

HPC Minutes June 6, 2018

Meeting began at 8:15 pm

Members present: Lisa Levin, Matt Moetzinger, Rosemary Moccio, Dorice Madronero, Bill Ellsworth

Others present: Craig Long, Warren Berbit

Members recited the Pledge of Allegiance and then meeting commenced.

Minutes from February 2018 and April 2018 official minutes were discussed and approved. Motion to approve by Member Ellsworth, second by Member Moccio. Motion carried.

Chairperson Levin alerted Members that the HPC now has the key to the display case in the Community Center and as soon as we begin to receive and amass artifacts, we can begin to load the display. The Montebello Summer Newsletter will feature an appeal to residents to share and/or donate any artifacts with the HPC for display. Members agreed that artifacts should be brought to Village Hall for collection. Members discussed any items the HPC might already have that it could put into the display pending receipt of artifacts from residents. Members Ellsworth and Madronero indicated that they have quite a few old bottles that could be displayed. Members also discussed featuring vintage photographs of Montebello. Mr. Long mentioned that he thought there was at least one Cobblestone Farm milk bottle at the Suffern Village Museum and thought that there might be a spare to loan Montebello. Member Madronero also suggested the HPC photograph some of the vintage photos/paintings/postcards on display at Village Hall to put into the showcase at the Community Center. Member Ellsworth reminded the HPC that he had dropped off a vintage photograph of the Cutler Mansion at Village Hall as well. Chairperson Levin agreed that photographs would be perfect since there might be a distinct possibility that the HPC does not receive many artifacts from the public.

Member Madronero suggested that historic photographs could be searched and possibly accessed at the New City Library, which has now digitized its collection. Mr. Long mentioned that it might be difficult to search for "Montebello" photographs using the name as a search term since the name has only been associated with the Village since its incorporation in 1986. The most that would likely be found associated with the Village using "Montebello" as a search term would be the Ryan Mansion.

Member Ellsworth inquired about when the Suffern Baptist Church burned. He mentioned that he thought it was in the 1950s, which Mr. Long corroborated. Member Ellsworth inquired if Mr. Long knew of any photographs of the church, to which Mr. Long answered that he had a poor image of it. Member Ellsworth indicated that perhaps we could duplicate that photo and include a short history of the fire. Mr. Long stated that he has some information on it. Members agreed that it would be a good idea to start searching online (HRVH.org, etc.) and at the Suffern and New City Libraries. Chairperson Levin mentioned that she had searched through the HRVH site at length a while ago and didn't find any Village area photos featured – although additional images might have been added since her last search. Members agreed that the HRVH site would be worth looking at. Member Ellsworth mentioned searching the Historic Aerials (historicaerials.com) website as well to find historic aerial images of the area dating back to the 1930s. Chairperson Levin mentioned that the only drawback to printing out and displaying these images is that the resolution is quite grainy on many of the older images. The HPC can consider what might be done with this option.

Chairperson Levin inquired if Mr. Long had had the chance to discuss the W3R signs with Skip Vezetti (Highway Department head) at the last Rockland County Historic Preservation board meeting. Mr. Long indicated that neither he nor Mr. Vezetti were unable to attend the meeting but that he would speak to Mr. Vezetti at the next meeting, which will be in two weeks. Members discussed that it would be a good idea to also install a marker on Viola Road to delineate the W3R route and explain what it is and what the W3R signs represent. Discussed placement for a marker. Member Ellsworth thought we'd only need two of the W3R signs: one upon entering Montebello from Route 202 at one end and one at the eastern end of Viola Road. Chairperson Levin suggested that it would be beneficial to place the signs on both sides of the road so that the W3R route markers are visible whether travelling eastbound or westbound on Viola Road. The HPC should find out how far apart placement of signs should be – plus, as Viola is a County Road, the HPC would have to do comply with the County's requirements. Mr. Long will discuss with Mr. Vezetti to verify all of these questions. Mr. Long will also inquire about costs per sign from Suffern Sign shop. Member Madronero asked if the design of the signs need to conform to the existing signs featured on other parts of the Route nearby. Mr. Long responded by stating that it would be preferable to match the signs as best as possible to have continuity so that it is recognizable. Member Madronero also suggested that the HPC could feature some history of the W3R route in the display case in the Community Center and on the Village website. The HPC agreed that at the next meeting, pending more information from Mr. Vezetti about what it is allowed to install along the route, it would discuss next steps.

Chairperson Levin asked Mr. Berbit about whether there was any further information regarding the pending Scenic and Historic Roads local law and the HPC's role moving forward in reviewing Certificates of Appropriateness. Mr. Berbit indicated that a Public Hearing is scheduled for June 20, 2018 to present pending local laws. The HPC should have received a copy of the revised version of the Scenic and Historic Road local law. The HPC should request the latest version from Joan Will at Village Hall. Following the passing of the Scenic and Historic Road law, the HPC will be receiving guidelines for review of properties wishing to alter properties along the roads listed under the law. Discussion of statute points and implications for HPC occurred. HPC's role will be greatly enhanced based on the passage of this statute.

Member Madronero asked Mr. Berbit if, when an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness is submitted, can the HPC request photos of existing elements and conditions if they are not submitted with the application. Mr. Berbit indicated that it is within the HPC's rights to request these items. Chairperson Levin inquired if an owner does not submit photographs of existing conditions and features, is it within the scope of the HPC's responsibility to physically visit the property to ascertain these items itself. Mr. Berbit indicated that, in order to make an educated assessment of the property, it would be.

Members discussed deteriorating conditions of two landmarked Village properties: 84-86 Viola Road and the "Fant Farm" at 253-257 Spook Rock Road. Both properties received inspections by Spence Engineering and Larry Picarillo, based on HPC resolution mandating inspections of landmarked properties every two years. Condition reports for both properties were issued and violation notices were sent to owners. Members discussed how both properties have deteriorated substantially since last inspections were done. Marcel Amona, Fant Farm, has been given violation notices previously and still has not completed all of the repairs and remediation necessary to uphold the original landmark designation agreement when he purchased the property. Mr. Berbit advised that, legally, once a property has been designated, the HPC has the obligation to make sure the condition of the property is not in violation and, if it is, notices should be sent that remediation must begin immediately to comply with the Village code. If

notices are ignored, after a certain date, the inspectors will be sent out again and, if action is not being taken to bring the property up to acceptable condition, the Village has the right to prosecute the owner.

The HPC states, on the record, the two properties – 84-86 Viola Road and Fant Farm – are not being properly maintained per their respective designations as Historic Local Landmarks and such conditions are leading to demolition by neglect. Violation reports should be sent to each of the property owners and repairs must begin in a timely manner to reverse the deterioration and so that further deterioration does not occur. If repairs are not begun, next steps will be taken by the Village to compel the owners to perform repair.

The HPC discussed passing a resolution to state that it appears that the properties are not being maintained according to the obligation stated in the historic landmark designation of the property and that the HPC demands that the repairs be made immediately to reverse the deterioration and to prevent further deterioration. If this is not done, the Village will begin affirmative action against the property owners to make sure that repairs are completed to the satisfaction of the HPC in a timely manner.

Mr. Berbit advised that the resolution should be drafted by the HPC and then the violation will be issued to the owners, whether it comes from Spence Engineering or from the HPC directly. Mr. Berbit advised that the HPC has the legal authority to react if the property is found to be in jeopardy and to initiate action against the property owner(s).

Two motions made on the floor – one for each of the two properties in question.

Motion made by Chairperson Levin to draft a preliminary resolution for notifying the property owner of the “Historic Johnson Farm” at 84-86 Viola Road regarding violations of condition requirements of a historic designated landmark property and demanding that owner make the repairs necessary in a timely manner, based on the deterioration of the buildings observed by Spence Engineering and Larry Picarillo, noted in a report dated June 4, 2018. If repairs are not made, and the property remains in jeopardy, the HPC and Village will take appropriate action. Motion seconded by Member Moccio. Motions are subject to Mr. Berbit formalizing and finalizing versions of the resolution. The Village will enforce the resolutions once finalized.

Members discussed that the “Johnson” resolution be sent to appropriate agencies within the County to make sure that all violations, whether condition or those involving health and safety, are addressed. The resolution should therefore mention concerns for occupants’ health and safety based on the violations observed.

Motion made by Chairperson Levin to pass a resolution for the Historic Fant Farm subdivision Main and Accessory Barn Structures at 253-257 Spook Rock Road to require the owner, Marcel Amona, to comply with the historic landmark designation condition requirements to maintain the property, based on the deterioration of the buildings observed by Spence Engineering and Larry Picarillo, noted in a report dated June 4, 2018. The buildings were observed to be deteriorating further than noted in previous reports dated March 23, 2016 and January 27, 2015. Motion seconded by Member Moccio. The Village will enforce the resolutions once finalized.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.