

### **III. Meeting Minutes for Yorktown Heritage Preservation Commission - July 12, 2023**

**Attendees:** Nancy Milanese, Adam Fetzer, Bridget Krowe, Christine Sisler and Lynn Briggs

#### **1a. Budget - As of 01/10/2023**

Account T.0082.0001 Homes of Distinction \$537.42  
Account T.0082.0002 Landmark Preservation \$3219.40  
Account 0479.0005-\$2500.00  
Total \$6256.82

#### **vs. 08/01/23 Nancy to provide**

Account T.0082.0001 Homes of Distinction - \$0  
Account T.0082.0002 Landmark Preservation - \$0  
Account 0479.0005-\$500  
Total \$500

#### **1b. \$5k Removed from Account for Town Obligation for Quonset Hut Purchase**

-Initiated multiple attempts with Supervisor Slater to correct the “accounting error” and return the \$5K funds to our account; no response received;  
-Addressed with Supervisor Diana on February 1, 2023; no response

Next Step-We agreed to jointly present our case to the Town Board; timing tbd

#### **2. Potential Assistance from our Liaison, Luciana Haughwout**

-Initiated multiple requests to meet to review our 2023 programs, plans and funding; unsuccessful  
-Next Step-Discuss approach to engage our liaison

#### **3. Town Board Funding Request**

On December 1, 2022, requested Town Board to fund two new programs

1) \$11884 to fabricate four new bronze markers\* to replace the dilapidated MDF markers; no response received

2) \$5550 to create Digital Audio Tour of Yorktown's 15 Revolutionary War sites, TravelStorysGPS a possible vendor

Also requested Town position re:

1) as part of Town government, can the YHPC charge admission fees to the public to our programs?

-No response despite follow up

2) clarify the Town's venue use fee policy (use parks, town facilities: free or fee?) for municipal entities like the YHPC (we are volunteers, not nonprofit nor for profit) to provide programs for the public good?

-No response received

#### **4. Westchester County Board of Legislator Funding Request**

On November 30, submitted funding request for \$17443 to Westchester County Board of Legislators, through our legislator, Vedat Gashi, for funding support for the Digital Audio Tour and four replacement bronze markers

-Received BOL approval for the \$17443

#### **Update**

-learned that Monumedic, our marker fabricator, went out of business

-obtained new estimate for markers from Franklin Foundry, \$9332 vs. Monumedic Estimate, \$11884; difference (Franklin is who Monumedic was working with)

-difference in estimates, Franklin -\$2552 but shipping has to be added

-need to process under 501C3 (Rae of Light Foundation, Inc.), provide 501c3 IRS determination letter, scope of services, budget breakdown, W-9, EFT, liability insurance certificate naming County of Westchester as certificate holder and additionally insured; takes about 6 weeks

#### **\*Bronze Markers**

-completed for YCCC, First Presbyterian Church, Yorktown Railroad Station, Shipman House

-stored at Parks and Recreation Building

-Jim Martorano has okayed our continued storage of the markers

-planning design and execute install / recognition events when conditions permit

-next group: Davenport House, Congregational Church, Lane's Tavern, Community Church

-Bridget developed proposed sign copy for Davenport House (needs to be vetted and sources identified; volunteers?)

-planning install event underway with First Presbyterian Church in late fall

#### **6. Other Support Requested of Supervisor Diana-February 1, 2023**

- storage space for our historic records-no response

#### **7. Historic Building Designations**

**a. 1952 Commerce Street** (Unique Building: designated as such in the Planned District Design Overlay Zone law: "Existing buildings that should be retained for cultural, architectural and historical references to the Town's history."

-The Town Board has approved the Garden Hotel development while simultaneously agreeing to demolish the building designated as Unique in the law it created, a conflict in actions.

Next Step – submit memo to Town Board requesting the Unique buildings be removed from the law

### **b. Strang Tavern Components (outbuilding at 800 Granite Springs Road)**

- Worked with the home owner, draftsman and disassembly contractor to save, identify and prepare the posts and beams from the original Strang Tavern
- Historically significant: Major Andre stop through Yorktown with plans to West Point in his boot
- took numerous videos: interviewed home owner, post and beam expert, volunteer architect
- funding supplied by Board of Legislators, Vedat Gashi legislator
- stored in secure location pending vision, plan development and funding support to repurpose as Cultural Heritage Center for 2026, 250<sup>th</sup> US birthday of American independence

### **c. Homes of Distinction**

- No activity
- Rob and Ashley Lenseth, 1145 Baldwin Road, have asked to renew their request for designation of their home for Home of Historic Distinction; retrieving and review initial application; dates back to 1835, Tompkins family and Elias Qureau and wife who bequeathed the land for my school house
- Located the Lenseth file and will reach out to him; he wants to post the HHD sign below his Clover Hill sign and have the text be visible on each side.

### **d. Proposed Landmarks**

#### **On Hold**

- Isaac Underhill House: application draft completed; conversation with homeowner, reviewing code, concerned about limitations on future exterior construction, acknowledged receipt of codes, reviewing (options: landmark, HHD or national register listing)

#### **On Hold**

- Hilltop Hanover Farm-County funded consultants to build master plan; attended stakeholder visioning workshop; shared aspects of research completed; meets three out of five landmarking criteria: 1, 2, 5; Lynn amending the content to better fit criteria

### **Underhill Farm Development**

- On July 17, 2023, the Planning Board approved the Underhill Farm site plan and resolution unanimously; 79% (10.9/13.8 acres) mostly undeveloped space will be disturbed; 6 acres of open space will be eliminated; over 494 of 714 trees (69%) cut down, destroying large quantities of ground cover and vegetation, 148 residential units will be fabricated; 15,600 sf of commercial /retail space will be added; all seven outbuildings will be demolished; 306% new or 4.6 acres of roads, buildings and other paved or impervious surface will be added (1.5 acres to 6.1 acres); iron entry gate will be replaced with "classic estate feel with some sweeping curved walls and steps to the plaza"; forty foot tall mixed use commercial building will overpower main building; scenic gateway to the hamlet will be replaced with high density mixed used residential complex
- since the start of SEQRA reviews, fifteen months ago, YHPC documented historic issues in over thirty-memos to the Planning Board and Public Record; we indicated the Planning Board failed

to perform the hard look across numerous SEQRA categories (archaeological, historic, architecture, aesthetic, neighborhood /community character, land use intensity)  
-we were essentially ignored during the process  
-we alerted SHPO that most, if not all, historic issues were not resolved and to wait until they were to sign the Letter of Resolution; the site plan resolution identifies a plan for a plan (historic issues unresolved and not approved by the Planning Board) for the main building, pond, stone walls, iron gate; SHPO signed the LOR on August 2, 2023  
-YHPC agreed to move forward to complete and file Underhill Farm landmark proposal with the Town Board; discussed and planned during prior YHPC meetings: January 12, 2022, February 9, 2022, April 20, 2022, May 11, 2022, July 13, 2022, August 10, 2022, November 16, 2022, December 14, 2022, January 11, 2023, February 8, 2023,  
-draft 99% complete, received advocacy letters from five entities, each request is customized

### **8. Student Research Projects with WCC/Historic Preservation Certificate Program**

-waiting for new batch of students; 24 on boarded to date who helped with a variety of projects including Rochambeau French encampment research, landmarking

### **9. Certificates of Appropriateness**

-J. Vigilante reported the basement door collapsed and police were called to the Community Church

-contractor delayed in replacing the door per the January 26, 2021, Certificate of Appropriateness approval; also increased cost to donor of funding

-alternate contractor to be secured

-Completed the CoA for the Community Church steps on December 15, 2022; project completed; painting still pending

-Pending roofing replacement decision and updated CoA input from Bridget Krowe, Davenport House, to finalize CoA

### **10. Public Relations**

No activity

### **11. Website and Facebook - Jessica Cox**

-update the home of distinction application

-main page updates made

-R. Steinberg must execute any changes to the photos/copy of HDDs and landmarks (ARCGIS) ('scrolls')

-Upload additional Certificates of Appropriateness and Resolutions

-Update and optimize the menu to be more clear (easier access to HDD & Landmarks scroll, separate out section for applications, tuck less frequently used pages under a heading)

-Change bullets and adjust where the print option appears on each page (currently shows up in a different place everywhere)

- Populate Public outreach page
- Update the press release page



Yorktown Town Hall  
363 Underhill Avenue, P.O. Box 703  
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

(914) 962-5722  
www.yorktownny.org

## Resolution to Submit Application to Designate Underhill Farm as Town of Yorktown Landmark

This is a Resolution adopted by the Town of Yorktown Heritage Preservation Commission at its regular meeting on July 12, 2023.

Whereas, on this twelfth day of July 2023, as the duly appointed members of the Heritage Preservation Commission of Yorktown, under the provisions set forth in Chapter 198-3 of the Code of Yorktown; and

Whereas, we have the power to recommend identified structures or resources be designated as landmarks, interior landmarks, and historic districts, respectively, to the Town Board, in accordance with Sections 198.3C.5 and 198-4; and

Whereas, after months of consideration between March 11, 2021 and July 12, 2023, the Heritage Preservation Commission agrees to submit a landmark designation proposal to the Town Board of Yorktown for Underhill Farm; and

Whereas, the property is located at 370 Underhill Avenue, Yorktown Heights, New York, 10598, Tax Map Section 48.06 Parcel 1 Lot 30, commonly known Underhill Farm, but also known as Floral Villa, Beaver Farm, Beaver Conference Center, and Soundview Preparatory School.

Be it Further Resolved, that this resolution is effective immediately.

Linda R. Briggs, Chairman

Date: July 12, 2023

Cc: Thomas Diana, Supervisor

Adam Rodriguez, Town Attorney

Diana Quast, Town Clerk

## YHPC Proposal to Landmark the Underhill Farm Site

From: Lynn Briggs (lynn1200@aol.com)

To: pguillaro@unicorncontracting.com

Cc: tdiana@yorktownny.org; sesposito@yorktownny.org; lhaughwout@yorktownny.org;  
elachterman@yorktownny.org; mcapoccia@yorktownny.org; afetzer36@gmail.com; bridgetkrowe@gmail.com;  
tmcloughlin2384@gmail.com; christine.sisler@gmail.com; planning@yorktownny.org; building@yorktownny.org;  
lynn1200@aol.com

Date: Monday, July 17, 2023 at 09:20 AM EDT

Good morning Mr. Guillaro,

Please find attached a formal letter from the Yorktown Heritage Preservation Commission (YHPC), with two supporting files, regarding the proposed landmarking of the Underhill Farm site.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Yorktown Heritage Preservation Commission



Guillaro Proposal Letter.docx  
14.3kB



Historical Significance Summary.docx  
18.1kB



Tax Map.pdf  
1.1 MB

**Yorktown Heritage Preservation Commission  
363 Underhill Avenue  
Yorktown Heights, New York 10598**

*FIN*

July 17, 2023

Mr. Paul Guillaro  
Unicorn Contracting, Inc.  
10 Julia Lane, Suite 102  
Cold Spring, New York 10516

Via Email

**Reference: Proposal to Designate the Underhill Farm Site as a Yorktown landmark**

Dear Mr. Guillaro,

Pursuant to Section 198-4,D,(1), the Yorktown's Heritage Preservation Commission is notifying you that we plan to submit a recommendation to the Town Board to designate the entire 13.8 acre Underhill Farm property, 370 Underhill Avenue, Section 48.06, Parcel 1, Lot 30, as a Yorktown landmark (Tax map appended).

In compliance with Section 198-4,D,(2), prior to submitting the recommendation, YHPC is reaching out to you as the owner of the Underhill Farm property to discuss the landmark proposal but more importantly to work together to identify measures that can preserve more of the ENTIRE eligible state and national register of historic places site while simultaneously meeting your financial goals.

**Federal and State Historic Significance**

Please note that ENTIRE 13.8 acre Underhill Farm site is eligible for listing in the State and National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for the Underhill's contributions to the settlement, agricultural and economic development of Yorktown and Criterion C, and in the area of architecture as an intact example of a Federal-style farmhouse transformed into a large Italianate-style residence reflecting the evolution of changing architectural tastes in the second half of the second half of the century.

**Local Historic Significance**

In addition, the Underhill Farm property meets four out of five local land marking criteria due to its significance in its agricultural legacy fueling Yorktown's formation and economic development (Criterion 1), its association with Captain John Underhill and his important descendants, Edward Kear's civic leadership and Jean and Gilbert Beaver's humanitarian



endeavors (Criterion 2), its architectural significance as an intact Federal-style farmhouse later transformed into a large Italianate-style residence (Criterion 3) and the overall visual impact to our community of the ENTIRE 13.8 acre parcel with its historic landscape features, outbuildings, architecturally significant main building and site features (Criterion 5). Refer to the Attachment for a summary of the Underhill Farm property historic significance.

#### **Planned Development Deemed Adverse Effect**

The NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) has determined that your proposed development constitutes an *adverse effect* due to the significant, irreversible alterations to the character of the site, including the intensity of the development and the planned demolition of several historic buildings on the property. OPRHP's determination requires that viable alternatives to your plan must be explored that would allow adverse impacts of the intensive development to be avoided, or at the very least, minimized or mitigated. Both the determination of eligibility and the finding of adverse effect reference the character of the property as a WHOLE--the ENTIRE property--not just the main building, reflecting the fact that the landscape, outbuildings, main building and site features ALL contribute to the significance of this irreplaceable historic resource.

Despite OPRHP's comments, the Underhill Farm Alternatives Analysis report simply stated, and without any supporting documentation, that there were NO economically feasible alternatives that could avoid or minimize the adverse impacts because the project would not be financially feasible if it was scaled down.

#### **Proposed Collaborative Solution**

We understand that Underhill Farm is your private property and that you must return a profit with the proposed development. We continue to express our willingness to work with you to develop a collaborative solution that can preserve more of the ENTIRE 13.8 acre cultural resource property before the historic features of the historic Underhill Farm are irretrievably altered and lost, such as:  
*---carving out two - three acres, preserving an outbuilding or two, and creating an education center for current and future generations to honor Yorktown's founding family's contributions, whose name you use in your marketing efforts but could also provide an enduring physical connection to the Underhill legacy*

Mr. Guillaro, we would appreciate your commitment to meet with members of the YHPC by July 24 to explore alternative plans for this historic property before we submit the landmark recommendation to the Town Board planned for no later than August 10. We can be reached at 914-400-7722 and look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,  
Yorktown Heritage Preservation Commission

## Attachment

### Documenting the Historical Significance of the Underhill Farm Site

#### Eligible for State and National Register of Historic Places

On May 26, 2021, the OPRHP determined that the Underhill Farm property was eligible for listing in the State and National Registers of Historic Places, under:

Criterion A – for Abraham’s and Edward B. Underhill’s contributions to the settlement, agricultural and economic development of Yorktown and

Criterion C in the area of architecture as an intact example of a Federal-style farmhouse transformed into a large Italianate-style residence reflecting the evolution of changing architectural tastes in the second half of the nineteenth century

#### Meets Four out Five Local, Town of Yorktown Landmark Criteria

The Yorktown Heritage Preservation Commission has determined that Underhill Farm is eligible for local landmark designation under four (4) of the five (5) criteria used to determine historical/cultural importance set forth in Section 198-4 of the Town of Yorktown Historic Preservation Code. This qualifies the main house, seven (7) of the outbuildings, and the 13.8 acres of contributing historic landscape features as a candidate for local landmark

**Criterion 1 - Possesses special character or historic or aesthetic interest or value of the property as a part of the cultural, political, economic, or social history of the locality, region, state, or nation** - As an historic property, for its importance in the formation of Yorktown, its agricultural legacy fueling economic development and its transition into an industrialized municipality. As well as its later uses as an internationally recognized conference center specializing in social and political discourse, and as a private school serving students who flourish in small, non-competitive supportive settings.

**Criterion 2 - Is identified with historic personages** - For its direct association with Captain John Underhill, a leading figure in the settlement of colonial America, founder of the largest Underhill family in the U.S. and Canada, and his descendants who were instrumental in the development of central New York and specifically, Westchester County. For Abraham I. and Edward B. Underhill’s settlement, agricultural, economic, and civic development of Yorktown. As well as Edward B. Kear’s civic leadership, and Gilbert and Jean Beaver’s humanitarian and social justice activism.

**Criterion 3 - Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style** - For the main house as an intact example of a Federal-style farmhouse later transformed into a large Italianate-style residence reflecting the evolution of changing architectural tastes in the second half of the nineteenth century. For the interior’s retention of period historic details such as substantial woodwork within the bay windows and arched entranceways, moldings and trims at the doors, windows, fireplace surrounds, staircase banister and newel posts and plaster ceiling medallions.

**Criterion 5 - Because of the unique or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood** - For the overall 13.8-acre farmland, the historic landscape features, including a small pond, outbuildings (a former summer kitchen/root cellar, three residential cottages, a carriage house/horse barn, a chapel with bell tower, and carpenter’s workshop), parklike lawns, mature trees, surrounded by stone walls, iron entry gate, retain period integrity to the property’s

past agricultural history. For its importance as a scenic gateway to Yorktown, and the setting of one of the Town's last architectural treasures, the historic Italianate mansion. As well as its over 200 years of largely undeveloped and unaltered history, remaining much as depicted in the 1880's etching reproduced in J. Thomas Scharf's 1886 *History of Westchester County New York*.

### **Town Board Approves YHPC Authorization to Apply to the William G. Pomeroy Foundation to Recognize Underhill Farm Property's Historical Significance**

On June 9, 2020, following a presentation to the Town Board of the historical significance of the ENTIRE Underhill Farm property, the Town Board authorized the Yorktown Heritage Preservation Commission to apply to the William G. Pomeroy Foundation for a grant to recognize the property's historic significance with a roadside marker

*Note: The Foundation declined the application on January 22, 2021, because the property had been sold and the land permission letter from the Soundview Preparatory School board was no longer valid*

### **Potential Underhill Farm Historic Significance- Revolutionary War French Encampment and Underground Railroad Activity**

The Yorktown Heritage Preservation Commission is waiting on the Planning Board to perform the "hard looks" to rule in or out whether French Army General Rochambeau encamped on the Underhill Farm property during the Revolutionary War and whether the local Underhill's engaged in any activity in the Underground Railroad during the movement in Westchester County during the early to mid-1800's

