

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE VILLAGE OF MONTEBELLO WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2013 AT THE MONTEBELLO VILLAGE HALL. THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:45 PM, ROLL CALL WAS TAKEN, FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Roll call.

Members Present: Lisa Levin-Chairperson
William Smith
Rosemary Mocio
William Ellsworth
Dorice Madronero

Members Absent: Matthew Moetzing

Others Present: Warren E. Berbit, Village Attorney
Craig Long-Village Historian

Shelly Flanagan-Ramos-Deputy Village Clerk -Transcriber of Minutes

Old Business:

Chairperson Levin stated that the CLG Grant application for training was submitted on or about January 31st, 2013. She was not sure of the timetable but will advise when she hears something.

If the entire requested \$7,000.00 grant is awarded, a date will be set and a full day of training will be scheduled with the National Alliance of Preservation Commission (NAPC), which would take place at the Community Center with members of the Rockland County Historical Society participating as well. There will be a catered lunch and light refreshments for break periods.

Discussion on who could participate in the training class. Only CLG members are able to participate. There is a cap of 30 individuals in the training class, excluding host staff members. Historian Long stated there are 8 or 9 County members, there is an additional fee per person of \$25.00 over the 30.

The Village is responsible for providing the audio visual equipment.

Next item for discussion was the Montebello Road Bridge update.

Chairperson Levin announced that from the Village perspective the County is very aware of and very willing to consider the historic nature of the bridge. If the stone can be reused they will use

it. They will replace bricks if they cannot be rehabilitated. The final design is not “set in stone yet” there are 4 different designs to choose from. County Legislature Ilan Schoenberger made certain that he will keep the Village in the loop with the design and any new developments.

Member Smith spoke of a flyer of the design that was sent out.

The County has not awarded the contract to anyone yet.

Members discussed the design and specifications of the bridge. Member Smith stated the bridge span is going to be 4 feet longer, so that the river flows more freely, and he assumes the bridge will be higher. The County is trying to rectify the downstream issues in Suffern, as well as trying to make the Village happy, in the interim he has a problem with them trying to make everyone happy.

Member Madronero understands that there has not been an updated comprehensive study /survey of the river by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers since the 80’s. She hoped the Corp is very much involved in the project particularly with the flooding as it affects Suffern.

Discussion ensued on Hurricane Irene, the damming effect of the river downstream, the wetlands/flood plain areas of Lake Antrim and Lake Road.

Discussion on the acquisition and tentative appraisals of # 8 & #14 Lake Road homes. Mr. Berbit explained how the acquisition/demolition process will take place.

Craig Long mentioned that the Village Hall historical marker is still in the works. It will have to go before the Village Board for approval on the wording.

The marker will be paid for from the Parks Commission budget.

Member Smith asked to go back to the bridge discussion, he recommended the Commission pick the color of the stone for the bridge; he would like to make it more aesthetically appealing. He asked if there was a liaison that the Commission could turn to for this process. Members mentioned Skip Vezzetti, the County Highway Superintendent.

Member Mocio stated the County said they would try and use the stone that was there. Member Smith would like to know what they are doing before it gets done. It will be very costly to clean the stone, which has water damage, which is the part that is labor intensive. It is a natural stone.

Member Madronero stated she would like to see the Village reuse the stone from the bridge on another project if the County does not use it. Member Ellsworth stated it would require machinery to move.

Mr. Berbit suggested using the quarried stone on the trails in the Gorman Ponds Park as possible steps. Members thought that would be a great idea, but did not think the boy/eagle scouts would be able to move the materials. Realistically it may not be feasible.

Attorney Berbit suggested using the stone to increase the downstream channel size, as rip-rap. A lot of manpower would be needed for this type of stacking.

Attorney Berbit recommended that the Commission stay on top of this issue by sending suggestions to the County in an active and proactive way, before the specifications of the detail are finished. He felt that if the contractor that is awarded the job is moving material from the bridge, maybe they can drop the stone in an area of the park to be used, as it does have historical value. Members all agreed.

Member Ellsworth noted the Haverstraw Park and how the materials were distributed when it was taken apart.

The ponds in the Gorman Ponds Park are going to be dredged eventually; maybe it can be used in that project. These are all just suggestions. It may be less expensive than hauling away. Stones are a valuable commodity.

There have not been any residents who have shown interest in historically designating their property. Although, Member Smith mentioned possibly designating his property located at 1 Lake Road.

Member Mocio wondered who to talk to showing a desire to use the stone from the bridge. Chairperson Levin would find out. She did not want to call anyone in particular, she will find out the proper people by starting with the Village Clerk.

New Business:

96 Viola Road- Owner Yosef Emuna. The former Cronin House. Historian Long gave a brief summary of the subdivision process back with the former owners and went on to say that the home in its current state is uninhabitable. The New owner Mr. Emuna wishes to demolish the current structure because it is cost prohibited to keep. Mr. Long and Mr. Spence, the village engineer surveyed the home, coming up with a number in the range of \$200,000-\$300,000 to restore. There are issues with the basement not being structurally sound, having termite rot, the kitchen is gone, the bathroom upstairs is gone, but Mr. Long stated that having been a municipal historian since 1985 and having fought with trying to save homes, there have been homes in a lot worse shape than this one. He felt that this damage may have occurred recently, possible by vandals.

He passed photos around of the home to the Commission.

Recently there were issues with sight distance on the corner of this property, as it is located at Spook Rock and Viola Road; the large tree has been removed. There is wonderful cobblestone wall on the property, which the current owner would like to remove.

Mr. Long stated the former owners were favorable to gaining subdivision approval if they would submit the form to protect the house, but it was never done. The new owner would like to demolish the entire house and build a new one.

Chairperson Levin asked about the discussion the Planning Board had when granting the 2 lot subdivision approval regarding registering the home as historic. Mr. Long stated that was only a discussion, he has already spoken to the Attorney for the Planning Board about that meeting. It has no binding impact and it was only a discussion. However, he was disappointed with the lack of interest in saving the home, or at least in the belief that that was not feasible.

Members discussed the Fant Farm cottage that was demolished “accidentally”

Craig Long suggested for the record that the HPC send a letter to the Planning Board stating they strongly recommend trying to preserve the home located at 96 Viola Road. This should be done rather quickly to avoid the new homeowner approaching the Building Department for a demolition permit.

Mr. Long also wanted to state for the record that the Village Engineer Martin Spence testified at a ZBA meeting that there was significant damage to the house, which would be very costly to repair, but the foundation is in good shape, the building inspector recommended the home be inspected by a professional structural engineer due to sustained damage over the years. There is no evidence of water damage, as it appeared relatively dry.

Mr. Long stated the Rockland County Planning Department recommended the home be preserved. The home is not on any kind of national or state historic register.

Discussion ensued on the value of remodeling the home versus demolishing the home and the interior rooms of the home.

Member Madronero wondered how demolishing the home would mitigate the issues with sight distance on the corner. It was stated that once the home is demolished, the cobblestone wall would be removed and the new home would be built further back on the property.

Member Ellsworth made a motion that the HPC should at least send a letter to the Planning Board to consider the historical nature, age of the structure, location, and the many built-ins inside the interior. There is not very much more the HPC can do. Member Mocio seconded that motion. All were in favor.

Attorney Berbit recommended sending a letter to the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Asst. Attorney suggesting that next time a historic property appear before them that the Historic Preservation Commission is apprised of such.

Motion was made by Member Madronero and seconded by Member Mocio to adjourn the meeting, all were in favor.

Meeting ends 9:25 p.m.