht if they had any questions. Paul said that they don't understand the goal of this process; that one could designate all of NYS because an artifact, etc., had been found. He said that Winston Farm hasn't been a farm for 50 years and "is perfect for development." Some of the pieces constituting the present property were purchased by the Schallers.

Leanne said that one of the prime considerations is that the main aquifer that supplies the town is under Winston Farm; that will be a factor in whatever development happens.

Michael said that the stone house made entirely of bluestone (in 1917) is significant; there are about ½ dozen in Saugerties. They relate to the local bluestone industry, which supplied bluestone to the rest of the nation and even overseas.

Bill said that the site *has* been farmed within the last 50 years; he, Ken, and others have farmed it. He also feels that the farm's connection with J. Winston and the reservoir is important.

Josh said that the farm is one of the last pristine farms; it is intact and has a history with it. He mentioned his idea of the farm becoming a living museum.

At some point during the above discussion, Paul Comeau was asked if the Commission was going to be given permission to go on the property; he replied, "No, not at this time." He said he didn't think it would be useful to the Schallers.

Bill asked Ken how he felt about being included in the designation. Ken asked how it would limit him. Barry replied that the Commission has no control over density, etc., which is under the aegis of the Zoning and Planning Boards. He said the purview of the

Commission was to help guide development to produce the best possible use that preserves the landscape.

Discussion about the Public Hearing at the next meeting (9/26) followed. The Commission has 62 days after the Hearing to designate or not designate; the owner has 45 days to appeal the decision to the Town Board.

Discussion followed about the public/private status of Niger Road. The Town has maintained the road up to the barns, which would be an indication that the Town owns the road to that point.

A motion was made reaffirming the intent to hold a Hearing regarding designation of the Winston and Snyder farms at the September meeting; it was seconded and passed unanimously. Barry said that the intent of the Commission was to be part of a good solution.

Josh asked Paul Comeau what the price might be if the Town were to make an offer to buy the farm; Paul replied that he was bound by an option agreement with a developer and could not disclose any details.

The next Commission meeting will be September 26, 2005.

The meeting was adjourned.

Susan B. Walker