

Comments from the Joint Board Meetings
Held on March 7, 2023
Re: Underhill Farm

Members from the town's four advisory boards (Conservation, Recreation, Heritage Preservation, Community Housing) attended.

Lynn Briggs, chair, represented the Heritage Preservation Commission along with Bridget Krowe and Christine Sisler.

Lynn thanked the Planning Board for encouraging the Town Board to hire an outside independent historic consultant to review the many deficiencies in the developer's historic studies, including resolving the property's potential archeological value relating to a possible Revolutionary War French Army Encampment and the potential Underground Railroad activity at this site. The Commission feels that most of the property's historic features were severely compromised or ignored in favor of the developer's profits. The Commission asked the Planning Board to require the developer to submit alternative development plans with fewer dwelling units and the elimination of commercial space.

According to Briggs, this 13 acre site is among the last of the historically significant parcels left in Yorktown. The property at one time belonged to one of the founding families, The Underhills.

The Commission has submitted many memos over the past year to the Planning Board expressing our concerns.

- 1- The failure to rule out archeological artifacts from encampments from the Revolutionary War.
2. The failure to rule out whether or not the property was used for the underground railroad.
3. The failure to address adverse effect finding.
4. The failure to acknowledge Underhill Farm as a historically significant property.
5. The continual change to the plans for the main mansion.
6. The failure to address how the mansion will be respected as well as present an alternative plan that does not affect the historic significance.

Accordingly, it was noted the town has hired a historic consultant and has been authorized to proceed. Hopefully, their findings should be submitted in two weeks.