

TOWN OF NEW PALTZ HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING  
Public Hearing on the Mohonk Preserve Testimonial Gateway Project  
1 Clearwater Road New Paltz, NY  
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Commissioners: John Orfitelli, Chair Helen Christie, Caryn Sobel, and Dawn Elliott

Also Attending:

Glenn Hoagland, Mohonk Preserve, Exec. Director  
Neil Larson, Larson Fisher Associates, Consultant  
Mike Mariello, ESQ., Land Use Specialist  
Stacy Delarede, Town Building Inspector  
Barton Weiss, Architect  
Emily Hagle, Mohonk Preserve  
Ryan Weitz  
RON KNAPP Knapp (Mohonk Preserve)  
David Brownstein (NP)  
Liz and Mike Flaherty  
Sue Stegan (NP)  
Susan Demark (NP)  
Glenn Gidaly

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: The purpose of this public hearing is to address the Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) Application presented by Mohonk Preserve for the site plan improvements to the Mohonk Testimonial Gateway property that we refer to as the Foothills Project. The Mohonk Preserve (Gatehouse) tower and the surrounding (110 acre) area has been designated an historic landmark, therefore, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to review the plans as presented by the client, as part of a CofA. This meeting is to formally hear the changes that they're going to be making in the context of the impact to the historic integrity of the immediate area. This is not to be confused with the Planning Board and their focus. The Historic Preservation Commission is strictly to focus on the historic impact.

The CoA was published on Web our site. All of the materials that are going to be presented here have been provided on our site and were also available at the Town Clerk's office in New Paltz since January 7<sup>th</sup>.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Great, so thank you for all the guidance, I mean, we worked with you last spring to designate the Testimonial Gateway structure itself as a local historic landmark and that is one of the first steps we took in this project to ensure historic integrity of that structure.

The entire project is designed to preserve the historic integrity and ambiance of the Testimonial Gateway by bringing the parking in a location where it doesn't impend on the historic approach or the historic Lenape Lane. We didn't want to bring autos back up that old road and force traffic on the Gatehouse Road, so we chose a location off Route 299 in the woods, appropriately sized, scaled and located so that it would be a distance from the Testimonial Gateway.

But we are also trying to effect, what the great landscape architects of the mid-19th century did in the landscape movement, which was the reveal, conceal, reveal idea. You can see this on Alana and Montgomery Place and the great estates which were designed by Alexander Jackson Davis and then Downy.

So when one comes west, obviously, you see the Testimonial Gateway. Then you'll go past it and enter into the woods for the 180-foot entry apron that curves through the woods. There will be an oval parking design.

Then you and your consultant, Neil Larsen, recommended that we do some things to really mitigate how much of a reveal there is through the Testimonial Gateway and to make sure that certain elements that are necessities in our site plan, like the wall and toilet bathroom, are not in the view shed. So what we've done is we've pulled all those to the east and the new location of the wall and toilet will be much farther east.

We've also added plantings to create a continual barrier. There will be a rustic picket fence some plantings. This is the septic field for the Testimonial Gateway which although it's not currently in use, may someday be used. So we can't really plant a lot trees in the foreground but we want to plant a substantial amount of trees here to create a visual barrier. But you will be able to look from the parking lot and see the top and at least the second story above the tower. So we've made those design changes from the original plan and those will actually be submitted to the Planning Board today.

Ryan Weitz from Barton and Judas is here tonight. He can answer any technical questions. They are our engineering consultants for this project. He can also answer any questions you might have about any elements of the engineering aspects of this design.

So those were changes made to improve and reduce the potential impact on the Testimonial Gateway. I'll go to the second area with changes also recommended by Neil Larsen, your consultant, namely, the historic Wawarsing Turnpike. This was an 1856 private toll road over the mountain. Local businessmen created the New Paltz and Wawarsing Turnpike as a way to lift business off the D&H Canal and create a shortcut and overland route to Highland Landing to facilitate trading and make millions through tolls.

However, the road was too steep. Wagons couldn't make it up and sometimes would tip over on top of people. Horses would get exhausted trying to get over the mountain. So in four years the business went bankrupt. It was actually bought by a local man in New Paltz who also couldn't make a go of it and it became the public road over the mountain. From about 1860 on, until 1945 when Route 299 came in over here, it was the public road over the mountain. In fact, Gatehouse Road and part of the bridge underpass along with the stretch of the Wawarsing Turnpike sited on the map was the old road.

For 120 plus years this portion had been a 20-foot wide gravel turnpike, a public two-lane road, which around 1890 was turned into residential driveway when the Smiley' s rebuilt a 2-story farmhouse on the site of the prior house. It's currently between 17 and 18 feet wide, but we want to add those three feet back so we do have two lanes to allow cars to pass.

We're going to really restore this portion up to the new parking area. Beyond that point this segment has reverted to a stabilized grass trail. It was a former roadbed and is still crowned. It still has ditches on the side but we want to keep the feeling of a grass trail. We're going to interpret this segment which will be the only place along the 25-mile route of the New Paltz and Wawarsing Turnpike where you've got a perfectly intact section. We're going to have an interpretive sign on each end of this which tells the story really of this road as a cultural element.

Neil Larsen made some great recommendations. Originally we had a cul-de-sac at the end which really impinged on the idea of the continual Wawarsing Turnpike. So, what we did is pulled it to the east so it's really a turn off of the old turnpike into the parking area. We also had comments from the Planning Board and from the equestrian community that they would like to have at least two or three horse (trailer parking) spots here. The equestrian community would like them in both (parking areas). We had to make a choice between allowing horses at the other one, the Testimonial Gateway, or just here. We've decided we'd pull them here (at the Wararsing parking area) since this is more of a rural entry point. So we're going to eliminate the horse (trailer parking at the Gateway area), which eliminates one area of potential conflict and have a horse lane for horse trailer parking here, as well as, a place for a school bus to park, probably during a weekday when school kids would come to visit this site.

In addition, we've added additional plantings which will do two things. It will protect the 1890's farmhouse which is historic and it'll protect continuity and historic integrity of the old road.

So those are the two major changes we have made. There will be a line of trees and lower bush plantings along (the roadway entrance) to minimize the visual impact. You really have to pull in before you feel like you're in this parking lot. It's not just going to be sticking out in the middle of that field.

We did consider the alternative suggestion of creating a new driveway instead of using the existing driveway in the old Wawarsing Turnpike section. That would have actually taken some land out of the woodland which, actually, is somewhat wet and it would have come out of an area where, in order to achieve comparable site distances, we require a lot of terrain alteration by cutting into slopes on both sides, and then we would have had two driveways. So we thought overall, if we could really respect the historic integrity of the (Wararsing Turnpike section) and reuse it, that would be better and result in a lower impact overall on the landscape.

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: Glenn, you talked about the tie-in of (the driveway) to 299 and how that segment could be kept.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Right. Not shown here -- and I apologize, in order to get the best site distances, the new driveway has to turn to a 'T' with the road, and so right now, of course it's angled to 299. What we would do is also keep that little segment that will remain of the old Wawarsing Turnpike. We could

even have a metal state historic marker, assuming it met the town's signage law, that's visible from Rt 299. I'm not sure if that would be possible, but we'll have the interpretive signage on the small section. We could even have one of the blue and yellow signs. (In any case), we will make sure we respect that little segment that's left as we turn into the driveway.

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: Okay. Good. We (now) welcome any questions folks have or anything Brian would want to add to that?

STACEY DELAREDE: How large is the (Warwarsing area) parking lot?

GLENN HOAGLAND: It's about a 20 car lot. Even with the addition of the horse trailer parking, we were able to actually find a way to reduce the overall footprint of that lot while accommodating the drainage and the function of protecting the nearby wetland. So overall, between the two lots I think we're actually utilizing 1.74 acres of land for parking lots between the two.

RYAN WEITZ: Yes, approximately 1.78 acres for pavement areas and the total area including some segments of trails, the kiosks, some roof areas, is approximately 2.1 acres overall throughout the entire 857 acre site.

Overall, I think Glenn covered on the big points of the changes in the design pursuant to Mr. Larson's comments, but one thing I just wanted to add, especially about the Hasbrouck parking, is -- and again, I'm going ask you to flip the map for a second. This plot represents the former design of having this turnaround area located immediately adjacent to the historic turnpike and then a much more condensed parking area. The proposed design with the revision per the Commission and the consultant spreads that parking out a little while actually reducing the impervious area, so we were able to provide storm water treatment within the center of the parking area, reduce the overall area and preserve the integrity of the historic turnpike. So, ultimately, we are reducing the impervious area and providing storm water treatment while preserving the historic artifact.

COMMISSIONER CARYN SOBEL: Is the impervious material regular asphalt?

GLENN HOAGLAND: No, the (material) would be gravel.

RYAN WEITZ: Yes. This entire area will be surfaced with historic historically sensitive gravel surfacing in compliance with the Restoration and Maintenance Manual that was for the Carriage Road System that was joint property between The Preserve, The Mountain House, and the State Park.

COMMISSIONER CARYN SOBEL: Okay.

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: So the Allee is the same material?

RYAN WEITZ: Correct.

GLENN HOAGLAND: The only thing we decided against was taking this beautiful grass trail (segment of the Warwarsing Turnpike) which is a very nice grass stabilized walking path and reverting that back to a gravel road. We felt that in that setting with the farmland and pasture, it was a really beautiful section.

DAVID BROWNSTEIN: I have two questions. Is there any change in how things will look, at the top of Lenape Lane from what it looks like right now?

GLENN HOAGLAND: The only change would be right now there's this sort of cheap, aluminum farm gate there. We're going to put in the standard core tin green swinging gate that you see at a lot of our trailheads and locations, so it'll look a little more park like there. At that end there will probably be one of the two interpretive panels for that section. So if you're walking that way you'll get the story, if you walking the other way they'll be one at the other end.

RYAN WEITZ: People will be welcomed more to walk down the Wawarsing Turnpike.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Right.

RYAN WEITZ: No one really knows whether you can do that or not.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Exactly, right.

GLENN HOAGLAND: A lot of this land right now is sort of in a limbo state where people are not sure how to get on it or how to walk it. Another opportunity that this lot will provide will be to use Lenape Lane as an alternative to other places where you might have to park on the roadside, which would be less safe.

DAVID BROWNSTEIN: So, can I ask one other question? Where should people be parking off of Gatehouse Road so they can access to the Testimonial Gateway?

GLENN HOAGLAND: Sure, so, one thing that we will do is (modify) the old Lenape Lane so instead of coming straight out, it will actually be landscaped out with a little bit of grass here and it will come to a 'T', and this will only serve as administrative access for the preserve rangers and facilities people. It won't be public auto access, but it'll be like it is now.. it will have a gate but it will be square up to Gatehouse Road.

DAVID BROWNSTEIN: Right by where it turns onto Rt 299.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Right. Then our understanding is the town is looking at solutions to turn this intersection into a 'T', so people will have to slow down and make a deliberate turn in and out of this. So you won't have this bowling alley effect that we have now. This will be grassed out and appropriately landscaped. We might even do something here instead of a core tin green metal gate, (install) a real park-like, rustic cedar round gate, something that would be more (like a) landscape garden gate like you would see at or along some Hudson River Estates.

STACEY DELAREDE: Glenn, going in that same vein, since we have people parking there (changes will need to) go to Chris Marx and petition for 'no parking' there. That would be a town decision.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Exactly. I mean, we're going to do the best we can to landscape this out on a portion of Preserve but there's a significant portion that's within the town right-of-way.

STACEY DELAREDE: Because that's become a very dangerous place for parking and I can't believe there hasn't been a serious accident.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Ultimately, the town board has to pass a 'no parking' ordinance. Right now, if cars don't have wheels on pavement they can't be ticketed. There has been a growing use of that area with more and more cars parking out into this grass aisle.

STACEY DELAREDE: So that would take some of the residents of that area to petition the Town Board to make that a 'no parking' area?

GLENN HOAGLAND: Right.

MIKE MORIELLO: We might mention too that this plan should alleviate some of that (problem).

GLENN HOAGLAND: After a lot of discussion with neighbors on all sides of this project we came to the conclusion that that this (Rt 299) is a state highway. This (Gate House Rd) is a secondary town road and this (Gate House Road area) is a neighborhood -- I mean there is the Jacobs Lane neighborhood, which we understand and hear their concerns, but there's a lot more houses closer to Gatehouse Road. We did not want to be inviting people to come down Gatehouse road to an entrance on this (Gatehouse) side of the project. Frankly, there would be an easy way to get an entrance off (Gate House Rd) to this project, but we felt that using 299 where there are no immediate neighbors coming in through this wooded location had less impact.

COMMISSIONER CARYN SOBEL: Yes.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Keeping cars off (Gate House Rd) was (important), so we're very committed to improving this sort of parking jam that's happening here right now particularly since the site became known as a protected site that's available to the public.

That's our goal and by turning this to a 'T', here, and landscaping it out, we felt it will improve not only the aesthetics, but take away that little triangle that people are really using for parking.

DAVID BROWNSTEIN: Is your service entrance there going to be just for cars to come through?

GLENN HOAGLAND: Exactly. We've got orange cones there because Yankee Construction been (starting) the maintenance work on the tower of the building itself. But we want to put a more substantial gate here and then signage that states -- Not An Authorized Entry. Although the goal here is that neighbors and people on foot will still be able to walk in -- but we don't want it to seem like an official entrance. Right now, if you're driving this way, it looks like a big invitation. We're trying to get away from that. Although we do want to preserve the character of this old road leading up to that circular portal in the Testimonial Gateway, that's a visual level.

DAVID BROWNSTEIN: Does that become a stone driveway or do you leave that as grass and stone mix like the way it is right now?

GLENN HOAGLAND: It would probably get re-crowned (and be) essentially a stone driveway. It's (currently) eroded and rutted so we'd probably regrade it as part the Lenape Lane restoration. It would not be done in a way that would (make it) an invitation to more traffic or other traffic (but rather) to make sure it drains properly.

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: Okay. Good.

DAVID BROWNSTEIN: One other question about that. Right now, the Preserve uses that road as an access road for cars during events that like Rock-a-Ridge and other things like that. Is the plan (intended) to discontinue that (access) when the new parking is there so that no cars will be coming up there and just kind of parking on the side?

GLENN HOAGLAND: That's another goal of this design, (namely), to not have cars parking on the grass and foreground of that historic structure in a kind of a free-for-all zone, which is why we are creating this trailhead to tuck the parking into the woods and create something that's much more like when you go to a historic site (with) a parking lot that's been carefully considered so it's not right on top of the structure.

STACEY DELAREDE: Do you own the (Breezy) barn?

GLENN HOAGLAND: Yes, right.

STACEY DELAREDE: Will you be doing maintenance to keep that barn?

GLENN HOAGLAND: Yes, we will.

STACEY DELAREDE: And you'll keep that road, because there's a little road there?

GLENN HOAGLAND: That little access road probably we will need to keep for again, administrative access for a ranger patrolling through there in a car, (as well as), for walkers who want to come up that road and cross the Lenape Lane Bridge and go down from Gatehouse, like neighbors particularly. Hopefully, not people who've parked on roads.

C COMMISSIONER CARYN SOBEL: Yes.

GLENN HOAGLAND: And that (road) could be also for emergency access if we needed to get an ambulance in there at either this end or that end.

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: Yes, that whole area (857 acres) is designated as a historic landmark that includes the barn.

COMMISSIONER CARYN SOBEL: Yeah, I like that access road for emergencies.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Right.

GLENN HOAGLAND: One of the things the Planning Board has asked us to do which we' re working on is actually is a multi-agency emergency response plan that (not only) centers around our rangers and our

own search and rescue plan but on a transfer of care with local emergency service agencies. We're going to give them a map showing all the access points, all the ambulance turn around points, and have a preplan for emergency response units.

COMMISSIONER CARYN SOBEL: Yes. When you gentlemen are done, can we just pass the maps around?

GLENN HOAGLAND: Sure.

RYAN WEITZ: Can I just point that both sides have plots on them. You can see that this is the reorientation of the vault restroom in the gathering area with that reveal and conceal historic view in mind and this is the former layout. So, both are provided on these boards.

GLENN HOAGLAND: The ones with the writing on them are the old ones.

RYAN WEITZ: The same would go for the site plan of this being the old design and then the revised design pursuant to the Commission's recommendations.

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: Okay. Neil, I was just wondering if you wanted to comment on any of the changes in what you see.

NEIL LARSON: I have no objections. I think (the plan) addresses all our concerns.

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: Okay, good. Neil Larson is the consultant that we have used. In fact, he is serving (as a consultant to) both us and the Planning Board in the capacity of helping us to understand the impact of the changes to the historic integrity, as well as, the environment of that area. So, he's provided (the Commission) input based on the plans and the changes that have been made have been largely based on Neil's direct input and comment.

EMILY HAGLE: Also, the plans are available from our (Mohonk Preserve) website so, if anyone that's attending tonight wants to refer to them at a later date.

COMMISSIONER CARYN SOBEL: Good.

MIKE MORIELLO: John, we also have our affidavit of the mailing to comply with the town code that we have mailed (public hearing) notices to all the immediate neighbors (adjoining the property).

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: Okay, good. Thank you. This is great.

DAVID BROWNSTEIN: One other question, way back when there was talk about a fountain in the area. Is that out?

GLENN HOAGLAND: No, we actually never intended to put a fountain in. We may need to put a water circulation device at some point. (Since) they are manmade ponds and there's really no inflow or outflow.

DAVID BROWNSTEIN: But nothing designed to be like a (fountain or water feature).

GLENN HOAGLAND: No, or like any kind of jet that shoots up. That was sort of part of the Smiley's originally romantic entrance idea back in 1908 when those kind of things were really in vogue but we've we want to allow the ponds to continue to be nature and they'll be used for nature education or scientific study. Over time we may want to make sure that those ponds are healthy biologically.

COMMISSIONER CARYN SOBEL: We do, as a Commission, have the opportunity to have everything restored back to the original (state). (However), we felt that it was really important that (since this piece of land and the facilities on it have changed through time), (the proposed plan) was more historically accurate than freezing (the way it looked) at one moment in time. So the fountains were a detail we talked about and we felt that it was (best to keep them) like you're going to do now with just aeration and (use them) for nature pond studies in their existing environment from the way it was like the '60s or '70s.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Right, 1970s.

COMMISSIONER CARYN SOBEL: Schools actually came and used (them) for nature study. I think that says a lot more about our history than freezing it at the 'ornamental' fountains moment. We thought this was a way to incorporate different periods of the history into this piece of land. So, we were on the side of keeping them natural not making the ornamental again.

DAVID BROWNSTEIN: I also understand that there was a speech given when the Testimonial Gatehouse was dedicated and that that still has the actual script of that was given at that time. I think it was Lisa who's the owner.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Oh, really. I would love to see it. Have you seen it Ron?

RON KNAPP: No.

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: We should probably find that.

COMMISSIONER CARYN SOBEL: Yes. We should.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Yeah, I mean the structure itself was designed by James Ware and Sons which at that period they were sort of the architects of choice for Richard Buildings, right. They did a house in Millbrook and some other big Gatehouses throughout the northeast from Boston to New York. We have the original blueprints from 1908.

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: Yes, the CofA on the Gatehouse that Caryn Sobel was largely responsible for creating along with Mohonk is on our site as well and has a lot of detail on the actual (structure) and history.

COMMISSIONER CARYN SOBEL: Including the original architectural drawings.

RON KNAPP: You may want to say something about the work that's been (going on) out there this past month.

GLENN HOAGLAND: Right, so, as I've mentioned, after the historic landmark designation (was completed) working with Caryn and the Board, we're obligated legally under that landmark designation to make sure this building does not further deteriorate and it remains and is ultimately, hopefully restored. But in order to maintain that, we had to apply for Certificate of Appropriateness and a building permit. So, to do the maintenance on the exterior, we got those permits and we hired Yankee Construction which is a well-known firm that that does specialize in historic preservation and restoration and maintenance. Before that we actually had Carl Sterns, preservation architect, do all the specifications and the construction bid documents and they're actually also monitoring the construction of the maintenance and repairs. We aren't really constructing anything, we're just cleaning up the interior and then fixing the roof and fixing the roof which also leaks, and ultimately we'll be replacing windows. We were able to find detail of the original windows which were with leaded glass and very interesting curved. So, we're going to have to accurately design replicate windows. We still have to fundraise for those because the windows alone are \$94,000. And so far, we've raised about \$150,000 towards just the restoration including a full roof replacement with accurate tiles. The tile company who made those tiles in 1908 is still in business. They're a six generation family business like Mohonk Mountain House and we took them one of the tiles. They said, 'Oh, yeah, we still make that'. So, we have a quote from them to reroof with the entire thing with replicate tiles. The costs came in at about \$400,000 to replace the new roof, the windows and the stonework. We've broken it up into parts and right -- we're doing the First Phase right now, which is trying to find out where all the leaks are. And then, that will tell us how much of the roof we need to replace. (Our plan is to) take tiles from one place (if possible), and to reuse them on another. So, at least part of the roof is original. So, we're working through all of that right now with the architect and with Yankee Construction.

So, you may have seen the sign up that says Yankee Construction. Ultimately, probably after the winter, there will be construction fencing around that site while they do the stone work and the high work just to make the site secured. We've already considered how to make a loop around it for the public (to safely pass).

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: Okay. Well, on behalf of the Commission, I'd like to say thank you for your efforts. (Do we have a) motion to close the Public Hearing?

COMMISSIONER CARYN SOBEL: Yes, motion to close the Public Hearing.

COMMISSIONER HELEN CHRISTE: I'll second.

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: All in favor?

Note: All Commissioners acknowledged approval to close the Public Hearing.

CHAIRMAN JOHN ORFITELLI: Okay. The public hearing is closed. Thank you for stopping by.