

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE VILLAGE OF MONTEBELLO WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015 AT THE MONTEBELLO VILLAGE HALL. THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 8:10 PM, FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ROLL CALL WAS TAKEN.

Roll call.

Members Present: Matt Moetzinger
William Ellsworth
Dorice Madronero-Acting Chairperson
William Smith

Members Absent: Lisa Levin – Chairperson
Rosemary Mocio

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

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

Member Madronero is acting chairman in the absence of Lisa Levin.

Resolution: 15-003

Village of Montebello

Title: Approval of Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission of February 25, 2015, be and are hereby approved.

Motion: Member Ellsworth

Second: Member Moetzinger

Upon vote, the Resolution carried unanimously.

Old Business:

Discussion ensued regarding the Village Hall marker. Seewa Studios did the previous markers. This studio has the Village logo on file, (copper and gold with extruder aluminum), for a 36x24 marker with posts, similar to the size and character count (891) of the marker at Indian Rock, cost will be approximately \$1600, this included shipping. Installation is not included in that price. With past installation, the County or Town Highway Department obliged in helping, it

was suggested they be asked again. The budget allocated for the marker at Village Hall was from a previous year's budget, members hoped the money was still available. Ms. Madronero stated this has been a priority item for the HPC for a while now. She asked about how long it would take for the marker to be made. The Historian responded that David at Seewa Studios said about 4-6 weeks once he receives the verbiage.

Members suggested an "unveiling" on Montebello Day since there is great resident turnout; it would be an ideal day.

The verbiage will be examined by the Village Attorney; who will add a few words, and then passed onto the Village Board for approval. Mr. Long will return to the next meeting with a draft of the wording so members can review. A workshop was suggested to give assistance to Mr. Long, but he did not think that was necessary, it can be done at the May meeting. Member Ellsworth too thought a workshop, and then it could be given to the Village Board in time for their May meeting. Mr. Long stated that if Seewa was told the Village needed the marker by a certain time, it would be done; they already have the logo on file. Prior to the next meeting, Mr. Long will email a copy of the draft verbiage to everyone. The target installation date will be before Montebello Day

The initial draft of the verbiage was shared with Mr. Sandra Ward, a former member of the Historic Preservation Commission. Her family resided in the home at Village Hall years ago.

New Business:

Discussion ensued regarding the issue of the demolition of the Lent House in Orangetown. Chairman Levin would like to create a "Montebello Endangered Properties Initiative". Members discussed what this means.

Mr. Berbit stated that once a property is designated as historic the property owner has an obligation to maintain the exterior. He explained the process, if a homeowner wanted to do any exterior work that required a building permit the building inspector notifies the Commission for review and comments. The owner would then be obligated to adhere to changes consistent with what the Commission dictated.

Mr. Long stated that even though a house may be on the National Registry, it is afforded a measure of protection with respect to a review process by the owner, and unless funding has been put aside to save the structure to perform renovations, it can easily be torn down, as with the Lent House. Funding had been requested to save this historic sandstone structure but it was taking too much time to get approved; in the meantime the developers of the property were moving along through the process of obtaining a demolition permit. They had been waiting and waiting for someone to come and save it, but funding was never received. The property will be used as a parking lot. It was noted that some of the material was saved, and because of what happened to the sandstone Lent House, Craig Long suggested to the Supervisor in the Town of Orangetown to examine Montebello's Historic Preservation Code, as well as the Architectural

Review process. He recommended they adopt this same type of Code. The problem that arises is that it is very difficult to reach out to homeowner's to designate their homes.

Discussion ensued on sandstone houses throughout the County.

Member Madronero has completed two terms, six years, on the Rockland County Historical Society and is no longer a member. She still continues to be very interested in Rockland History.

Member Moetzinger stated there are dozens upon dozens of potentially historic homes that could be designated that are listed in the Reconnaissance Level Survey Booklet, and thought the best way to outline which ones to start with is to take a triage approach to identify ones that are worth saving or most worthy of designation, then to prioritize that list. Member Madronero thought it made sense to do a type of laser targeting, to try and reintroduce historic preservation again to the residents with historic properties. Raising awareness by reaching out to everyone..

It was suggested to reach out to homeowners that have applied to the Zoning Board, to be more proactive in encouraging designation if they require a variance or any kind. Mr. Berbit had the same idea.

Member discussed the deteriorating properties located at 84, 90 and 96 Viola Road; these properties have not been improved upon, and have gone into further disrepair over the years.

Mr. Long gave a brief history on those properties, remarking that the house at #84 has structural issues inside, and #90 appears to have many, many vehicles parked haphazardly on the property.

There is concern about the barn deteriorating on the Fant Farm property. Member Moetzinger, who resides next door, said there has been activity on that property over the last few weeks. The building inspector has visited, shingles have been delivered, and progress is being made on the barn. The windows on the northwest corner have been repaired but there are still more that remain broken. It appears that every other weekend there are still parties happening. He had originally thought there were four fraternity students from Ramapo College listed on the lease, but there have been a lot more vehicles lately. Member Ellsworth wondered if there was any way to actually find out how many people live there. The County Board of Health would need to get involved to better access the property. A Rockland County Task Force was formed to handle issues such as overcrowding, there may be a possibility that they get involved due to safety concerns. Mr. Berbit felt that it was time for the Village to become involved to do an investigation. A few complaints have been filed with the police department, as Mr. Moetzinger has personally witnessed underage drinking. Students occupy the house in the summer, when college ends for the semester, but it's not as active. The village has a noise ordinance. The Township of Mahwah in New Jersey, which is where Ramapo College is located, does not allow this type of housing. Mr. Moetzinger thought the same fraternity was living on Mile Road for a year but have since moved to Spook Rock Road. A remedy needs to be figured out, this is becoming a nuisance.

Discussion on the homeowner that removed trees from their property through the Warren Berbit Preserve on Spook Rock Road.

Dorice Madronero asked Mr. Long about the possibility of placing a historic marker at the Suffern Middle School. What better site than an educational spot about history. She asked if he had a bit of history that could be put together for the verbiage. He gave a brief summary of the history of the school building, which was built in 1941. The Ramapo Central School District was the first district in the County to centralize.

Mr. Moetzing read an excerpt regarding the school. (from the internet)

Dorice wondered if this was something that would have to go before the school board. Mr. Long was not sure. The Commission could ask.

Mr. Ellsworth asked what the first step would be to get this project moving along. Mr. Berbit said it was to convince the Montebello Village Board to spend money on School District property.

Member Ellsworth made a motion to have the Village Historian speak to the Superintendent of the Ramapo Central School District to determine if there was interest in placing a marker on-site at the School, which would give background historical insight and details, Member Smith seconded, and the motion carried by all.

Discussion on the type of marker that will be chosen, and price. The Village Board had made it clear that they would like all the markers to match that are placed around the Village.

Old Business:

The Montebello Road Bridge is making progress. All the pylons have been driven; foundation walls are up. Members are hopeful it will be finished this year.

Members conversed on the design of the Tappan Zee Bridge.

With no further discussion on historic preservation, a motion was made by Member Ellsworth, seconded by Member Moetzing to adjourn the meeting, motioned carried by all.

The meeting ended at 9:10 p.m.