

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND PARKS COMMISSION OF THE VILLAGE OF MONTEBELLO WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2019 AT THE VILLAGE HALL. THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 8:25 P.M. FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Present:	Lisa Levin	Co-Chairperson
	Amy Rapoport	Co-Chairperson
	Bill Ellsworth	Member
	Dorice Madronero	Member
	Rosemary Mocio	Member
	Matt Moetzinger	Member
	Robert J. Israel	Member
	Maureen Danzig	Member
	Warren Berbit	Village Attorney
Absent:	Howard Hochberg	Member
	Tony Piazza	Member
	Josh Goldstein	Ad Hoc
	Craig Long	Village Historian/HPPC Advisor

Co-Chairs Levin and Rapoport opened the meeting with the suggestion that we go around the table and introduce ourselves and supply phone numbers. That being done, Mr. Berbit opened with a bit of historical background regarding the genesis of each board that combined to form the HPPC. The Parks Commission was formed by a Village resolution because of a provision in the Village law in the State of New York that allows you to form a Parks Commission. There is no such provision for the formation of a HPC (Historic Preservation Commission), however, on Municipal Home Rule the Village Board has a lot of authority and power to take actions that even the statute does not talk about. So, the Historic Preservation Commission was formed by a custom-designed local law. Combining the two Commissions was done by local law so now the Parks Commission piece blended into the Historic Preservation Commission is all formed by local law as the Historic Preservation and Parks Commission (HPPC).

As far as the regular business is concerned, this year will be the experiment with co-Chairs of the HPPC. If either co-Chair cannot attend a meeting, the other will run it with total and complete authority to run it as necessary. When both co-Chairs are in attendance, if the subject matter is discernably what used to be Parks or used to be Historic Preservation, each respective Chair should run that part of the meeting that concerns former Parks or HPC matters. After this year, there will be one Chair for the HPPC and perhaps a Vice-Chair to act in the absence of the Chair. There will be no more wearing separate hats for Parks and Historic Preservation after that time because the Village Board and Mr. Berbit are in agreement that it would be time for the two boards to get together and fully blend.

Mr. Berbit went on to mention that it is a good thing that the merger of the Commissions happened because it appeared that the Parks Commission was getting a little restive and questioning its purpose for existing now that the Village has acquired everything it was going to acquire and had done most of the capital improvements. Mr. Berbit did not agree with that at all because he thought that the more you have operational on a day to day basis, the more you have other kinds of issues that come up that require a different type of mindset. Mr. Berbit convinced the Village Board that actually you have very complementary skills and focus in the Parks and Historic Preservation, where they are both exist to make Montebello a better, happier, nicer place to live. Preserving history and parks fit together nicely. He hopes that all will agree that the merger is a good thing and that the boards will complement each other well.

Mr. Berbit continued to say that the only official HPPC public hearings are the Certificates of Appropriateness when someone desires to make changes to a property within the Historic and Scenic Road Overlay District which, on the designated roads, runs 250 feet from the center line. If someone plans any activity there, a Certificate of Appropriateness application would come to the HPPC. The former HPC has heard one application thus far: the “Gerber Estate” at 556/558 Haverstraw Road (40.19-1-33 and 44) for the installation of a tennis court on its front property. Mr. Berbit indicated that although it was a complex project, this was one that was going to bring the area up rather than impact it negatively. Other projects may not be as easy to adjudicate. Member Madronero inquired as to whether the county drainage department had approved the work yet. Mr. Berbit did not know if they had gotten that far on it yet, however, the HPC did its part.

The next complex application that we know is looming is 84 Viola Road, although smaller, less complex applications may come before the HPPC before that one does. 84 Viola will be complex due to the size and scale of the proposed building plus the existence of a locally designated landmark on the property very close to the proposed location of the new construction. Because the proposed building is considered a house of worship, which is the highest level of intensity in our new Public Gathering Law. There are three levels under the new law: 1. Public gathering place, which is the lowest intensity; 2. Neighborhood house of worship, medium intensity; and 3. Community house of worship. The code requires that all parking be behind the structure which pushes the placement of the structure closer to the road which, in turn, pushes the structure within the 250 feet zone from the center line Historic and Scenic Road Overlay. The 250 feet zone doesn't mean that you can't do anything within that zone, it merely means that an additional review must be done by the HPC, now the HPPC, for appropriateness from an historic and scenic vantage point. Applicants have to give due consideration that any proposed alterations to existing properties are consistent with what is there and not detracting from view shed and the historic nature and character of the road and the surrounding neighborhood. The HPPC's role is actually a bit redundant with the role of the Architectural Review Board, which also has similar authority in this case, which means that both entities overlap. The ARB will consider appropriateness of materials, design, color, buffers, trees, plantings, etc., which is very much the HPPC's purview. Mr. Berbit stated that the HPPC is an important board and will be doing important work over time.

Old Parks Commission Business:

Co-Chair Rapoport indicated that they still have minutes to approve from previous meetings in December and March but there were not enough former Parks members present for a quorum to approve those minutes. Therefore, approval of former Parks minutes would be tabled until a quorum is present.

Co-Chair Rapoport indicated that Tony Piazza, who is not present, was acting on her behalf during meetings while she was out of town over the winter. She gave an update on old Parks business completed and ongoing. The Ponds Park trail map has been color coded to indicate the different trails. An Eagle Scout is supposed to fill out the insurance forms for the park, however, Co-Chair Rapoport was unaware as to whether this has been done yet and will follow up. Member Israel indicated that he thought that the Scout was going to begin installing signs for the trails in September, since he still needs to raise the funding for the project. He is also repairing the Daniel Beard steps that come off the parking lot, planting flowers, adding the map to the main signs.

Member Madronero expressed concern that perhaps there is a need for more security camera placement within the park since she has noticed garbage and people hanging out in the parking lot after hours. Member Mocio asked if there is someone who patrols the park periodically. Co-Chair Rapoport and Mr. Berbit replied that the police have been notified about the problem and will step up patrols during off hours.

Co-Chair Rapoport moved on to discussion of Yoga in the Park. Apparently, there have been inquiries regarding doing yoga again, however, it is dependent on how many people would be interested. She also mentioned that a Walking Group would be a good idea. It was also suggested that a fall clean-up event be organized, perhaps appealing to high school students looking for community service hours to clean up the parks.

Member Madronero added that the HPC has discussed getting historic information on Montebello and the Schwartz estate out to the public and thought perhaps that if we have a Scout working on the signs, perhaps we could add a bit about the history of the property, the trail names, etc. She wondered if there was a particular story that we'd like to tell and that we could install something along the trails for people to read. Co-Chair Rapoport mentioned that maybe we could install historic markers along the trails to tell the story of the trail names and the area. Perhaps, however, the HPPC would take care of more permanent historic markers. All agreed that the former estate that houses the park has very interesting history and should be showcased, perhaps even installing Schwartz Estate/Burr Cottage historic marker. Member Madronero also suggested perhaps incorporating history within a map to make it more informative and interactive. Mr. Berbit suggested drawing from the three Montebello histories that have been compiled, which would be available at Village Hall. Co-Chair Rapoport cautioned that she was hesitant to create too many more things that could be graffiti-ed or damaged, as quite a few of the signs within the park have been vandalized in the past.

Old HPC Business:

Co-Chair Levin requested that the former HPC minutes from January and March be approved. Member Ellsworth made a motion to approve both January 7, 2019 and March 11, 2019 minutes, seconded by Member Mocio. Motion carried by former all HPC members.

Co-Chair indicated that Joan Will will be taking over collecting photos, etc. for the Community Center display cases now that the renovations of the building are coming to an end. HPC should forward any photos and artifacts to Joan Will at Village Hall. Co-Chair Rapoport indicated that she had had photo books compiled and that all of them had been turned over to Village Hall some time ago (before Joan took over as Village Clerk). The HPPC will follow up to make sure that the books are located.

Co-Chair Levin stated that since Craig Long was not present at the meeting, discussion of the Washington Rochambeau trail markers (W3R) would have to be tabled until the next meeting when Mr. Long was in attendance. The markers have been installed in Suffern and so it now makes more sense than ever for us to continue them through Montebello.

Co-Chair Levin moved on to discuss the HPC's ongoing challenge for remediation on all local historic landmarks. Condition reports have been submitted on all properties and Larry Picarillo is monitoring the progress of repairs. Mr. Picarillo indicated that local code enforcement officers will finally be scheduling court dates for Fant Farm to address the lack of compliance with the law and numerous violation notices to compel the owner to finally complete the repairs as required under the law. Co-Chair Rapoport asked if anyone is living in the Fant Farm House. Member Moetzinger indicated that a couple of the owner's workers and their families are currently living there. The kids are in the school district so it is a bit more stable of a situation than in the past when there were college students (used as an off-campus fraternity) living there.

Co-Chair Levin indicated that a CLG Grant application for a "Historic and Scenic Road Study" was submitted by the deadline and the Village is waiting to hear if application has been approved. All of the historic roads will be inventoried so that we have a good idea about what is along them in the event that a property owner fills out a Certificate of Appropriateness application.

Site plan for construction on 84-86 Viola Road was presented at the April 9, 2019 Planning Board meeting). Public hearing was held on this matter and, after discussions regarding many issues, including safety, noise, scale, use, drainage, light, compatibility with surrounding area, traffic, etc., the Planning Board adjourned the meeting and invited applicant to return to discuss these issues at greater length. Meeting minutes can be viewed on the Planning Board section of the Village website.

New business:

The full commission discussed meeting day and time and whether the fourth Wednesday of the month works for everyone. All agreed that it was convenient and that 7:30 would be a good time for all, beginning with the May 22, 2019 meeting.

With no further discussion, Member Mocio made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m. seconded by Member Moetzinger. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.