

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE VILLAGE OF MONTEBELLO WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2008 AT VILLAGE HALL. THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:04 PM FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.**

**Roll call.**

Members Present: Hannelore Renud  
Josephine Bracken-Chairwoman  
Sandra Ward  
Valerie Rainford  
Chantal Schwartz-Ad Hoc

Others Present: Warren Berbit-Village Attorney  
Craig Long-Village Historian

Members Absent: Wayne Leone

Recording Secretary: Shelly Flanagan-Ramos-Deputy Village Clerk

**Resolution: 08-008**

Village of Montebello (HPC)

Title: Approval of Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED, the Minutes of the Meetings of the Historic Preservation Commission of March 19, April 7, May 28, June 12, August 27, and September 24, 2008 be and are hereby approved.

Motion: Member Renud

Second: Member Schwartz

Upon vote, the Resolution carried unanimously, it being understood that the members were individually voting for meetings at which they were personally in attendance.

### **Old Business:**

Chairperson Bracken announced we have not heard back yet from the New York State Historic Preservation Office regarding the grant, but has spoken to Bill Pfaff, the HPC alternate architect, and he is very interested in applying to be the one who helped begin Phase I of the architectural survey. Discussion on the Fant Property regarding construction of the cottage. Chairperson Bracken and Bill Pfaff visited the property and noted that on the top of the windows over the garage, there is an extra emblem type piece, or a keystone, that does not belong on a historic home. The pillars around the porch also look smaller than what was supposed to be. (Mr. Berbit commented that he recalled they were to be done two ways, including shingles, for HPC reaction) There is a lot of concern with the specifications that were approved and what is actually being built. Members would like to add certain stipulations into the HPC application form that when a structure is being renovated or re-built, they are informed and stay informed that it is exactly what they approved.

Discussion on the Rio Vista Project, members would like to be very involved in the building process of these homes. Chairwomen Bracken visited the property to take pictures for our "future museum", while there the trees were being taken down and she noticed a Beech Tree that possibly could be saved, but ultimately was not able to be. Members discussed having a closer relationship with the Planning Board when developers are going through the process of getting approved. She would like to use Architect Bill Pfaff's expertise more in the HPC meetings.

Discussion on the building moratorium. Attorney Berbit explained how the moratorium works, what parcels will be effected and zoning issues.

### **New Business:**

Next item on the agenda was a Public Hearing on designating Village Hall as a Historic Landmark. Chairwomen Bracken read the Mayor's application dated 9/6/08. The Clerk read the Public Hearing Notice into record:

"PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Public Hearing will be held by the Historic Preservation Commission of the Village of Montebello on Wednesday, October 22, 2008 at 7:00 pm, local time or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, to consider the recommendation of the Mayor, Jeffrey Oppenheim, to designate the structure known as "Montebello Village Hall", located at One Montebello Road (SBL: 55.8-1-2), as a local landmark, by operation of §195-60 of the Code of the Village of Montebello.

All members of the public and all interested parties are invited to attend and participate. The Historic Preservation application will be available for inspection and review at the Village office Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m."

The Village Attorney confirmed with the Deputy Clerk that the legal notice was published and posted as required by law and that copies of the application were made available to HPC members and the public.

Members discussed the application. Member Ward has a strong connection to the Village Hall property, having had family members who owned the land when it was a home. She has a lot of valuable memories and shared them openly. Mayor Oppenheim feels designation of Village Hall is very important for the future of the Village. He discussed the extensive renovations that were made as well as the preservation of the building.

Member Rainford arrived at 7:35 p.m. She wished Member Renud a "Happy Birthday".

Village Historian Craig Long gave a brief history of the property, passing around pictures dating back to 1925 of the past owners of the property. Member Ward reflected on her memories and family members. Discussion ensued. The Historian encouraged more homes to become historic landmarks. Attorney Berbit requested that the pictures Mr. Long had be put into the record.

Chairperson Bracken motioned to open the public hearing at 7:50 pm. Member Ward seconded. No one wished to speak. Member Ward motioned to close the public hearing at 7:51, Member Renud seconded, motion carried by all.

Members think it is a wonderful idea to grant historic designation to Village Hall. They were very excited when they received the application from Mayor Oppenheim. Attorney Berbit explained upon request certain HPC procedures as far as a Certificate of Appropriateness is concerned once the property becomes designated historical; he added and changed certain criterion in the resolution as directed.

Motion is made by Member Ward to recommend designating Village Hall and its surrounding environment as a historic landmark. Seconded by Member Rainford, upon vote the motion is carried unanimously.

**Resolution 08-007**

Village of Montebello (HPC)

Title: Designation of Village Hall, One Montebello Road, as a Local Landmark

WHEREAS, an application dated September 6, 2008 was made to the Historic Preservation Commission ("HPC") by the Mayor, Jeffrey Oppenheim, seeking to have the Village Hall property located at One Montebello Road, known as 55-8-1-2 on the Tax Map of the Town of Ramapo, designated as a local landmark pursuant to Chapter 195-60 of the Code of the Village of Montebello; and

WHEREAS a public hearing was held on said application at the Village Hall on October 22, 2008 and the Village Attorney ascertained that due notice was given by publishing and posting of the Legal Notice which reads as follows:

"PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Public Hearing will be held by the Historic Preservation Commission of the Village of Montebello on Wednesday, October 22, 2008 at 7:00 pm, local time or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, to consider the recommendation of the Mayor, Jeffrey Oppenheim, to designate the structure known as "Montebello Village Hall", located at One Montebello Road (SBL: 55.8-1-2), as a local landmark, by operation of §195-60 of the Code of the Village of Montebello.

All members of the public and all interested parties are invited to attend and participate. The Historic Preservation application will be available for inspection and review at the Village office Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.,"

and by said Legal Notice, the letter and the application to the Village, having been provided to the Applicant, Members of the HPC, Village Board, Village Historian, Building Inspector and Village Attorney, and such having been simultaneously made available to the public; and

WHEREAS, the applicant, Mayor Jeffrey Oppenheim, appeared and gave testimony in support, affirming his application, and emphasizing the importance of the building as the gateway structure, its historical importance vis-à-vis the Village in connection to the founders thereof, and to Pearly Morse, an important historical figure, and those who followed, as well as to demonstrate that the Village, itself, takes historic preservation very seriously; and

WHEREAS, the Village Historian appeared and gave testimony recommending that the Village Hall and environs be granted historic landmark status for the reasons stated by the Mayor, and for the following additional reasons:

1. Pearly Morse, who owned the entire property which came to be known as the Schwartz Estate, and then Montebello Pines, lived in the estate house therein, and severed off the corner parcel, which became the Village Hall, to build the home for his son, Stanley, and his bride, Blanche Ward.
2. The architect is believed to be George Fowler, who had a practice in NYC, but built and lived in the stone house on Mile Road opposite the side entrance to Suffern High School and was responsible for other stone structures in the area, including the first Suffern Free Library building ;and

WHEREAS, Historic Preservation Commission member Sandra Ward added to the record her knowledge and remembrances, Blanche Morse having been her Great Aunt, thus enabling her to identify persons and events depicted in the photographs supplied by the Historian, also amplifying Pearly Morse's importance to the federal government, he and his firm having served an important role as lead, investigative accountants looking into corporate corruption in and around the Depression Era; and

WHEREAS, no members of the public appeared or wished to speak, the Public Hearing portion was opened and closed at about 7:50 p.m and the HPC deliberated in public; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the Legal Notice and Affidavit of Publishing and Posting of same, the following documents were included in the record and duly considered:

1. Application dated September 6, 2008, as stamped in by the Recording Clerk on September 9, 2008
2. Mayor Jeffrey Oppenheim letter dated August 28, 2008
3. Historical photographs introduced by the Village Historian. ; and

WHEREAS, in the course of its deliberation the HPC considered the importance of the property as the first Village Hall owned by the Village, the prominence of former owners or occupants, its architectural style and its importance as the gateway to the Village, and the desirability of the Village setting a good example, as factors in deciding whether the property should be designated.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the HPC makes the following findings pursuant to 195-60 (D) of the Code:

1. With respect to the criterion that the subject is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of history of the Village of Montebello, Rockland County, the Hudson River Valley region, New York State or the United States of America, it concludes that the continued use of the home and environs as the first Village Hall owned by the Village represents association with events that significantly contributed to the broad pattern of history, as does the connection to Pearly Morse a significant historical figure with long standing familial connection to the area, that connection also including the Ward family, the latter dating back to the mid-1800's.

2. With respect to the criterion that the subject is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, it concludes that association with those persons who formed the Village, as well as with the former owners, including Pearly Morse, associated with the development of the addressograph and with high level accounting investigations for the federal government, who built the house, circa 1922, as a wedding present for his son, Stanley, who married Blanche Ward, meets this criterion.

3. With respect to the criterion that the subject embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction of that represents the work of a master or that possesses high artistic values or that represent a significant or distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, it concludes that as per the opinion of the Village Historian, the use of stone and slate, the natural architectural style and the columns and porch, such represents a fine example of Tudor construction with nature stone, and appears to be representative of George Fowler's work, a local architect of some renown.

4. With respect to the criterion that the subject has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to prehistory or history, it concludes that in addition to the lives of the former owners, the pivotal role that the building and its environs played in the infancy and maturation of the Village are likely to yield information important to history.

5. With respect to the criterion that because of unique location or singular physical characteristics, the subject representing an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood in which it is situated, it concludes that such is the case since the structure is a significant landmark that has stood at the gateway to the neighborhood and now represents the gateway of the Village; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in light of the foregoing findings, that the HPC makes the following recommendations to the Village Board:

1. With respect to the designation of local landmark, that the Village Hall and its entire environs be designated a local historic landmark, thus setting the stage for the entire Village by recognizing this wonderful gateway building which also reflects the lives and times of families which form a significant part of the founding bedrock of our Village and it's geography.

Motion: Member Ward

Second: Member Rainford

Upon vote, the Resolution carried unanimously

Mayor Oppenheim will have Member Ward's website linked to the Village website for all to view her historical photos of the Village. Member Ward wishes to speak to Montebello Seniors who may have photos and interesting stories to tell.

Mayor Oppenheim mentioned that the Building Inspector, Harry Lewis, and Planning & Zoning Board Clerk, Carol Adduce (who has 20 years of service to the village), will be retiring at the end of the year. There will be an evening dinner the first Friday in December.

**Resolution 08-006**

Village of Montebello (HPC)

Title: Change Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Date

BE IT RESOLVED, due to the holidays and subject to availability of the meeting room, that the November meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission be held on November 19, 2008 and that no meeting be held in December.

Motion: Member Ward

Second: Member Renud

Upon vote, the Resolution carried unanimously.

Member Renud made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Member Ward seconded and the motion was carried by all.