

Historic Preservation Commission

November 7, 2011 Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:30 pm.

Roll Call

Present

Yvonne Beatrice
Randall Brewster
Deborah Grob
Alex Michelini
Gus Vasiliadis (late 7:45pm)
Barbara Shanley

Absent

Carol Greene
Marthajean Drago
Tony Bourgholtzer (excused)

Flag Salute

Sunshine Law: The secretary read the Sunshine Law.

Public Session: Mr. Michelini moved to open the public session and Mr. Brewster seconded the motion. All approved.

The Chair recognized Mr. Michael Mann, 128 Winding Hill Drive, Hackettstown, NJ 07840 representing the Ramapough Lenape Nation (RLN). Mr. Mann stated that several members of the RLN are here tonight because of the RLN's concern of the status of the three Indian burial sites on Stag Hill Mountain. Mr. Mann stated that he has been working on this project for over a year. He started with Mr. Robert Crane, at the State level, to have the three burial sites on Stag Hill Mountain, which is where their ancestors are buried, listed on the National Historic Registry, so the sites will be protected from any further disturbance from development and vandals. He started with Mr. Robert Crane, because he didn't know where else to start. However, Mr. Crane did not respond. The RLN is very concerned that these burial grounds are being destroyed either intentionally or unintentionally by landscaping debris, developers, and vandals.

Mr. Mann stated that he then contacted the Mahwah Tax Assessor to inquire who owns the properties and did not receive a response. Through the research efforts of the RLN members they were able to establish that the largest burial site was owned by Cannonball Run, Inc. and presented a letter from Cannonball Run, Inc. to the then Mahwah Mayor Kraus, stating that as owner of Block 1 Lots 4, 7, 8, 10 & 11 there is an Indian Burial Ground on the property of approximately 2.854 acres and Cannonball Run, Inc. was contacted by the RLN because they would be interested in acquiring the title to the cemetery and the RLN would pay for the cost of the Sub-Division. This property is now owned by the County of Bergen. The Chair asked Mr. Mann for copies of the documents he referred to, and Mr. Mann agreed and gave copies to the HPC secretary.

The bottom line is that the RLN would like to hold title of the land where the Indian Burial sites are. The RLN is coming before the HPC for advice on how to obtain title of these sites.

Chief Mann stated that some of the burial markers have been disturbed and local landscapers have used these sites as a dumping site for their landscaping debris.

Ms. Judy Sullivan, Esq. representing the Ramapough Conservancy, has donated her time to assist the RLN in acquiring ownership of the three Indian burial sites and stated that one site is listed in Bergen County Historic Sites Survey as inventory #0233-116, Silver Lake section, west of Mountain Road with burial stones from the Mann family dating back to 1897; and #0233-111 Silver Lake section, south side of Split Rock Road; Parr House ruins, and #0233-135 Silver Lake section, south and west of Mountain Road, north of the Suffern-Midvale Trail; Indian Burying Ground, as land originally owned by the DeGroat family.

Mrs. Grob stated that one of the sites is presumably owned by the Ramapo Reformed Church.

Chiefs Perry and VanDunk stated that the Mann, DeGroat, and DeFreese families are all descendants of the RLN, and that they have been trying for over 35 years to have these sites protected, without any success.

Mrs. Shanley, stated that the property owner would need to contact the Township Council of Mahwah requesting that the property be added to the Township of Mahwah historic element of the Township Master Plan and added as an amendment to Ordinance #1313 as a protected historic property. Therefore, the first step is to establish ownership of the property. The RLN will need to solicit the owners to either allow the RLN to acquire title of the land and then the RLN can request that the sites be added to the historic element of the Master Plan; or request the owner/s of the property to request from the Mahwah Township Council that the properties be added to the historic element of the Township of Mahwah Master Plan. In either case the properties would then be protected as Township of Mahwah historic sites.

Chief Mann, stated that the RLN wants to protect these sites from any further vandalism. Mr. Michael Mann stated that two of the graves show signs of fresh earth, which means that they have been recently disturbed.

Mrs. Shanley and Mr. Brewster will meet with Chief VanDunk and Mr. Michael Mann this Sunday, November 13, 2011 to try and locate block and lot numbers of the burial sites so they can determine the ownership of the properties.

Chief Mann stated that the RLN is also concerned with the gas pipeline that is coming through and will destroy the Indian burial sites. Therefore he stressed the urgency of historic designation.

Ms. Sullivan stated that she is soliciting the assistance of Archaeological Historian Ed Lenik to map all the historic sites on Stag Hill.

Mrs. Shanley asked for a point person from the RLN who will serve as the contact person. Mr. Michael Mann (201-400-2204) and Mr. Jack Anderson, 48 Sand Road, Westwood, NJ 07675 volunteered (201-647-4835).

Mrs. Shanley stated that the HPC needs to contact Township Business Administrator, Brian Campion, to ask what the procedure is to pursue this historic designation of the three RLN burial sites. The Municipal

Building is closed for Election Day, tomorrow November 8, 2011. Therefore, Mrs. Shanley will phone Mr. Campion on Wednesday, November 9, 2011, to make an appointment to discuss this issue.

Chief Mann requested that Ms. Sullivan also be copied on any correspondence regarding this issue.

Mr. Michelini moved that the Mahwah Historic Preservation Commission supports the efforts of the RLN to preserve their historic burial grounds where their ancestors are buried and the HPC will lend its efforts to the RLN to reach a satisfactory result. Mr. Vasiliadis seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain: Grob, yes; Brewster, yes; Michelini, yes; Vasiliadis, yes; Beatrice, yes; Shanley, yes.

Ms. Sullivan also stated that the HPC should be aware that Bear Swamp Road is listed as the access road for the Spectra Pipeline. However, the Historic Cleveland Bridge, which is the entrance site, is not listed as an historic site on Spectrum's map.

Chief Mann stated that in RLN's research of the RLN's burial sites, they discovered that the William Bond map of 1710 is stored in an unprotected metal file cabinet at the County of Bergen. The County Clerk photo copied the map for them. Mrs. Shanley will contact Robin Brown of the County of Bergen Historic Preservation Commission as to the status of the map and what can be done to preserve it.

Mrs. Shanley thanked the members of the RLN for attending tonight's meeting and bringing these issues to the HPC's attention.

Mrs. Beatrice moved to close the Public Session and Mr. Brewster seconded the motion. All approved.

For the record, let it be known that Steven Oritt of Phydo Films (stevenoritt@gmail.com or phone 310-420-4929) reported to the HPC that he is doing a documentary on the Ramapough Lenape Nation and requested permission from the HPC to videotape the Ramapough Lenape Nation portion of the HPC Public Session. The HPC approved.

Minutes: October 3, 2011 minutes: Mrs. Shanley requested that under Winter Farmhouse, correct Mr. Alverz to Mr. Alvarez, and under Darlington Schoolhouse second sentence should read Mrs. Shanley, Mrs. Brewster, and Mr. Vasiliadis met.....

Mrs. Grob moved to approve the October 3, 2011 HPC minutes as corrected and Mr. Vasiliadis seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain: Grob, yes; Brewster, yes; Michelini, yes; Vasiliadis, yes; Beatrice, yes; Shanley, yes.

Chairs Report:

Mahwah Museum: Mrs. Shanley reported that she attended the Mahwah Museum tree dedication in honor of the late Township Historians, John Bristow and Janet Brown and was honored to speak about John Bristow's many life time accomplishments. The dedication was very well done and attended.

Apple Ridge Cemetery: The Chair reported that she had spoken to Apple Ridge Trustee, Mrs. Ellen Stein, regarding the clean-up of the cemetery on the corner of the condo owner's property. The owner does not want to bring any attention to the cemetery, therefore, does not want it cleaned up. However, the

owner will allow the HPC to document the cemetery. Mrs. Shanley and Mr. Brewster will conduct the documentation of the cemetery.

Winter Farmhouse: Mrs. Shanley reported that the broken window is still not repaired. She will again contact the owner.

Darlington Schoolhouse: Township Electrical Inspector, John Lane, had met with NYNJTC representative, Ed Goodell and a representative from Orange and Rockland and agreed on an acceptable location for the utility pole. Mrs. Shanley invited Mr. Goodell to the December 2011 HPC meeting.

Applications: None at this time.

New Business:

83 Oweno Road, no report at this time.

Fletcher House Escrow Account: Mrs. Shanley stated that the HPC does not have a copy of the deed and needs to get a copy. She will contact Mrs. Handley for a copy. If Mrs. Handley does not have a copy, then the HPC must pay for a copy from the County of Bergen, which should come out of the escrow fund.

Mr. Michelini moved to release the Escrow Funds for the Fletcher House to Mrs. Handley upon receiving a copy of the deed and Mrs. Grob seconded the motion: All approved.

Vote: 6 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain: Grob, yes; Brewster, yes; Michelini, yes; Vasiliadis, yes; Beatrice, yes; Shanley, yes.

NJDEP:

Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company General permit authorization. The Chair asked for a volunteer to review these permits. Mr. Michelini stated that he did not feel it is the responsibility of the HPC to oversee this project. The HPC is in support of the RLN historic designation of the Indian burial sites, but does not have the authority or manpower to oversee the pipeline.

Ramsey Mitsubishi: No Comment

Getty Service Station: No Comment

Algonquin Gas Transmission: No Comment

Old Business:

The Chair suggested that the HPC table the discussion on the Joyce Kilmer promotion suggestions that he made at the October 3, 2011 meeting to the December 2011 HPC meeting. All agreed.

Let the minutes reflect that Mr. Vasiliadis excused himself from the HPC meeting at 10:10 p.m.

Mrs. Grob moved to adjourn the meeting and Mrs. Beatrice seconded the motion. All approved.

These minutes are a synopsis of the MHPC tapes, which are on file at the Township Municipal Building.

/dms