

III. Meeting Minutes for Yorktown Heritage Preservation Commission (YHPC) November 15, 2023, By Zoom

Attendees: Nancy Milanese, Bridget Krowe, Christine Sisler, Tom McLoughlin and Lynn Briggs

Meetings: The YHPC will now return to meeting in person at the Albert A. Capellini Cultural & Community Center, Room 209; a quorum will be required for those who attend in person and those who do not attend in person are able to participate by Zoom.

1a. Budget - As of 11/01/2023

Account T.0082.0001 Homes of Distinction \$537.42

Account T.0082.0002 Landmark Preservation \$1393.55

Account 0479.0005-\$500.00

Total \$2430.97

Tom secured a \$1000 "grant" from the Lions Club for us; deposited in T.0082.0002 Landmark Preservation

Still Unresolved

1b. \$5K Removed from Account for Town Obligation for Quonset Hut Purchase

-gained agreement with Town Board to secure Quonset Hut to store Zino barn timbers from two forty foot trailers

-agreement stipulated that the YHPC would find donors to cover one half of the Quonset hut cost and that the Town would cover the other half

-YHPC secured donors and installed the Quonset hut and arranged for the timbers to be transported the timbers from the storage trailers to the hut

-Town removed \$K from funds for YHPC in addition to the YHPC securing outside donors

-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; new Comptroller in place now

2. Town Board Funding Request for 2023

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 Historic sites

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

3. Westchester County Board of Legislator Funding Request for 2023

As a backup contingency, on December 1, 2022, submitted funding request for \$17443 to Westchester County Board of Legislators, through our legislator, Vedat Gashi, for funding support for the production of two videos and four replacement bronze markers

-Received BOL approval for total of \$17443 in November 2023 for both programs: four bronze marker replacements of 25 year old plywood markers and production of digital audio tours of Yorktown Historic Sites and Revolutionary War Rochambeau encampment sites

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; First Presbyterian Church first

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

-developing proposed copy with sources

Video Production of Yorktown Historic Sites

-setting up planning meeting and project kick off with Hollywood East Productions later this month

4. Other Support Requested of Supervisor Diana-February 1, 2023

- requested storage space for seven years of YHPC historic records in compliance with state records law and related archiving

-requested potential storage space from numerous sources over the years, museum, Engineering Department, YCCC, supervisors

-no response and/or availability

5. 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 relocated to 800 Granite Springs Road from corner of Granite Springs and Route 202 in 1830)

-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

-disassembly funding supplied by Board of Legislators, Vedat Gashi legislator

-stored in secure location pending visioning study and master plan development and funding support to repurpose as Cultural Heritage Center for 2026, 250th US birthday of American independence

c. Homes of Historic Distinction

-1145 Baldwin Road, 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

Isaac Underhill House - On Hold

-corner of California and Hanover: 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)

Hilltop Hanover Farm-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

Underhill Farm-Landmark application in process

-On July 17, 2023, the Planning Board approved the Underhill Farm site plan and resolution unanimously

-participated as an Interested Agency in the SEQRA process for Underhill Farm; attended 25 meetings, three public hearings, submitted over 30 memos into the Planning Board public

record requesting to address potential impacts to: historical, archaeological, architectural, aesthetic resources and neighborhood character

- while our efforts to designate the property a town landmark date back to 2019 with a project with the Soundview Prep School head master and history teacher, the discussions were interrupted when the property was sold to Unicorn Contracting in 2020

- throughout the eighteen months of the SEQRA process, the YHPC requested a collaborative solution that preserves the property's historic features—our shared history—while enabling the developer to meet his financial goals

- regretfully, our efforts were unsuccessful

- the site plan left numerous unresolved historic issues which is why landmarking is needed to protect historic features of the property

- in compliance with the town code, the YHPC requested a discussion about the proposed designation with the owner on July 17

- receiving no response, the YHPC submitted the designation application to the Town Board on August 18

- the town attorney required the YHPC to meet with the owner in person; three members of the YHPC (Lynn Briggs, Bridget Krowe and Christine Sisler) and the town attorney (Adam Rodriguez) met with owner, Paul Guillaro, his son, Michael Guillaro and his attorney, Mark Blanchard, on October 18 and proposed landmarking, preserving the chapel and YHPC participation in the designing the historic exhibit

- the owner declined our requests on October 27 and “remains strongly opposed to an application seeking to formally designate any portion of the property”

- despite the YHPC request on October 27 for reasons rejecting our requests, the owner has provided no reasons

- owner consent is not required for landmarking

- per town code, submitted the landmark application designation again to the Town Board on October 19

- awaiting the town board to set the public hearing date in compliance with the code, to be convened within 45 days of application designation submission

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

Shrub Oak International School

- Caitlin Sweetapple, Director of Research, is formulating the Community Church marker cleaning program for 2024

- cleaned 105 out 550 to date

Local High Schools

- Yorktown High School Student Sophomore Matthew Pilot contacted us several months and asked if we would support him in an Eagle Scout project

- Matthew wanted to clean the grave markers of those Fallen Heroes on whose graves at Shrub Oak Cemetery he has been placing American Flags for several years
- met with Matthew, established project objectives, timeline, deliverables
- leveraging the Shrub Oak International experience, Matt and I cleaned the first Fallen Hero marker
- Matt performed the Eagle Scout project successfully and was signed off by this oversight team and the Shrub Oak Cemetery
- the end results included cleaning 47 Fallen Heroes grave markers, with about twenty volunteers, in four hours
- his project was covered by News 12 on May 21st
- Matthew presented his Eagle Scout project to the Town Board on October 17 with his parents and mentor, John McQuillan present; his presentation included the clip from News 12
- Matthew's parents invited the YHPC chair to speak at his Court of Honor ceremony, scheduled on December 9

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
- alternate contractor to be secured and door replacement completed
- rotten and dilapidated steps replaced with 2022 CoA were painted in fall of 2023
- amended CoA for new roof installation (metal) for Bridget Krowe, Davenport House, October 27 and the new roof installed

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