

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND PARKS COMMISSION OF THE VILLAGE OF MONTEBELLO WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2019 AT THE VILLAGE HALL. THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:40 P.M. FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Present:	Amy Rapoport	Co-Chairperson
	Bill Ellsworth	Member
	Dorice Madronero	Member
	Rosemary Mocio	Member
	Matt Moetzing	Member
	Tony Piazza	Member
	Craig Long	Village Historian/HPPC Advisor

Absent:	Lisa Levin	Co-Chairperson
	Maureen Danzig	Member
	Robert J. Israel	Member
	Josh Goldstein	Ad Hoc
	Howard Hochberg	Member
	Warren Berbit	Village Attorney

Old Business:

Co-chair Rapoport received the schedule of what our Eagle Scout, Thomas Fantry, is doing. She passed around to the members for their review. The Village needed clarification as to exactly what he is doing because she sent some photos of the Park (KGPP) which, she felt, needs attention from the landscapers. His schedule shows what Thomas is doing. He is not doing all the trails – just a clarification of what he was doing. Member Moetzing read the into the record, “Katherine Gorman Park Beautification, Thomas Fantry, Eagle Scout Project. 1. Remove wood steps at base of Daniel Beard Trail (12 steps); 2. Replace steps at base of Daniel Beard Trail (12 steps); 3. Prep area for trail map; 4. Supervise installation of trail map; 5. Install trail signs on trees at trail intersections (14 signs); 6. Clean and retrace the south part of the Daniel Beard Trail between Woonaki and Utopia, Pond Three; 7. Clean area around gazebo and plant daffodils. Member Piazza indicated that Thomas is being helped by his whole troop. Member Ellsworth asked what is he replacing the steps with? Member Piazza stated that there are wood blocks that define the steps but they are beginning to rot, so Thomas is going to remove those. Co-chair Rapoport stated that she does not know what he is replacing them with, but that it is in his criteria for it.

Next update was regarding the outdoor Village activities being offered to residents. Co-chair Rapoport went over to Club Pilates in Airmont Road. The yoga will run from July 10th through August 14th. Member Piazza asked how we will notify residents of the Village that this is happening. Co-chair Rapoport replied that they will send out an email to residents like they did last year. She will work on that with Member Danzig. She indicated that Club Pilates was very helpful and that they would be offering its services gratis. Yoga will be every Wednesday during that time period and we would need to find a day for Pilates to be held within that same timeframe. She will find out more on the details on the time and days for yoga and Pilates sessions.

Discussion then moved on to the minutes from the May 22nd meeting. All agreed that minutes looked good but cannot approve them due to an absence of a quorum.

Member Piazza then brought up the issue of dumping of grass clippings, dead branches, etc. in KGPP by landscapers. Co-chair Rapoport had done a walk-through to inspect the park and noticed that all along the curb area of Senator Levy Drive (about 2-3 feet in), you can see not only dumped grass clippings and dead

bushes but also bags of garbage. Co-chair Rapoport was unaware that he was supposed to also walk the trails and pick up garbage. Member Piazza mentioned that he feels that the reason the garbage blows all over is because the bags that are attached to the garbage cans do not get emptied and he has to empty those cans. Member Piazza indicated that it is his understanding that the individual that handles Village maintenance/trash pick-up is also responsible for emptying KGPP garbage. He also indicated that a lot of the landscapers eat lunch in the park and that could also add to the garbage problem.

Discussion then led to individuals fishing in the ponds and that they need to carry a fishing license with them, as the requirement is posted on the park signage. Member Piazza stated that there are actually a lot of fish in the ponds – one of the original members of the Parks Department actually used to stock the ponds each spring. Co-chair Rapoport felt that the HPPC should resume stocking the ponds. Member Madronero asked if the DEC provides the stock for the ponds and Co-chair Rapoport said that they do. She asked if any members are interested trying to follow up with the DEC to see if we can begin the stocking process again. She suggested contacting local DEC first to ask how the process works and to be directed to the appropriate office that would handle such a request. Member Madronero mentioned that she thought that the DEC office that covered Rockland is in New Paltz. Co-chair Rapoport offered to call to find the proper channels to make this happen.

Member Piazza stated that he had sent a message in the Montebello Pines online community bulletin boards to ask that all residents alert their landscapers not to dump debris in KGPP. He said that he actually received responses from 4 residents thanking him for alerting the neighborhood about the dumping.

Member Madronero asked if there is any way for there to be better surveillance in the KGPP. Member Piazza responded by stating that since there is no electricity in the park, this would be difficult. There are only solar panels in KGPP that power the pond aerators. Member Piazza stated that the best we can hope for is police patrols. The police do go into the park to monitor what is going on and they do park in the parking lot as a deterrent. Co-chair Rapoport stated that at the last Village Board Meeting, it was reported that incidents in the park have decreased because of the police presence. There have been less people hanging out when they should not be there and cars breaking through barriers. Member Piazza said that he sees police there all the time.

Discussion then moved to Historic Preservation matters. Co-chair Rapoport mentioned that there was one item brought up at the Village Board meeting re: designation. She asked the former HPC members how it has been handled recently, since she had once worked on a designation in the past, however, she was unaware of the current policy regarding designations. Besides the filling out of an application, she asked if it is something that the HPPC would do collectively and present to the Village, to suggest that a particular home should be considered for designation. Member Moetzing responded by stating that it depends if the homeowner requests it or if we, as a commission, would like to designate a home on our own. Member Moetzing indicated that we would pass a resolution that we think it is a historic property of merit and then it would go to the Village Board for approval. Member Piazza asked if the owner would have to approve it as well. Member Moetzing replied yes, if it is the current owner. We would have to have a public hearing on it. Member Piazza asked what if the owner states that he/she does not want the house designated? Mr. Long replied that we have had that happen before and we can't force them to proceed with a designation request. Mr. Long remembers that the Village Board did, however, approve the designation that Co-chair Rapoport had worked on quite a few years ago (it was an "adversarial designation"). During the public hearing, the owner was represented by counsel and Mr. Long had to testify during the hearing about the significance, etc. of the property and why it should be designated. He was cross-examined by owner's counsel. Mr. Long indicated that in most cases, we try not to have that happen, because the Village Board, on the political side, don't want to be faced with an adversarial nomination. Obviously, they don't want to be seen as a Village that would designate someone's property against their wishes. He indicated that to Co-

chair Rapoport's point, the designation process is still the same: an application is filled out, owner appears before the HPPC, there is discussion regarding merit of the application and whether property meets the criteria for nomination, approval of HPPC to move the process forward. The next step would be to hold a public hearing, daytime notice, and after testimony, the board would pass a resolution to recommend designation. The last step would be to present to Village Board for final approval. Member Piazza confirmed that this process is for a Local designation. He asked if it would be basically the same process for state and/or federal designation. Member Moetzinger replied that no, state and federal designation would mean a different process.

Co-chair Rapoport indicated that at the latest Village Board meeting, someone from the public raised the question about a home at 19 Mile Road, which is historic, and why it was never designated. The house in question is across the street from the high school and features 38 acres, and backs up to wetlands. It was previously owned by Joe Heidt or someone in the Heidt family. Member Moetzinger clarified that the property is across the street from the softball fields at the high school. The question posed at the board meeting was if it was ever considered for designation or if it could be. Member Madronero questioned when the house was built. Mr. Long mentioned that if it is the house he is thinking of, he believes it was Fowler's house, going back in terms of the original owner. Fowler was an architect who designed places in Suffern. He also wrote a syndicated column and specialized in houses in the 20s and 30s and English Tudor style. Mr. Long stated that the house would certainly be worthy of designation, however, once again we have to consider whether the owner is interested in pursuing it. Co-chair Rapoport stated that as she now understands the position of the HPC in recent years, the board is not necessarily comfortable with adversarial designations. Mr. Long replied that what the HPPC could do once again is try to solicit owners to apply for designations. He reminded all that the HPC had tried to do that on many occasions and appeals, however, there was little interest. Member Piazza asked if the Goldberg residence was on the historic register. Mr. Long replied that Goldberg's house is a rebuilt version of the historic house that sat on the same site. Discussion returned to 19 Mile Road. Member Moetzinger did not see it in the 2010 Historic Resource Survey. Co-chair Rapoport indicated that the house has a gazebo in the back, along with a lake, 38 acres, and it backs up to wetlands – she isn't sure if they're state or federal wetlands. She stated that it would be interesting if that process could be started, if that is what is recommended. She stated that she's not 100% familiar with the process, although she had orchestrated a local designation in the past, since she had thought things had changed – certainly the application had changed. Mr. Long indicated that he thinks that he has a copy of an application that Co-chair Rapoport had hand-written for a previous designation, whether that was the Johnson farm application (which was approved) or another one that did not go through (i.e., Bristol Meyer home on Viola Road just past Cobblestone Farm).

Member Ellsworth mentioned that we have occasionally discussed designating the Blind Players Club and the Sisters of Life property on Montebello Road. They are both large properties and he thinks that it would be a good idea to begin the process, even if both designations would be adversarial because it would add protections to the properties if they are sold in the future. Member Piazza indicated that in the case of the Sisters of Life property, the Archdiocese of NY would be a tough fight if they were not in favor of designation. Member Ellsworth replied that he didn't think that the Archdiocese would really care. Multiple members disagreed, with Member Madronero mentioning how they are seemingly liquidating a lot of properties and Mr. Long explaining that when the Village of Suffern tried to get Sacred Heart Church to designate its property, it wanted no part of it. Mr. Long indicated that Suffern wanted to put it on the National Register because it is a 1903 Schickel & Ditmars structure, funded by Ida Barry Ryan, and featured Locke stained glass windows (stained glass artist who was just as famous as Tiffany at the time). The church's leaders' concerns revolved around the constraints that a designation would place on them for any changes or repairs moving forward, e.g.: the church has a slate roof and if designated, any repair/replacement would have to conform to SOI standards. They weren't too happy with that possibility

and therefore, they rejected the idea of designation. Member Moetzinger mentioned that the roof, in fact, is being replaced right now.

Regarding the Sisters of Life property, Member Piazza stated that he had contacted the Archdiocese years ago when he was in real estate and they didn't want to hear anything about that property. They indicated that they were keeping the property and weren't interested in any offers for it. Co-chair Rapoport mentioned that one of the things she did when we rewrote the Master Plan was to go over to the property and speak to them (she did it via phone) to find out if they had any plans to do any kind of renovation, were they planning to sell it, etc. – basically to find out what their plans for the property were moving forward. At the time, she was told that they had no particular plan to do anything. They did reconstruct the stone wall at the entrance on Montebello Road and fixed the drainage. Member Piazza indicated that if any property should be designated in the Village, it would be that one.

Member Rapoport asked if anyone knew if the building inspector was able to access the Blind Players Club house for interior inspection. Co-chair Rapoport indicated that she will follow up with building inspector.

Member Piazza stated that he really likes the idea of inviting owners of historic properties to a gathering to discuss designation. Both Member Moetzinger and Member Mocio replied that perhaps five people at most showed up and we received no applications from it. Member Mocio stated that she believes that, based on the former HPC's experience with public outreach and lack of interest, the general consensus is that people simply don't want to have any kind of restrictions on what they can and cannot do with their property. The only real benefit to designation is a potential for a tax break, however, it is only applies to Village taxes, which is very small and a very compelling reason for most. Member Piazza stated that there is a prestige to it, however Member Mocio replied by saying that the former HPC found that the owners didn't really care about the prestige. Member Madronero stated that it might be different if Montebello had a downtown historic district, where people could walk down the street and appreciate the historic structures. We don't have that here which is a definite negative for us.

Member Piazza also mentioned that he will ask Joan Goldberg if she would be interested in designation. Members will also find out more information about possibly moving ahead with recommendation for designation of 19 Mile Road. The question would be whether it would be a good idea to approach the new owners with an appeal for designation. Co-chair Rapoport stated that perhaps we present the whole picture as to the benefits of it...Member Mocio replied that the real question is exactly what are the benefits that we can offer? Without being able to offer real tangible benefits, designation is a very difficult sell in Montebello. Co-chair Rapoport asked if members knew of benefits of designation offered by other communities. Mr. Long replied that Montebello was gracious enough to give them a slight tax reduction to incentivize but not too many other communities do that. All agreed that the Village tax benefit isn't really a bit motivator.

Member Piazza mentioned that in cities like Boston, Historic Preservation is so strong that they can tell owners what to do and they will comply. Mr. Long noted that these types of communities are where you have old world money that has been in place for so long as people move in over the years. Member Madronero noted that it is the lure of those types of places that have prestige already placed on the historic areas.

Mr. Long revisited the notion of having some type of get together to appeal to owners of local historic properties by recommending that maybe individual HPPC members reach out to people they know and inviting them, rather than a blanket invitation to all owners and to ask them to bring a friend. Member Piazza also stated that maybe many owners don't know that their house has a history. Perhaps a strategy would be to send them a note mentioning that their house is in fact historic and would they like to entertain

(or explore) the idea of applying for designation. Co-chair Rapoport also suggested maybe incorporating them in a historic trail of homes. Member Moetzinger pointed out that all of the Village's historic homes are listed in the 2010 Historic Resource Survey, with those that could potentially be significant noted as such. Member Piazza stated that an idea would be to send a letter out and maybe they would come to us on their own. Member Madronero and Member Mocio both replied and stated that we had already done that with our appeal to owners of homes listed in the Survey. Member Mocio asked if other former HPC members could recall if we also included "do you know the history or your house" information. Member Madronero stated that we have spoken about bringing attention to the famous/notable people who have lived locally. Co-chair Rapoport stated that perhaps we could do some sort of historic narrative that was accessible to the residents. Member Madronero suggested that maybe we could give short histories of locations with a video/voiceover that we could upload to the website. Member Mocio mentioned that we could remind people in the newsletter and on Facebook to check out the HPPC section of the website. Member Ellsworth revisited the idea that we do "then and now" photos of the Village's historic structures.

Member Piazza moved on to discuss redoing the HPC pamphlet. Member Moetzinger stated that he thought Co-chair Levin might have it on stock paper and that we had a whole stack of them for Montebello Day in the past. He was aware that there were extra pamphlets back in the garage. Member Piazza recommended that we enlarge the map on the pamphlet. In fact, he would recommend that we feature more homes of note (not just the designated ones) and the whole back of the brochure should be the map. He went on to suggest that if it's big enough, we could put highlight the historic roads as well as the locations. Member Mocio asked if a new brochure would be to send out or leave it in certain locations. Member Piazza replied that certainly should have them at Village Hall but we could also send it out. At any rate, it needs to be redone and updated. As long as we have to redo it, let's enhance it by making the map bigger and adding the historic roads. Member Madronero stated that it would be something that real estate agents could use as well. Member Mocio suggested that we also mail one out to each address. Discussion went on to talk about what we should include in the updated version: pictures need to be larger, map needs to be larger – in fact, the entire brochure should be bigger. Member Madronero also pointed out that we would need to change the name of the HPC to the HPPC and feature the parks more than they were in the original brochure. Member Piazza also suggested that we note that Montebello is a Tree City. Member Madronero suggested that we put together assigned plans of action and meet accordingly to physically sit down and carve out a plan to move forward with this. Member Mocio suggested that perhaps we also include a little more history of the designated landmarks featured in the brochure. Member Ellsworth suggested that the brochure should be kept to a size of 8-1/2"x11" or something like that for logistics such as mailing, etc. Member Piazza suggested that we could design it with more folds that would remain the same basic size when folded. Co-chair Rapoport suggested that we discuss moving forward on this at the next HPPC meeting. Member Mocio wanted clarification that our goal is to create a new brochure and then mail them out or just leave them for people to take in certain locations. Member Piazza suggested that we make that decision at a later date. Members Mocio and Madronero agreed, however, that we should decide on basic design based on brochure delivery since we can't make it too big/heavy if we decide to mail them out.

Discussion ensued about whether there will be a Montebello Day this year. Member Moetzinger indicated that as it is already June, if there will be a Montebello Day, it would likely already have been decided on. As of tonight, Montebello Day is not on the Village calendar.

Mr. Long asked if he could give an update on W3R signs. Mr. Long showed a sign that featured the National logo. Mr. Long called the National Park Service to inquire if there is a standard sign that they use. They told him that the sign that he already has is the standard W3R logo that is used along the entire route from Rhode Island to Virginia. They are allowing states and communities to do whatever they want with the sign as long as they use the approved W3R logo. Mr. Long reminded members what Mahwah had done to personalize it to its length of the route. He found one that incorporates the wording "Washington

Rochambeau March to Victory” and the dates, 1781 when they went down and 1782 when they came back. Members agreed that they liked that idea. Member Piazza asked if we could also add Village of Montebello. Mr. Long had approached the local sign maker in Suffern for costs; a 6”x12” sign with just the logo, the cost would be \$20, a 12”x12” sign with just the logo would be \$28 and an 18”x24” sign with the logo and all of the text would be \$75. Mr. Long gave him a quantity of 10 signs and that is what each sign would cost based on that quantity. Member Piazza asked if we could add the Village of Montebello logo at the bottom as well. Members agreed that all liked the “March to Victory” text. Member Ellsworth asked if the sign had to be as big as 18”x24”. All agreed that the larger sign would be easier to read from the road.

Sign placement discussion followed. Mr. Long stated that Skip Vezetti suggested that you take a map and mark out where you think you would like to have the signs installed. Then the County Highway department would sit down with their engineers and say “yay” or “nay” regarding the placement. Mr. Long had asked what is the recommended distance in terms of signage and Mr. Vezetti stated that they could work with the Village to give their recommendations based on experience. They can also take a look at what signs are already along the route and recommend based on what would work well with existing signs. Members then discussed how many and basic placement – should be at Village boundaries on Viola Road between Route 202 (Haverstraw Road) and Spook Rock, Route 202 to Viola, from Viola onto Spook Rock until it reaches the Village boundary. Mr. Long suggested members get a large map to see the whole route and then decide placement, since we also might want to have signs near side roads that cut into the route. Decision will also need to be made as to whether the signs should be consistent in size along the route. We can play with the size of the logo, etc. Members agree that the sign should note that it is the Village of Montebello. Member Piazza suggested that the sign maker might create a couple of different designs for us to choose from. Mr. Long will find out if he would do that. Co-chair Rapoport suggested members decide on how many signs we would want. Mr. Long cautioned that HPPC should find out whether Village Board will approve it and if they would be willing to spend the money. HPPC will decide on the number and give the Board a recommendation for the project. It would be best, however, for the HPPC to be specific on number, placement, and cost before approaching the Village Board. Mr. Long offered to sit down with the County Highway department with the HPPC’s suggestions and then come back with their recommendations in response. That way, the HPPC can include what the Highway Department has recommended when presented to Village Board.

Member Madronero asked if the highway department would install the signs, since they are county roads and whether we would have to supply the posts. Co-chair Rapoport suggested that we might like the posts to stay in theme with the other Village of Montebello signs (i.e., wooden posts with gold finial on top). Member Piazza cautioned that nicer posts would mean a lot more money to request. Members agreed that it would be better to go with plain metal posts. Member Madronero also noted that we then need to create the web presence to explain the route. Co-chair Rapoport stated that maybe surrounding towns along the route will notice what we have done and might also install signs so that there would be a consistent presence along the entire W3R in Rockland County. All agreed that collaboration is important. Mr. Long will mention what Montebello is doing with the W3R signs at the September County Preservation Board meeting.

Motion to close meeting made by Member Ellsworth, seconded by Member Piazza. Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.