

Town of New Paltz Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Wednesday December 20th 2017 7:00PM - 9:00PM in the Community Center

Commissioners attending: John Orfitelli (Chair), Caryn Sobel (Vice Chair), Susan DeMark, Dawn Elliott.

Also Attending: Joe Moriello, New Paltz Town Attorney

Agenda

1. Public Comment
2. Incentives for Historic Presentation
3. Review/Approve November Minutes
4. Historic Landmark Signage for Put Corners Cemetery
 - a. Interpretive Plaque Design
5. Gateway Committee Update

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 pm with a motion from Dawn Elliott and seconded by Susan DeMark. Motion carried.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. **Public Comment:** No public comments were received.
2. **Incentives for Historic Preservation:** John Orfitelli provided Town Attorney, Joe Moriello, with a brief overview of the need for incentives and highlighted his recent experience with owners of the fifteen stone houses in the Town that qualify for designation. As cited in our [presentation to the Town Board on June 1st](#) only one of the property owners agreed to proceed with the designation process. Based on this response, the HPC decided to examine various incentives that would encourage owners to allow the Commission to designate their properties as local historic landmarks.

Joe Moriello shared his thoughts on how to encourage home owners to participate in the designation process, namely,

- **Quantify the Impact on Valuations:** Joe suggested contacting the Town Assessor, Tricia Masterson, to obtain how designation as a landmark would protect property valuations. John Orfitelli agreed to meet with Tricia Masterson to determine how to quantify the impact of changes that were not consistent with the historic character of the property. For example, how would the valuation of a stone house be impacted by covering the stone with aluminum siding?
- **Provide a Phased Tax Exemption:** Joe Moriello encouraged the Commission to recommend the Town Board move to adopt a local law exempting historic properties from real property taxation for the percentage of increased value due to changes decreasing 100% to 0% over 10 years. The phased tax exemption which was introduced by a 1997 Ithaca Bill and passed into law by the NY State Legislature is available for all municipalities.

Criteria for exemption:

- Designation Status
- Adherence to Local Preservation Law
- Compliance with Process Through Assessor

Joe Moriello described the process for creating a fund for use by the HPC to assist property owners of designated landmarks based on fees from real estate transactions. Basically, creating any type of tax or fee on home owners requires action by the State Legislature. Special legislation would be needed to allow New Paltz to implement a real estate tax that would support historic preservation. An example of special legislation is The Land and Agriculture Preservation Fund in Warwick which allows the Town to raise funds through taxes that are used to acquire land for preservation. Other states including Connecticut and Texas have legislation that collects fees on real estate transactions to support historic preservation.

The Commission agreed to request support from the Town Board on moving forward with a proposal to the State Legislature to allow New Paltz to collect a fee on real estate transactions for the purpose of helping owners of historic landmarks.

- 3. Review/Approve November Minutes** Motion to approve minutes from our meeting on November 15th was made by Susan DeMark, seconded by Dawn Elliott. Motion carried. John Orfitelli agreed to post a pdf version with active links (once converted by Caryn Sobel from .doc file).

4. Historic Landmark Signage

- a) Interpretive Plaque Design:** Members of the Commission continued to work on collecting materials in the three categories:

- Local Historic Context
- Cultural History
- Family Histories and Images

Dawn Elliott: to utilize Ancestry.com along with the names and dates in the spreadsheet records provided by John Orfitelli to search for family photos or other related information. Dawn agreed to follow-up with Susan Stessin-Cohn who indicated interest in working with the Commission on this project.

Caryn Sobel: to research the Deyo archives, visit Carol Johnson at the Library, check with HHS, and contact our Town historian Susan Stessin-Cohn to discuss other resources.

Kate Brodowska: to check with [Luminary Media Publishing](#) for related materials. Kate also can provide resources to have a mounting platform built to hold the plaque.

- 5. Gateway Committee Update:** John Orfitelli distributed the [Gateway Committee report draft](#) to the Commission for review and comment. A number of changes were made by the Committee at the [Monday meeting on 12/18](#). Deadline for submitting final changes is 1/8/2018. The final report will be presented to the Town Board on 2/15/2018.

Motion to adjourn was made by Caryn Sobel and seconded by Dawn Elliott. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:51pm.

Next Meeting is Wednesday, January 17th 2018.