

Historic Preservation Commission

December 7, 2009 Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:35 pm.

Roll Call

Present

Barbara Shanley

Tony Bourgholtzer

Carol Greene

Deborah Grob

Gus Vasiliadis (7:43pm)

Alex Michelini

Yvonne Beatrice (7:37 pm)

Flag Salute

Absent

Marthajean Drago

Randall Brewster, excused

John Bristow, excused

Public Session: Mr. Michelini moved to open the Public Session and Mrs. Grob seconded the motion. All approved.

Mrs. Beatrice arrived at 7:37 p.m.

Chestnut Tree LLC: The Chair recognized Mr. Tibor Latincics, PE & PP of Conklin Associates, Inc. 29 Church Street, Ramsey, NJ 07446. Mr. Latincics reported that he is attending the HPC meeting to officially represent Chestnut Trees LLC, Docket 524 preliminary sub-division application and unofficially to answer whatever questions he can on the New York New Jersey Trail Conference (NYNJTC) Darlington Schoolhouse project.

Mr. Latincics reported he is representing the owners of the Chestnut Tree LLC major sub-division application, the Krazinski family. The plans have been filed with the Planning Board under Docket #524P. The sub-division allows for 10 single family houses. Average size, of the lots, is one acre. There are five buildings on the property. A large single family home; a small single family home; a barn, garage and tool shed. All but the large single family dwelling are proposed to be demolished. The farmers' walls on the perimeter of the property will remain. The existing single family buildings and barn are shingle style. The barn is 130 years old. The larger home will not be demolished and the smaller single family could remain with approved variances from the Board of Adjustment, as did the Winter Farmhouse located on Farmstead Lane.

The Chair reported that the smaller single family home is listed on the Bergen County Historic Sites Survey as #0233-77, located at 28 Masonicus Road, known as the Knight-Goetschius House Pre 1861. However, the home is not listed on the HPC historic element of Ordinance #1313 as a protected historic property.

Let the minutes reflect that Mr. Vasiliadis arrived at 7:42pm.

The Chair reported that this application is on the HPC December 7, 2009 agenda for review and comments to the Planning Board.

Mr. Vasiliadis asked if the stone farmers' walls will remain. Mr. Latincsics reported that the stone walls on the southern border are outside of the County right of way. It is usually requested by the County that the owner vacate the wall, just in case the road may have to be widened.

Mrs. Shanley asked if the barn could remain on the sub-divided lot. Mr. Latincsics reported that the barn is located in the proposed roadway.

The Commission thanked Mr. Latincsics for his presentation.

Darlington Schoolhouse: The Chair reported that she and Mrs. Greene attended the Township Council meeting for the first NYNJTC presentation of the Darlington Schoolhouse renovation and over flow parking proposal.

Mr. Latincsics reported that the proposed walking path from the schoolhouse to Continental Soldiers Park was too exposed. The Township Council had concerns that the walking path would create a parking problem at Continental Soldiers if the walking path was too visible which might encourage Ramapo Reservation visitors to park at Continental Soldiers parks when the Reservation parking lot is full. The Council asked the NYNJTC to come back with an alternate proposal. Mr. Latincsics reported that the alternate proposal changed the location of the path to a more remote area, which would make it less accessible to the Ramapo Reservation visitors. The NYNJTC will submit this proposal at the December 17, 2009 Township Council.

Mr. Latincsics reported that this application is very unique because it requires numerous board approvals such as the DEP, Highlands, County, and Township just to name a few.

The Commission thanked Mr. Latincsics for his informal presentation of the alternate parking proposal that will be presented to the Township Council.

The Chair recognized Mr. Curtis Koster President of the Township of Mahwah Library Board of Trustees (MLBT).

Mr. Koster reported that he is attending the HPC meeting as a result of Mr. Michelini's proposal to the MLBT for a local history room to be included in the plans of the library renovation. Mr. Koster reported that the board's immediate reaction was that the request was two years too late. However, after further discussion, the MLBT agreed that it was a good idea and has established a sub-committee to investigate the possibility of a local history room, chaired by library Trustee, Mr. Karl Bierley. Mr. Koster submitted to the Commission a list of questions and concerns that the sub-committee needs to have answered by the Commission before the MLBT's next meeting. Questions included what is the intended

purpose of the local history room; what is the size and nature of the collection; who will maintain and be responsible of the content; who will have access and under what condition; what funds are available to maintain the collection, and Mr. Koster personally asked how does the Mahwah Museum and HPC fit into this project.

Mr. Michelini reported that the library is one of the most appropriate places for the public to research local history. The purpose is to expand local history knowledge, which is not always readily available. Mr. Michelini reported that the Township has a wonderful museum and does an outstanding job with the collections they have and the presentations they offer the public. However, the point is that knowledge has to be accessible to all people. If it is not accessible it is lost. Many towns have museums and local history rooms which co-exist. The museum's hours are limited. The library is a gathering place and offers a greater accessibility for the public to expand their knowledge of Mahwah.

As far as the size of the room, Mr. Michelini reported that the size and nature of the collection will grow as items are collected. It will always be a work in progress.

Mr. Koster reported that what the MLBT needs is quantitative data; feet of shelf space, number of file draws, table space etc. It is not an easy job and the MLBT is requesting that the HPC submit their request to the MLBT by their December 16th meeting. The architect needs to address this change to the original plans as soon as possible.

Mrs. Beatrice suggested that the MLBT instead tell the HPC how much space the architect has available and the HPC will accommodate that area. To tell the library how many shelves or files draws will be needed could be obsolete within a few years. Mr. Koster reported again that they can only deal with what they know. They are not storing boxes or artifacts. They envision an area that is visible to the public for two reasons; it should be attractive and inviting to the public, and for security.

Mrs. Greene reported that she is not really clear on the concept and issues of the local history room and its relationship with the HPC. Mrs. Greene asked Mr. Koster if she had time to present her questions and concerns to the Commission and the MLBT. Mr. Koster welcomed Mrs. Greene's comments, but stressed that the issues need to be addressed before the MLBT's December 16th meeting.

The Chair recommended that the Commission expand the Local History Room Ad Hoc Committee to address Mrs. Greene's concerns. Mr. Koster suggested that the Committee should also include the MLBT committee members.

Mr. Koster reported that he had received a letter from the Mahwah Museum Society inviting Mr. Koster to a presentation of what the Museum has and does. However, that meeting is after the MLBT's December 16, 2009 meeting and too late. Mrs. Greene, reported that she would contact Mr. Dunn, the president of the Mahwah Museum Society and arrange for an earlier date for the presentation.

The Commission thanked Mr. Koster for attending the HPC meeting and explaining to the Commission the needs and concerns of the library regarding the Local History Room. Mrs. Shanley reported that she also attended the MBLT meeting with Mr. Michelini and asked Mr. Koster to explain his comment that the HPC was two years too late and that they would be better off coming to them two years down the road. Mr. Koster stated that he didn't understand why he would say that because it didn't make any

sense. Nevertheless, after talking to the architect, that is not an issue; the MLBT needs to know now the needs of the Local History Room or it won't happen.

Mr. Koster asked that the meeting with the Mahwah Museum be schedule as soon as possible.

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

Public Session was closed.

Minutes:

October 5, 2009 Minutes:

Mrs. Beatrice moved to approve the October 5, 2009 MHPC minutes as read and Mrs. Grob seconded the motion. All approved.

Vote: 8 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain: Grob, yes; Beatrice, yes; Vasiliadis, yes; Michelin, Greene, yes; Michelin, yes; Bourgholtzer, yes; Shanley, yes.

November 2, 2009 Minutes:

Mrs. Greene asked to review the exact wordage of Mr. Bristow's comment, as Township Historian, regarding giving his records to the Local History Room. Mr. Micheleni reported his understanding of what Mr. Bristow reported was that he had certain materials, not as Township Historian, but what he had personally accumulated over the years that he would be willing to turn over to the Local History Room.

Mrs. Grob moved to table the November 2, 2009 minutes to clarify Mr. Bristow's statement, and Mrs. Bourgholtzer seconded the motion. All approved.

Vote: 8 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain: Grob, yes; Beatrice, yes; Vasiliadis, yes; Micheleni, Greene, yes; Micheleni, yes; Bourgholtzer, yes; Shanley, yes.

Legal: Mrs. DeScherer was not present, no report at this time.

Chair's Report:

2010 Budget: The Chair reported that she had met with the Township Business Administrator and the Mayor regarding the HPC 2010 budget requests. The Chair stated that the HPC did not request funds in all of its accounts in the 2009 Township budget, namely funds for Historic Plaques. However, this year she requested funds in all line items except Training and Seminars.

Winter Farmhouse Historic Marker: The Chair had spoken to the property manager, Mr. Andrew Alvarez and he agreed to allow the HPC to install a historic marker on the Winter Farmhouse property and to also allow the Commission to inspect the basement to establish a date of the foundation. Mrs. Greene will email or fax the HPC secretary the text for the plaque.

Moffatt Road Cemetery: The Chair reported that the Moffatt Road Cemetery clean up has been completed and thanked Mrs. Karin La Greca a member of the Environmental Commission for overseeing the project that was done by the Mahwah High School Environmental Club. The Chair will obtain a list of the students so they can be recognized.

Darlington Schoolhouse: No further report.

Historic Awards: The Chair reported that the HPC will present the award to the Montessori School for their reuse of Commodore Perry School at the December 17, 2009 Township Council meeting. Mrs. Greene reported that the Museum has photos of the Commodore Perry School and will ask if the Commission can borrow them for the presentation. Mrs. Shanley will prepare the certificate and do the presentation.

103 Oweno Road “Fletcher House”: The Chair reported that the original plans showed the exterior beams as being cut off. The Sub-Committee met and denied the plans because of this. The Committee also noted that the parch ceiling shall not have wainscoting covering the beams, as shown in the plans. Mrs. Shanley marked the plans indicating that the exterior beams will not be cut off and the wainscoting will not cover the parch beams and Mrs. Handley initialed the change. The Committee then approved the plans as amended. The Chair reported that the plans will be approved in an on-going process.

Application: Chestnut Tree LLC, Docket 524P

Mr. Vasiliadis moved to approve Chestnut Tree LLC, Docket 524P with the recommendation that since the property is listed on the BCHS Survey as #0233-77 Knight Goetschius House pre 1861, that the HPC be allowed to photo document the property and allow the HPC within 45 days from the date of this recommendation to attempt to find a potential owner for the 130 year old barn. The potential owner would disassemble and relocate the barn at their expense. Mrs. Grob seconded the motion. All approved.

Vote: 8 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain: Grob, yes; Beatrice, yes; Vasiliadis, yes; Michelini, Greene, yes; Michelini, yes; Bourgholtzer, yes; Shanley, yes.

The Chair will contact Mr. Brewster to contact the owners and request permission for the photo documentation and recommendation that HPC be allowed to try and save the barn by finding a new owner to disassemble and relocate the barn to the new owner’s location.

Upon applicants approval Mr. Michelini will submit a press release regarding the barn.

Mrs. Greene will email her Local History Room concerns and questions to the Commission and inform the members of the meeting date with the Mahwah Museum.

Mrs. Grob moved to adjourn and Mrs. Beatrice seconded the motion. All approved. Meeting ended at 10:10 pm.

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

/dms