

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE VILLAGE OF MONTEBELLO WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2018 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 Moccio
Dorice Madronero
Matt Moetzinger
William Ellsworth
Craig Long, Village Historian

Members Absent: Warren E. Berbit, Village Attorney

Others Present: Linda Mackey, Historic Preservation Specialist /Survey & Evaluation Unit
CLG Representative, Eastern New York

Old Business:

After the Pledge of Allegiance was conducted, Chairperson Levin introduced Linda Mackey from the NYSHPO to the members. Linda attended the meeting as to observe the HPC as part of a scheduled annual CLG audit. Chairperson Levin mentioned that she and Linda had met separately earlier in the day to discuss the specifics of what the HPC has accomplished over the past audit period. They also discussed what the HPC could be doing better moving forward. Chairperson Levin said that it was a very productive session.

Member Ellsworth inquired about the Community Center display case. Chairperson Levin indicated that no artifacts have been received from residents to date. She mentioned that she and Member Madronero would be meeting at the Suffern Library to look through the historic photograph collection in the Local history room to see if there were any that were appropriate to display. Chairperson Levin mentioned that she had already looked at what they had a while ago and most photographs were not Montebello-specific. She suggested at this point, we start with what we have, which is not a lot, however, at least the case would not be empty. Mr. Long indicated that the reason that there are not many historic photographs featuring Montebello properties is likely because most of the area was farmland, country estates, grist mills, etc. and had no business district.

Member Moetzinger suggested that the photos we already have of the local landmarks should definitely be featured. The display case is not that big, so the photographs could also be hung on the walls. The HPC would need additional permission to begin hanging items on the walls and also specific direction as to where we could display the photos.

Member Madronero suggested that we feature a photo of Senator Royal Copeland's house with a brief history about him. The Copeland house is featured in the 2010 Historic Resource study and Mr. Long indicated that we do have photos of him and his house. Senator Copeland was a United States Senator from Rockland who was also a doctor practicing homeopathy. Mr. Long mentioned that he was also an ophthalmologist.

Mr. Long produced a photo of the Viola Baptist Church dated June 11, 1942, commemorating the celebration of its centennial. Member Ellsworth suggested that a new photo of the cemetery that remains at the site be taken as reference for a "then and now" type of display. Member Madronero offered to go and take some photos from the same perspective.

Member Madronero spoke about Bayard Lane and that she thought that there was still a similar group in Pennsylvania that follows the Borsodi School of Living tenets.

Discussion went to an update on the Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route markers (W3R). Mr. Long said that unfortunately, during the summer months, the Rockland County Historic Preservation Board did not meet and at the September meeting, Skip Vezetti was not in attendance so Mr. Long was unable to speak with him. He has a call in to Skip but has not yet had the chance to speak with him.

Discussion of the approval of the Historic and Scenic Roads Overlay District law, which was passed in August, 2018. The HPC is therefore now officially on board with it. Moving forward, the HPC will have the opportunity to review and comment on any Certificate of Appropriateness applications submitted for any alterations/additions to properties situated within 250 feet of the center line of historic roads within the Overlay District. The HPC will be notified when any applications are submitted, however, Mr. Berbit still has to advise the board the exact procedure and the parameters by which the HPC would consider each application. Mr. Berbit had indicated at past meetings that he would be finalizing and advising the HPC on specific guidelines but he have not yet received these. The Planning/Zoning Clerk (Regina) indicated that they had discussed the procedure and that the applications would come to them and they would funnel them to the HPC.

Member Moccio asked if Village residents in the affected overlay districts were aware that this law is now on the books. Chairperson Levin indicated that if they do not know about it at this point, if they submit an application, they would be alerted. The final distance from the center line of the historic roads in the overlay districts is 250 feet.

Chairperson Levin asked Mr. Long for his opinion on what to do with the "Blind Players Club" property at 103 Montebello Road, now that the Historic and Scenic Overlay District Law affects that property. The house had a fire a number of years ago and has been vacant ever since, although the property is not in violation of any local codes, and the owners appear to be maintaining the surrounding landscape, the HPC is concerned that the boarded-up house (and the adjacent "Camp Montebello" property, which is also deteriorating) would become victim to demolition by neglect. Chairperson Levin has asked the Building Inspector multiple times about the status of the property and he indicated that as long as there are no code violations on the property and it is secure (not a public hazard), the boarded-up house can remain untouched as long as the owners are up to date

on property maintenance and taxes, etc. Chairperson Levin asked Mr. Long's opinion about possible national historic designation to compel its protection, based on the new Historic and Scenic Roads Overlay District law now in place. The house definitely falls into the "250 feet off the center line" provision and would it be in the HPC's purview to mandate (or request) that the property is restored, in keeping with the historic nature of the neighborhood. Mr. Long remembers that at one point in the past, the owner wanted to raze the structures and subdivide the property, however, he was unaware of the current status or plans for the property. Mr. Long indicated that the HPC should ask the Building Inspector about this. Member Ellsworth asked if we could designate the property locally, however, it would likely be easier to begin with a national designation, as that would be less restrictive for the owner. Chairperson Levin indicated that during her conversation with Ms. Mackey, Ms. Mackey asked if there were any historic properties that the HPC was concerned about. The Blind Players Club house was one that stands out (other than the Johnson Farm and Fant Farm), as there are no protections on it from the HPC's standpoint. Again, it would have to be something that the owner would have to approve since it is the Village's, and therefore the HPC's, opinion that we do not proceed with "adverse designations." It is something for the HPC to consider. Member Ellsworth asked Mr. Long if he could pull together some information on the Blind Players Club if the HPC decides to move forward with recommending a national designation. Member Madronero asked what is the specific significance of the property. Mr. Long explained that he believes it came out of the 1920s when the adjacent property, owned by Charles Pace, was turned over to a Brooklyn chapter known as the "Team Lodge" who would come to the area in the summer and put on plays, etc. It eventually morphed into more than that when it became more of a summer camp which, in the 1950s (he thought), they built a pool which they eventually enclosed in the extant cinder block building known as "Camp Montebello." All of the property was originally owned by the Ryans. The property with the house was known as the "Blind Players Club" because blind individuals would come up from New York City for an opportunity for them to vacation in the area. It is noted in the 1920s and 1930s that they would put on plays for people in the Suffern area to come and watch. It was actually known as the "Team Player Lodge" initially.

Chairperson Levin indicated that she would ask Mr. Berbit if the law triggers anything with regards to protection of historically significant properties that are not designated.

Chairperson Levin moved on to mention that "like-for-like" repairs were proceeding on the Johnson Farm. They have made the bare minimum repairs to the windows and the siding in order to clear the violations cited in the Spence Report. The Village Clerk believes that the plan down the road will be to make a more formal application to perform more extensive repairs. The owners have not submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness application yet, however, the Building Inspector is monitoring the progress of the repairs and will alert the HPC if he has any concerns. He has also said that the exterior work is progressing: "like-for-like" replacement of weather damaged exterior siding, extra trim work and insertion of miscellaneous glass panes into existing windows. Montebello now has a Code Enforcer to help the Building Inspector.

Discussion moved to Fant Farm. The Building Inspector has alerted the HPC that the Village has issued new violations notices as nothing substantial has been repaired on the Spence violations notice from June. Some work has been done, however, it has been very slow and it is not enough to clear any of the violations. The HPC will revisit once the new violations have been issued.

Member Moetzinger mentioned that there are still tarps on the barns and the house and has seen some work, but not much. Now that the Village has a Code Enforcer, hopefully the penalties will be enough to compel the owner to proceed with remediation of all violations. Discussion moved to whether the Spence report covered condition issues on the house or just the barns. All members agreed that perhaps the Building Inspector and Spence should also make sure that a condition report be completed on the house as well.

New Business:

Chairperson Levin alerted members that a Site Plan to construct a house of worship will be presented by "84 Viola Road LLC" was scheduled for the Planning Commission's October 9, 2018 meeting. She mentioned that it would be a good idea for as many of the HPC as possible to attend to become aware of the scope of the project. Members may go to Village Hall to see copies of the site plan.

The HPC has expressed concerns that it has not been thoroughly kept in the loop regarding Village issues within its scope. Mr. Long suggested that the HPC speak with Mr. Berbit regarding how to make sure that any pertinent HPC-related issues that are put before other Village boards and the Building inspector are made readily available to all HPC members without the HPC having to discover or seek out information regarding such issues relevant to the HPC. The HPC will bring this issue up at the next HPC meeting at which Mr. Berbit is in attendance.

Chairperson Levin moved on to the approval of the July 25, 2018 minutes. Motion by Member Ellsworth, seconded by Member Moetzinger. Motion carried.

With no further discussion on Historic Preservation, Member Ellsworth made a motion, second by Member Moetzinger to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.