

Historic Preservation Commission

December 3, 2012 Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:30 pm.

Roll Call

Present

Yvonne Beatrice
Carol Greene
Constantine Vasiliadis
Deborah Grob
Barbara Shanley
Jack Bolan

Absent

Marthajean Drago
Randall Brewster

Flag Salute

Sunshine Law: The secretary read the Sunshine Law.

Minutes: October 1, 2012 minutes. Mrs. Beatrice corrected spelling of caboose in the fifth paragraph, sixth sentence, and the ninth paragraph second sentence corrected” who” to “which”. Mrs. Greene moved to approve the October 1, 2012 minutes as corrected and Mrs. Grob seconded the motion. All approved.

Public Session: Mr. Vasiliadis moved to open the meeting to Public Session and Mrs. Greene seconded the motion. All approved.

The Chair recognized Mr. Ron Wohlberg, 7 Indian Field, Mahwah, NJ 07430. Mr. Wohlberg introduced himself as a resident of Mahwah interested in serving on the Mahwah Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Wohlberg reported that he would like to share his over 50 years experience in the construction and construction safety field with the Commission. The Commission thanked Mr. Wohlberg and encouraged him to submit his resume to the Mayor requesting to be appointed to the MHPC Class “A” vacancy.

The Chair recognized Ms. Leda Dunn-Wettre, 24 Glengorra Court, Mahwah. Ms. Dunn-Wettre stated that as an attorney she also has an extensive background in Historic Preservation serving on the the US District Court of the State of NJ Historic Preservation projects and would also like to submit her resume for consideration of Mayoral appointment to the MHPC. The Commission thanked Ms. Dunn-Wettre and encouraged her to submit her resume to the Mayor for appointment to the MHPC as a Class “C” member.

The Chair recognized Mrs. Janet Tuffy, 17 Snow Drive, Mahwah, NJ. Mrs. Tuffy stated that as an owner of a home built in the late 1930’s she and her husband would like to know from the Commission the pro’s and con’s of listing their home as an historic property on the Township ordinance or Master Plan. The house is not listed on the Cragmere survey, but they would like to protect the property as an historic site. The Chair replied that being listed on the ordinance and listed on the Master Plan are two different designations. The Chair reviewed the specifications for ordinance designation and Master Plan

listing. Mrs. Tuffy thanked the Commission for its review of the property and comments and will discuss the historic designation with her husband and contact the Commission with their decision.

Mrs. Greene moved to close the public session and Mrs. Beatrice seconded the motion. All approved.

Chairs Report:

The Chair reported that the October 29 2012 HPC meeting was cancelled due to Hurricane Sandy.

Ramapough Indian Cemeteries: The Chair reported that the Ramapough Nation cemeteries on Stag Hill Road are in the process of being cleaned up by Mahwah Museum representative, Tom O'Brien with the cooperation of the Ramapough Indian Nation. Ms. Beatrice spoke with Chief Vinnie Mann of the Ramapough Indian Nation and reported that they have still not heard back from the County as to the status of the cemeteries.

Apple Ridge Cemetery: Chair reported that she and Mr. Brewster couldn't get access to Apple Ridge to inspect the site. She will contact Mr. Gary Paton, from Apple Ridge, for an update.

Cleveland Bridge: The Chair reported that Township Business Administrator, Brian Campion, wrote to the County stating the Township's and HPC concerns regarding the road widening. As of December 3, 2012, the Township has not received a reply from the County.

The Chair read to the Commission an excerpt from the October 26, 2012 letter from Daniel D. Saunders, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, concerning the effects of the Cleveland Bridge/Bear Swamp Road Bridge modification or reconstruction. The Chair will follow up on the determination. The members asked for a copy of the letter. The secretary will scan and email the members a copy.

Vacancies: The Chair reported that she will write a memo to the Mayor supporting the appointment applications from Ms. Dunn-Wettre and Mr. Wohlberg.

Miller Rd. /Armour Rd. stone pillars. The Chair reported that she will contact the owner of the property, Mr. John Vargas, 1 Armour Road, and inform him that the stone pillars are not on the Township right of way and that it is his responsibility to repair the pillars.

NJDEP:

Letter of Interpretation, Lb 24, Lots 31 & 33 and, "Notification of Flood Hazard Area Individual Permit", Bl 173 Lots 146, 55 Whitney Road. No comments.

Public Session: The Chair had a question for Mr. Wohlberg. Mrs. Greene moved to re-open the Public Session and Mr. Vasiliadis seconded the motion. All approved.

The Chair recognized asked Mr. Wohlberg if he would be interested in applying for the Class A HPC member appointment and asked Mrs. Dunn if she would be interested in applying for the Class C HPC member appointment. They both agreed.

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

New Business:

HPC 2013 Budget: The Chair reported that she will be meeting with the Mayor and Business Administrator to review the HPC budget requests for 2013. The Chair reported that the budget requests

have remained the same except that the Commission has requested funds for the purchase of an historic road marker for Darlington Schoolhouse. The Chair also reported that she had requested funds for the painting of the Quackenbush Barn. Under the direction of the Business Administrator, the funds will be requested in the Parks and Playgrounds budget.

Old Business:

Old Train Station Museum: The Chair reported that during the budget hearing, she will inquire about adding the Wanamaker Shed, Caboose, and Glassgaw out house to the Township ordinance as protected historic structures.

The Chair urged the Commission to reach out to find a new home for the Knight-Goetschius Barn. It is in danger of being demolished.

Joyce Kilmer Recognition Poetry Contest. Mrs. Beatrice requested confirmation of the dollar amounts for the first, second and third prizes for the Ramapo Ridge Middle School and Mahwah High School which is to be awarded to a male and female from each school. Mrs. Shanley will confirm with Mr. Brewster the dollar amount that has been donated. The poems will be due April 30, 2012 and will be announced by middle of May.

Applications:

Docket #1348-12 Use Variance, 748 Wyckoff Avenue, Mahwah (Ackerman House).

The Historic Preservation Commission stated that the use change of this property would have a detrimental effect on the historic site.

After a thorough review of the application, Mrs. Grob moved to reject the use variance application and Mrs. Beatrice seconded the motion stating the Ackerman Farmhouse is listed on the Bergen County Historic Sites Survey (0233-107), the 1989 Master Plan, and the current revised Master Plan as a remnant of 19th century agricultural settlement along Wyckoff Avenue. This farmhouse is one of the few pre 1861 farmhouses left in Mahwah and the use change of this property would have a detrimental effect on the historic significance of this site.

It is also noted that nothing has changed in the area which would indicate a zoning change or a change in use for the property as stated in the earlier Planning Board resolution. The current 1989 Township Master Plan refers to the Fardale area (where the applicant's property is situated) as "a one acre residential zone is one of the principal development patterns in Mahwah and the thrust of this plan is to continue to maintain and preserve its character and integrity", "and there has been a clear and consistent policy on the part of the Township to maintain this historic site and surrounding lands around Forest Road, Wyckoff Avenue and Pulis Avenue in a low density single-family residential capacity."

It is also stated in the revised Master Plan goal proposal:

"To maintain and enhance the existing areas of stability in the community, particularly in such areas as the Cragmere section of the Township and in the areas off of Forest Avenue, and reinforce the minimum 0.34 acre and 0.23 acre lot area requirement for these portions of the municipality. A principal goal of this plan is to preserve and protect the residential character and existing density of these areas

by restricting incompatible land uses from established residential areas, and limiting intensities of use to the levels, and locations, prescribed herein.”

And Objective:

“The Cragmere area, as well as the area off of Forest Avenue in the vicinity of Jefferson and Franklin Streets, are typified by varied terrain and/or a modest lot size arrangement, which includes some narrow streets with poor road alignment. These characteristics necessitate a planning response that will ensure that infill development does not adversely impact the environmental character, physical features, or circulation of the area, and does not add to the physical congestion of this neighborhood.

In an effort to implement this goal, the Planning Board formally rejects the notion that the mere consistency of a proposed lot’s size with the surrounding area in and of itself represents a suitable basis for variance relief, concluding that such consistency does not represent a “public benefit”, not does it address issues relating to the negative criteria that mandate a showing that there is no substantial detriment to the public good. In particular, that issue must revolve around, amongst other things, the problem associated with any additional traffic generating potential that impacts traffic movement on the narrow, winding, and poorly aligned roadways.”

Therefore, the Historic Preservation Commission agrees with the 1989 Master Plan and current proposed Master Plan to keep this section of Mahwah residential.

Vote to approve Docket #1348-12 Use Variance, 748 Wyckoff Avenue, Mahwah (Ackerman House).

5 no; 1 yes; 0 abstain: Beatrice, no; Grob, no; Bolan, no; Greene, no; Vasiliadis, yes; Shanley, no.

General Discussion: Mrs. Greene reported that she was approached by a resident that the Winter Park Committee is looking to take the Winter Park pillars down. Mr. Bolan, whose wife is on the Committee, reported that there is no discussion concerning removal of the stone pillars.

Mahwah Museum: Mr. Bolan reported that he attended the Mahwah Museum meeting with guest speak Lesley Benchley from the Morris County Historic Preservation Commission. He reported that she was very informative and said that the main objective was how to bring County support to the Township regarding the Township’s historic structures. It took Morris County 10 years to create a joint shared project with Morris Township and Morris County.

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

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

/dms