

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE VILLAGE OF MONTEBELLO WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2017 AT THE MONTEBELLO VILLAGE HALL. THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 8:15 PM, FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ROLL CALL WAS TAKEN.

Roll call.

Members Present: Lisa Levin, Chairperson
Rosemary Mocio
Dorice Madronero
William Ellsworth

Members Absent: Matt Moetzinger, Member
Warren E. Berbit, Village Attorney
Craig Long, Village Historian

Diana Montgomery – Deputy Village Clerk -Transcriber of Minutes

Chairperson Levin discussed coming up with ideas to appeal to residents and revisit inviting Historic Preservation speakers and/or experts for community involvement. The HPC discussed having meetings twice a year involving outside speakers to try to involve community. Chairperson Levin indicated that it would be helpful to get someone to come in to speak about National Register Listings and national designations to try to get residents more interested and possibly compel property owners to designate their properties. Would like to involve speakers who can present what preservation is on a broader basis to introduce community to what can be done within our community. Perhaps someone more local or regional who is familiar with local history.

Member Madronero discussed the capabilities of the website and how our links can help our message. Member Madronero indicated that because of her experience as a trustee at the Historical Society of Rockland County, she is aware of how difficult it is to get people to come out to events of this nature. As discussed at earlier meetings, the new Village of Montebello website offers the HPC the ability to connect with the community and allow people to do so when it is convenient for them. Things like links to national preservation sites, county and local information, “Story Corps” audio files, newsletter content, historic photos, etc. will allow residents to explore the HPC mission and hopefully compel people to become more involved as they become more educated. This presence is key to the HPC’s public outreach goals. The HPC will find out from the Village how it can use the HP section of the website and what the capabilities would be for our purposes. The HPC would like to have interactive abilities to fully realize the potential for outreach.

Member Ellsworth mentioned that it would be great if people could submit both historic and present-day photos of their houses, in addition to submitting any historic photos that they might have of the area that is now Montebello.

HPC discussed the new website, navigating through it during the meeting to see how easy it is for residents to find and access items relating to the HPC. Member Madronero and Member Moccio agreed that it is a great opportunity for us to include appropriate HPC reference links. The HPC also might ask the Village if it is possible to add site/reference links to the HPC section from the front landing page of the website, as navigating through the tabs to find the HP section isn't necessarily clear.

Member Madronero suggested that instead of focusing on getting speakers at this point in time, perhaps we should focus on our presence on the internet through the Village website. Chairperson Levin agreed that it would be a great first step as, with an ultimate goal of getting traffic to a speaker series, the HPC should first establish a clear presence with Montebello residents. The HPC would like to see residents that are curious and interested in preservation.

The HPC will come up with lists of links to add to the HPC section of the website. Member Madronero suggested that we find out the capabilities of the website for HPC purposes and what limitations there might be. Discussion turned to the stone walls that are so prevalent within the Village and how important they are to the Village's character. Member Madronero suggested that we might use a graphic of one of the stone walls as our section header. Again, we would need to see what the website's capabilities would be in regards to photos, backgrounds, etc.

Chairperson Levin mentioned that there should also be a clear link to the 2010 Historic Resource Survey so that residents can easily access it.

Chairperson Levin confirmed to the HPC that the HPC resolution of inspections of landmarked properties had been approved by the Village Board, but that inspections would be conducted once every two years, instead of once every six months as requested. Members agreed that due to the fact that the Village only has one inspector, every six months was a bit too ambitious given his workload and that once every two years would be sufficient. These assessments having a two-year window would give homeowners ample time to remediate any repairs that are deemed necessary, given the historic status of the property.

Member Ellsworth asked if the HPC has any jurisdiction over the two Village cemeteries. Chairperson Levin answered that because neither are designated, the HPC does not have any leverage to require condition assessments. However, Chairperson Levin indicated that Montebello resident Howard Hochberg contacted her regarding a Boy Scout project that intended to clean up the two local cemeteries and asked whether there were any protections on what they could and could not do. Chairperson Levin indicated that although the HPC could not mandate the clean-up methods, she asked that they be respectful to not disturb the historic headstones and

to avoid scrubbing them or using any harsh chemicals in any cleaning of the areas. Also, she indicated that she requested that any types of repairs made to any items within the cemeteries be made in keeping with the historic character of the sites. Member Ellsworth asked if there is a historic marker on either of the cemeteries. He indicated that the Maple Grove cemetery was associated with the Suffern Baptist Church that burned down in the 1950s. Member Ellsworth suggested that we might explore historic markers for both cemeteries. Chairperson Levin answered that since the cost for historic markers comes out of the Parks department budget, they may not wish to spend upwards of \$2000.00 on sites that are not locally designated landmarks, especially on a cemetery that is simply a historic rural site without substantial overall significance. Member Moccio indicated that the historic nature of the cemetery would be evident by simply reading the dates on the headstones. Member Madronero also mentioned that both cemeteries are located in areas that are not walkable (no sidewalks) and also cannot stop on the road to read a marker, cautioning that erecting markers might actually be hazardous.

Member Madronero suggested that we add a link to the Suffern Free Library Local History in the HPC section of the website.

Members approved minutes from July 18, 2017. Motion made by Member Ellsworth, second made by Member Moccio. Motion carried.

Chairperson Levin announced that the HPC/Village of Montebello had received a certificate from the United States Department of the Interior, in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and National Park Service, Department of the Interior to congratulate Montebello, NY on being a Certified Local Government partner in the Federal Preservation Program since June 26, 2008. The HPC will upload image to the website.

Discussion moved to additional ideas of outreach to and involvement with the community. Member Madronero spoke about approaching the Montebello Seniors to see how many are life-long residents and might have memories of the area over the years about making audio recordings of their experiences as they apply to Montebello. All agreed that it would be a great idea to have resident oral histories included on the website for all to access. Chairperson Levin will explore feasibility of this project, first with Village Hall regarding website capabilities and then to assess Senior group interest in the project. The HPC could also transcribe the stories if audio recordings aren't feasible. Member Moccio also suggested that we could feature the stories in the Village newsletter.

With no further discussion on Historic Preservation, Member Madronero made a motion, second by Member Ellsworth to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.