

Town of New Paltz Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Tuesday October 15th 2013 7:30PM - 9:30PM at the Town Hall

Commissioners attending: John Orfitelli (Chair), Helen Christie (Vice Chair), Caryn Sobel, Dave Gilmour, and Steve Warren along with Town Board Liaison, Kitty Brown.

Agenda

1. Public Hearing on the Nomination for Local Landmark Designation of the Testimonial Gatehouse
2. Decision to Designate
3. Review/Approve Minutes from August and September
4. Update on Grant Activities

Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 7:32pm by motion from Helen Christie, seconded by Steve Warren. Motion carried.

1. Public Hearing on the Nomination for Local Landmark Designation of the Testimonial Gatehouse

John Orfitelli opened by describing the purpose for the public hearing and role of the Commission regarding designation of properties as local landmarks.

The meeting was then opened for general questions and comments from the public. The Commission addressed a number of topics during this portion of the meeting. A recording of the entire proceeding was made by Dave Gilmour. The following is a summary of what was discussed.

- John Orfitelli described the restrictions imposed by a local landmark designation, how the property tax is unaffected, and the reasons for property owners to seek designation.
- Dave Gilmour cited the example of Gerri Buck and her efforts to help the Commission designate her property that was once owned by John Arbuckle.
- Eric Roth and Glen Hoagland provided an overview of the Gatehouse parcel being nominated.
- Several concerns were raised regarding the timing of the designation and the relationship to the purchase by OSI. John Orfitelli stated that the designation was not prompted by any action by OSI or the Mohonk Preserve.
- Dave Gilmour explained that the parcel is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and how Federal funds from the Secretary of the Interior (can be acquired by local Commissions in the form of grants).
- John Orfitelli highlighted how over time the Commission plans to designate the farms located within the 857 acre Mohonk Preserve area. The process is quite time consuming and therefore the properties will be prioritized and designated individually over the next several years.
- A number of questions involved the proposed trailhead at the Testimonial Gatehouse site, the condition of the bridge at Butternville, and parking by visitors along Gatehouse Road, and Butternville road. John Orfitelli explained that while these were all important issues, they were outside the scope of this Commission and the designation itself. The Commission would be involved in any SEQR reviews and approvals involving the building permit process.

Once all of the general questions and comments were addressed, formal public statements were received from those who signed-in earlier. The following is a synopsis of the comments from the 17 attendees who addressed the Commission.

All of those who addressed the Commission endorsed the designation and many expressed their gratitude for the work being done by the Commission.

Several individuals voiced concern over the recent actions by OSI and the Mohonk Preserve (which were unrelated to the designation itself) and displayed a general lack of trust in both organizations.

1. Andi Weiss Bartczak of Gardiner stated that she feels the Mohonk Preserve consumes services but does not return in kind in the way of taxes. She wants OSI to explain to the public their plans for future development.
2. Glenn Hoagland, Director Mohonk Preserve, explained what the Preserve has accomplished so far and the project to manage control of foothills. A meeting is set for Nov 21st for public review of the project plans. Glen clarified that land is exempt from taxes, however, all houses on the parcel are taxed and there has been a tax increase. The Mohonk Preserve is in the process of raising funds to acquire the land from OSI.
3. William Sample of New Paltz encouraged the Commission to move forward on the designation.
4. Irwin Sperber, 142 Bruynswick Road congratulated Commission for their efforts to preserve Historic Structures. Stated his concerns with motives of the Mohonk Preserve, Glynwood, parking lot plans, traffic flaws in current plans, impact to the eco systems, and tax exempt status.
5. Ron Knapp, 5 Van Kleeck Road, member of the Preservation Board at Mohonk Preserve, explained how the Preserve negotiated 2.15 million with OSI to purchase 1/3 of the 856 acres. Testimonial Gatehouse has mold, leaking roof and inside is deteriorating. They need to stabilize the structure before they can begin total restoration. Plan for parking is 100+ not 200. There have been 13 meetings to date and Ron Knapp and Glen Hoagland are available to anyone who would like to learn more.
6. Lou Cariola, 6 Jacobs Lane, restated his concerns about parking and trailhead. He fully supports our effort to designate.
7. Sue Stegen, 11 High Pasture Road, fully supports our effort designate. She mentioned that fields should be keep mowed to allow for views.
8. Harry Ellis, 156 Buttersville Road is very supportive of our efforts. Highlighted the need to keep aesthetics and how there are many accidents at intersection of Buttersville and 299. The Town needs to keep grass height low to minimize obstruction. He is worried about the entrance at Gatehouse. He suggested creating a small plateau or adding a stop sign or soft median and a sign is required at the bridge across Buttersville Road.
9. Eric Roth, Grant Writer at Mohonk Preserve, spoke about the historic value of the Gatehouse. Explained that the designation will preserve it no matter who owns it in the future.
10. Alex Motebecker, 8 White Oaks, stated his support for the designation.
11. Harper Keehn, 27 Dug Road, stated his support for the designation.
12. Lawrence Badendyck, 7 Calvin Blvd, requested that while he supports the designation action he feels the decision should be delayed until plans from OSI and Mohonk Preserve were made available.
13. Todd Mathews, 100 Buttersville Road, supports the designation and questioned why anyone would object. He highlighted how it protects the landmark.

14. Kevin Barry, New Paltz Town Board, stated he is not opposed to the designation, however, requested that public comment be accepted for an additional week and the decision be delayed until January 2014 when Mohonk Preserve publishes plans.
15. Michael Calimano Hawk Hill Road, asked if SEQR action is required. Dave Gilmour responded that this is an Unlisted Type I Action so no SEQR action is required. Michael Calimano assured those in attendance that the Planning Board will be involved in reviews of changes.
16. Kitty Brown, New Paltz Town Board, highlighted importance of preservation efforts.
17. Bill Rhoads of New Paltz, spoke in support of the work by the Commission.

Chair, John Orfitelli, stated that the public concerns regarding future plans by the Mohonk Preserve have been well documented in the Preserve's LAMP plan available on the web and that this designation action gives the Commission a direct role in reviewing any future plans that involve the Testimonial Gateway.

With no others wishing to make a statement, John Orfitelli thanked those for their input and made a motion to close the public hearing. Motion was seconded by Helen Christie. All were in favor and the Public Hearing closed at 9:15.

2. Decision to Designate

Caryn Sobel proceeded to read the Decision.

Dave Gilmour requested time to discuss the decision. Here are his recommendations and comments:

- The decision should mention that the site is already in the National Register.
- Highlighted that there were ornamental fountains on the parcel and they should be mentioned in the decision.
- Decision should mention the view from the Tower.
- Concerned about the terminal vista within. Transportation should not detract from the terminal vista.
- Concern with the parking occurring now.
- We need to prepare and address the alley and the type of surface that should be restored to the alley.
- Also need to consider forming a Historic District around the parcel.

David Gilmour's recommendations will be addressed through the Historic Preservation Commission's regulatory oversight.

Caryn Sobel explained how the designation was created through research and collaboration with a number of consultants including SHPO and that the extraordinary body of material that exists in the public domain provides additional resources that augment the designation.

Motion was made by Steve Warren to accept the decision. Motion was seconded by Helen Christie. Motion carried with unanimous vote. Dave Gilmour requested a roll call vote. The following responded aye: John Orfitelli, Helen Christie, Caryn Sobel, Steve Warren, and Dave Gilmour.

3. Review/Approve Minutes from August and September

4. Update on Grant Activities

Agenda items (3) and (4) were deferred to the November meeting.

Motion to adjourn was made by John Orfitelli and seconded by Helen Christie. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:45.