

Town of New Paltz Historic Preservation Commission Meeting
Wednesday December 16th 2015 7:30PM - 9:30PM at the Community Center

Commissioners attending: John Orfitelli (Chair), Caryn Sobel, Dawn Elliot, and Helen Christie (Dan Torres was not available due to a joint Town/Village Meeting requiring his attendance).

Also in attendance:

Mike Moriello, Land Management Attorney for Mohonk Preserve
Glenn Hoagland, Executive Director, Mohonk Preserve
Ron Knapp, Board of Directors, Mohonk Preserve
Ted Kolankowski, Managing Landscape Architect, Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C.

Agenda

1. Public Comment
2. Mohonk Foothills Project CoA
3. Other Items
 - a) Review of OSI Action on Red Barn
 - b) Review/Approve Minutes from November 2015
 - c) Financial Disclosure Statement Reminder
 - d) Meeting Schedule for 2016

Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by motion from Caryn Sobel, seconded by John Orfitelli, motion carried.

1. Public Comment: No public comments were received.

2. Mohonk Foothills Project CoA:

The Commission reviewed the following responses and proposed mitigations from Ted Kolankowski, Managing Landscape Architect, provided to the HPC and Planning Board in a letter dated November 25, 2015 regarding the concerns submitted by our consultant Neil Larson of Larson Fisher Associates (detailed drawings, specifications, and references in this letter will be published on our site as part of the supporting Material associated with the CoA application):

1. Paving of the Allée: The paving of the pin oak allée should preserve the historic integrity of the feature. A pervious surface, preferably a gravel with bluestone content, was recommended in earlier discussions.

The surface of Lenape Lane will be restored consistent with the historic surfacing along the Oak Allee. The Preserve intends to utilize the proposed gravel surfacing and routine maintenance recommended in the "Restoration and Maintenance Manual for the Shawangunk Carriage Road Systems" (Manual) as adopted by the Mohonk Mountain House, Mohonk Preserve, and Minnewaska State Park Preserve. There is flexibility in the design of the wearing surface of the pavement to make adjustments in the composition of the aggregates and the Preserve is willing to work with the HPC during final design to develop a system that will comply with historic integrity of the surface. (See attached details and specifications from the Manual)

2. Location of Services: The potential adverse visual impacts the proposed parking area will have on the Testimonial Gateway are not adequately mitigated in the plans provided. The applicant should be requested to shift the congregating area and visitor services to one side or the other of the proposed site and out of direct view of the historic building.

The Preserve will mitigate these identified impacts by shifting the facilities to the east side of the reception space including the vaulted toilet. In addition, to more effectively screening views of the reception area from the gatehouse the Preserve intends to add the appropriate screening vegetation towards screening views of the gatehouse so as to direct visitors to the trail entrances to Lenape Lane which provide more appropriate initial viewing vistas of the historic gatehouse. The Preserve is working on the development of a planting design to ensure that any adverse visual impacts on the Testimonial Gateway can be mitigated. (See Plan Sheet G 1.1)

3. Location of access to the Hasbrouck House: The Wawarsing Turnpike is a significant historic feature that will be significantly altered by the proposed project. The section providing access to the Hasbrouck House appears to be essentially intact to its historic dimensions and features. Widening the road will have a potential adverse effect as will the proposal to construct a 10-ft.-wide "dry swale" along the easterly side of the roadway. Every effort should be made to preserve the historic road materials and roadside features to mitigate the potential adverse impacts of the road widening. An alternative to the proposed paving is needed, as well as more detailed plans for the preservation of the roadside. The portion of the roadway proposed to be bypassed by a new entry from Rt.299 should be preserved as-is rather than "reclaimed as upland meadow." The construction of a "new vehicle turnaround" at the northeasterly end of the Wawarsing Turnpike will also have a potential adverse impact on the integrity of the historic roadway. The need for the "turnaround" should be reconsidered. Removing it and preserving the scale, materials and roadside characteristics would eliminate the need to mitigate this potential adverse impact. An alternative that would remove any potential adverse impacts to the Wawarsing Turnpike would be to construct a new road along the tree-line on the easterly side of the meadow east of the turnpike. This impact would be mitigated by the preservation of the historic turnpike and the reduced visual impacts to the house.

We believe the concerns for impacts along the Old Wawarsing turnpike can be addressed in part by clarifying the design intent which is to minimally widen the existing pavement by 2-3'. Using historical aerial photographs, we were able to determine that the existing gravel surfaced pathway approaching Hasbrouck House varies in width from about 17' to 18'. To provide for safe two-way passage of school buses which will access the conservation educational facilities at Hasbrouck House, the drive would need to be the specified 20' in width. The pavement surface of the Old Wawarsing Turnpike will be restored consistent with the Shawangunk Carriage Road Systems Manual discussed in our response to the paving of the Oak Allee above. The 10' wide dry swale is intended to address the stormwater pollution prevention needs of the project and once constructed will be planted with the appropriate meadow plantings, thus providing a consistent agricultural meadow appearance to the new edge of pavement. The Preserve is confident that the finished surface of the pavement and the plantings of the 'dry swale' will preserve the overall historic appearance of the Old Wawarsing Turnpike. In addition, as an additional mitigation measure the Preserve will voluntarily add interpretive signage at this last remaining intact portion of the turnpike at this trailhead which will provide historic information about the history of the Wawarsing Turnpike. The remainder of the Wawarsing Turnpike will be preserved in its current state as a turf pathway.

The Preserve recognizes the concerns of the HPC regarding the proposed turnaround, however, the need for this facility arose in response to meetings with neighboring residents who requested that foothills parking be dispersed and not concentrated at the Testimonial Gateway site. Similarly to previous discussed surfacing, the new vehicle turnaround discussed in the second part of this comment will be surfaced with a system that is compliant with the Shawangunk Carriage Road Systems Manual. The Preserve is working to effect design changes including changes in surfacing, the inclusion of additional screening plant materials, reorientation of the facilities and other alternatives to help further mitigate the visual impact of the turnaround.

We propose to further revise the 'bus turnaround' area to be more respectful of the history of the Wawarsing Turnpike by creating a single entrance drive off of the turnpike to the parking and turnaround area (see the attached sketch). Rather than appearing to be a termination or interruption of the turnpike, the original road alignment would be the visually dominant feature under this realignment. In addition, the Preserve will provide an interpretive panel along the turnpike that will provide historical information about the origins of the Wawarsing Turnpike. The surface of the turnaround and parking facilities will be in compliance with the same standards that will be used for the Wawarsing Turnpike restoration. The alternative alignment for the entrance drive proposed by the HPC would create a new intersection with Route 299 that would be in a steep embankment along the shoulder of Route 299. Thus, creating a safe access point there would require regrading to provide a clear sight triangle (30' x 30') for exiting traffic, and as a result could have an additional visual impact. To provide the required sight distance at the resulting intersection, additional regrading and tree removals would be needed to establish visibility to the east and additional regrading along the shoulder to the west would be required. It is submitted that the current plans maintain the 'status quo' of the Wawarsing Turnpike and the house from a historical perspective.

4. Ponds: The ponds on the property have returned to a natural state in recent decades and were used for nature education classes in the 1960s. The ponds should be maintained for their current ecological conditions. Pond-edge trails, as recommended in the Mohonk Preserve LAMP document (p. 103) are suggested.

There are no improvements to the ponds proposed as part of the Foothills project. The phenology trail system will be established with minimal disturbance and will be primarily a footpath through the upland wooded areas adjacent to the ponds. The majority of the associated trail improvement will be pruning of existing vegetation to create safe vertical clearances for the trail. In areas where wetlands will need to be crossed to provide continuity in the trail system, the 'Phenology Trail' detail shown on sheet G 5.4 will be used. Restoration of the ponds for improvement of pond ecology or for other habitat conservation purposes could be considered in the future.

The Wawarsing Turnpike has had an interesting history as discovered by Glenn Hoagland who shared the following excerpt from An Unforgiving Land: Hardscrabble Life in the Trapps, a Vanished Shawangunk Mountain Hamlet by Robi Josephson and Bob Larsen:

Pgs. 38 & 39:

Local investors had wanted to cash in on the success of the 1828 D&H Canal, Harp noted. In 1834 the New York State Legislature passed an act incorporating a turnpike company joining Ulster and Sullivan Counties, but things did not take off until the mid-1850s. Impressive volumes of goods shipped from the Rondout Valley and Catskills enticed investors. Harp wrote that "the Ulster Tannery at Lackawack processed 225 tons of hides a year; 14 saw mills produced 20,000,000 board feet of lumber a year; the Napanoch Ax Factory made 9,910 axes in the month of January; the Ellenville

Glass Factory produced 80,000 units per year, and the Napanoch Iron Co. produced 800 tons of iron per year with coal, 350 tons with charcoal and 500 tons of Salisbury Iron."

Based on such promising figures, the New Paltz and Wawarsing Turnpike Road Company was born. Construction costs were figured at \$1,000 per mile, and the shortest route was calculated from New Paltz through the Trapps to Wawarsing. Will Jones's survey route, partially hopscotching the older dirt wagon road, was approved, and the turnpike began inching its way west over the mountain. Ralph Le Fevre of New Paltz recalled the adventure of traveling at about age fourteen through the Trapps on the new turnpike. It was a big event for many, but most of all for the Trapps people.

A tollgate was set up at the gap in the cliffs facing New Paltz, where a stile blocked the road with a pole or pike. Once the toll was paid, the pike was turned or lifted to allow passage. Tolls varied with type and size of vehicles, and number and type of animals. An 1834 act specific 12 ½ cents for wagons, carts and wheeled carriages drawn by two horses, mules or oxen, 3 cents for each additional animal; 6 cents for wheeled vehicles drawn by one animal; 6 cents for sleighs or sleds drawn by two animals; 3 cents more for each additional animal; 20 cents for every twenty horses, mules or cattle; 6 cents for every twenty sheep or swine; and 4 cents for every horse and rider or led horse. Empty vehicles might pay half. Walkers and funeral processions passed free.

The New Paltz and Wawarsing Turnpike Company hired Trapps man Hiram Van Leuven to be "gate keeper" collecting tolls at the gap. In 1860, Hiram and his wife, cousin Anna Maria (pronounced Mariah) Van Leuven, in their early twenties, were raising two young children and owned property worth \$200. Hiram was luckier than many, for he had landed one of the first steady paying jobs on the mountain.

The state regulated the construction and operation turnpikes. Frederic J. Wood noted that in Massachusetts "it was directed that the turnpike should be built in as straight a line as possible, and this was nearly always done with unfortunate results, as the resultant location led up and down hill regardless of grades, and disregarding center of population, usually rendered the road of little practical use."

Truer words were never spoken. Business over the mountain never materialized. The turnpike was saddled with taxes while the nearby D&H Canal was not. "The old company couldn't make it pay," The Kingston Democratic Journal reported in August 1860. "The road was sold under the hammer, and Wm. DeGarmo, of New Paltz, bought it for a few hundred dollars." Perhaps DeGarmo, an original investor, intended to reorganize, but the turnpike stayed public, young Hiram Van Leuven was out of a job, and the D&H remained transportation king of the region for much of the century.

Elsewhere along the Shawangunks, new roads crossing the range had greater success. South of the Trapps, the Newburgh-Cohecton Turnpike opened in 1809, followed in 1851 by the toll Ellenville and Newburgh Plank Road. North of the Trapps, the section of the New Paltz Turnpike over the Shawangunks to the Rondout Creek was never built, but a road existed over that part of the mountain. The grade there was so steep that drivers needed to rest their horses at the crest of the ridge. Thus began a new summit neighborhood aptly called Mountain Rest, where a small hotel was operating by the early 1850s. To the south in the Trapps, the Aldrich Tavern was followed by two small hotels run by the Fowlers and Shaffers.

The Commission agreed that Mohonk Preserve has sufficiently addressed the concerns raised by our consultant, Neil Larson. John Orfitelli submitted a motion to accept the CoA application and supporting materials from Mohonk Preserve for the Foothills Project and to proceed with a public hearing on January 20, 2016. Caryn Sobel seconded, all voted in favor. Motion carried.

In addition, John Orfitelli agreed to inform the Planning Board Chair, Mike Calimano, of the review and approval by the Commission to proceed with a Public Hearing on January 20th.

The following CoA process timeline and assignees (in **bold**) were established:

1. Public Hearing: January 20th, 7:30pm at the New Paltz Community Center
2. Public Hearing Notice, New Paltz Times, January 7th edition: **John Orfitelli**
(Input required for submission by January 4th)
3. Posting on Site (4 sides) of CoA Pending Action, January 6th: **Mohonk Preserve**
4. Abutter Notification of Public Hearing and CoA Action, January 4th: **Mohonk Preserve**
(List of abutting property owners from Town Tax Office)
5. CoA Materials (Hard Copy) at the Town Clerks Office, January 7th: **Mohonk Preserve**
6. CoA Materials digital copy on HPC Site available, January 7th: **John Orfitelli**

3. Other Items

- a) **Review of OSI Action on Red Barn:** Helen Christie learned from the Town Building Inspector, Stacy Delarede, of a plan by OSI to demolish the Studley Barn located on Butternut Road which is not designated as a local landmark and is not located within the Mohonk Preserve. OSI had conducted a structural evaluation of the barn condition and determined that it could not be saved. Glenn Hoagland along with Ted Kolankowski agreed to approach OSI at a meeting already set for Thursday, 12/17, to share various ideas for using the materials including renovation of the Breezy Barn and construction of several small structures within Mohonk Preserve.
- b) **Review/Approve Minutes from November 2015:** A motion was made by John Orfitelli to approve the November 2015 meeting minutes. Seconded by Caryn Sobel, Motion carried.
- c) **Financial Disclosure Statement Reminder:** John Orfitelli reminded the Commissioners that their Financial Disclosure Statements were to be submitted by year end.
- d) **Meeting Schedule for 2016:** The Commission agreed to continue meeting on the third Wednesday of each month. There will be no meeting in February. Meeting start time will be changed to 7:00pm beginning in March.

Motion to adjourn was made by Helen Christie, seconded by Dawn Elliott. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:05pm.