

Town of New Paltz Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Wednesday May 21st 2014 7:30PM - 9:30PM at the Town Hall

Commissioners attending: John Orfitelli (Chair), Helen Christie (Vice Chair), Caryn Sobel, and Dave Gilmour along with Town Historian, Susan Stessin-Cohn.

Also attending:

- Stacy Matson-Zuvic, NYS Historic Preservation Office.

Agenda

1. Public Comment
2. Review/Approve Minutes from March
3. SHPO Audit
4. Landmark Initiative Grant
 - Review April Notes: March Recap
 - Outreach Event
5. Rowley CoA Memorandum of Decision
6. Mohonk Preserve Request for Letter of Support
7. Use of Social Media

Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 7:35pm by motion from Caryn Sobel, seconded by Helen Christie. Motion carried.

1. **Public Comment:** No public comments were received.
2. **Review/Approve Minutes from March:** Motion to approve minutes was made by Caryn Sobel, seconded by Helen Christie, motion carried.

Discussion with Susan Stessin-Cohn:

White Duck Farm: John Orfitelli mentioned how meeting minutes dated March 2006 (now published on our web site) highlighted the designation of White Duck Farm as having been approved by the Commission. However, as documented in recent meeting minutes, Helen Christie could not find the designation as recorded by the Ulster County Clerk. Susan Stessin-Cohn, who was instrumental in the creating the White Duck Farm designation, agreed to check with the County Clerk's office to determine if and where the signed designation documentation has been filed.

Outreach: Susan Stessin-Cohn, who previously worked with Historic Huguenot Street, described her experiences at HHS and stimulated a discussion for various outreach efforts including:

- **Mobile Apps:** Since creating a mobile app would require programming skills, this would be an excellent candidate for a SUNY Participate in Government student or future SHPO grant with SUNY CRREO.
- **Student Internships:** John Orfitelli has posted internships at SUNY and participated in Job Fair events held each semester at the SUNY Student Center. While so far not successful, it was agreed that the internship material should be updated and reactivated.
- **Use of Social Media** including Blogs, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook: A topic which has been championed by Caryn Sobel and documented in recent minutes, the use of social media clearly

offers significant potential for outreach activities. Caryn agreed to contact Town Board Member, Dan Torres, to discuss the status of the Town's social media efforts and guidelines. Also, Caryn agreed to create a twitter account specific to the HPC. Caryn stated that she currently gets Tweets from Historic Preservation organizations ranging from Federal to Local levels. Susan Stessin-Cohn has an active blog related to local historic topics. A walking tour of historic homes would be ideal for a YouTube video (another grant candidate).

- **Fund Raising** – Utilize the Interactive On-Line Map to draw attention to our efforts. Hold scavenger hunts requiring the use of the map and data.

3. SHPO Audit: Prior to our meeting, Stacy Matson-Zuvic, from the NYS Historic Preservation Office, conducted an audit of the Town of New Paltz HPC for the period 10/1/09 – 10/31/13. A summary of the results and recommendations will be provided to Susan Zimet and John Orfitelli within the next 30 days. Stacy requested materials be provided to Lorraine Weiss which had not been provided to date, namely, updated resumes for the Commissioner's and a description of the recent notification amendment to our local law,. Dave Gilmour agreed to create a description of the local law amendment for submission to SHPO.

Dave Gilmour presented the following observations to Stacy:

- There seem to be limited CLG-training opportunities ID'd/publicized in proximity. Plus, we don't get opportunity to interact much with adjacent and area CLGs, both of which could be facilitated by SHPO staff (and both and especially latter something we have discussed actively addressing ourselves and which is germane, as a resource like Mohonk is regional in nature).
- When national register / section 106 referrals occur, there often is not clarity on specific policy triggers, scope and project context. In the very small set of cases this CLG was consulted on (seemingly too small), the point of contact seems to have occurred late in the overall regulatory process. Rather, I believe we seek to achieve much earlier communication on potential projects and active projects, and in so doing be afforded fuller Interested party status. Example - two projects circa 2011.
- SHPO online tools do not function effectively; yet, these do have useful data and serve important roles in enabling CLG admin, review and outreach. This is compounded by SHPO staff downplaying utility of tools, seldom if ever offering training, lack of functional user manuals, and awkward aspects of software, and some information being hard to access or not being available online (ex. state register and inventory eligible for same). SHPO staff has not been clear in providing outreach on what the the functions will be of new tools, rollout, training, etc. In the meantime, CLG in limbo with hampered access to existing tools.

4. Landmark Initiative Grant

- **Review April Notes: March Recap:** John Orfitelli reviewed his notes from the April meeting with Neil Larson and Jill Fisher and in particular the **Outreach Event** and status of the **Next Steps**:
 - **The Outreach Event** is a critical time sensitive first step in the Designation Initiative. The following outline describes the key aspects discussed at the meeting.
 - **Date: Wednesday, June 4th**, was considered the best date given prep time and proximity to various family events such as graduations.
 - **Time: 6:30pm, Duration: 1.5 – 2 hours:** Jill to moderate with 15 min PowerPoint presentations by Neil Larsen and John Orfitelli. The goal is to introduce property owners to the historic context of stone houses in New Paltz (Neil) and an overview of the designation process (John) then quickly get to Q&A where most of the issues/concerns can be addressed.
 - **Location:** Deyo Hall, provides a historically significant and non-political venue.
 - **Invitation Letter:** Jill Fisher agreed to draft a letter of introduction for stone house property owners that will also serve as an invitation to the event. Helen Christie will

create the mailing list from the resource inventory data subset associated with stone houses. The letter will be sent on 5/19/2014, about two weeks prior to the event.

- **Testimonials:** Gerri Buck and Rich Rowley will be invited to provide their experience and perspective on the designation process.
- **Handouts:** Several documents and examples to be provided to property owners include: Landmark Nomination Application, Decision Letter, and Review Guidelines.
- **Map Video DVD:** To keep the meeting as short as possible, the video will not be shown but rather a copy of the Interactive On-Line Map video will be provided to each property owner.
- **Presentation Outline:**
 - Introductions
 - Stone House Context (Neil) 15 min
 - Designation and CoA Process (John) 15 min
 - Testimonials
 - Q&A

Refreshments: Ice tea, water, cookies,...

Next Steps (All Completed as of May 21):

- ✓ John Orfitelli to arrange for use of Deyo Hall on 6/4/2014 for 6:30pm – 8:30pm.
 - ✓ John Orfitelli to create list of stone houses from Resource Inventory spreadsheet and provide to Helen Christie.
 - ✓ Jill Fisher to create draft of invitation letter.
 - ✓ Helen Christie to create owner address mailing list from stone house inventory data.
 - ✓ John Orfitelli will create a project time sheet to keep track of Commission activity.
- **Outreach Event:** In addition to the Next Steps items shown above, John Orfitelli edited the draft invitation letter provided by Jill Fisher into a formal copy with Town Logo and HPC letter head. Helen Christie mailed the letters to the 18 candidate stone house property owners. The Commissioner agreed to place phone calls to each property owner in order to determine if they were planning to attend. Helen agreed to obtain and distribute the phone numbers of the property owners to the Commission. The list was divided between the Commissioners in order to expedite the phone contact process. John Orfitelli agreed to personally invite Geri Buck, George Sifri, and Rich Rowley to the event as supporters of our efforts. The grant specifies that designation materials on 15 properties will be provided by Neil Larsen by 9/30/2014. The Commission will then proceed to complete the landmark designation process over the next several months.

5. Rowley CoA Memorandum of Decision: John Orfitelli reviewed the decision letter for the Rowley CoA which has been recorded by the Building Inspector and Town Clerk.

6. Mohonk Preserve Request for Letter of Support: John Orfitelli provided a letter of support to Rose Harvey, Commissioner, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation on behalf of Mohonk Preserve's application for the Testimonial Gateway Trailhead Project – Phase 2: Implementation.

7. Use of Social Media (covered in Discussion Item)

Motion to adjourn was made by Dave Gilmour and seconded by Caryn Sobel. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.

Next Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 18th at 7:30pm in the Town Hall.