

# Rockland County Historic Preservation Board

February 27, 2023 Final Minutes

Robert L. Yeager Health Center, Building T

Pomona, NY 10970

**Members Present:** Stacy Alessio, Mary Cardenas, Claudia Cooney, Marianne Leese, Lisa Levin, Craig Long, Robert Masiello, Peter Scheibner, Charles "Skip" Vezzetti  
**Staff:** Michael Kezner, Rockland County Planning Department  
Eugene Bondar, Rockland County Law Department

**Call to Order:** The meeting began at 3:30 PM.

- 1. Introductions:** Board Chair Craig Long welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that all active members were present. Craig asked Eugene how the Board would go about applying for a Preserve New York grant to fund a survey of Dutch red sandstone houses in the County, as discussed at the previous meeting. Claudia noted that applicants for this grant must provide 20 percent of the total project cost. Eugene stated that, since the Board is established through the County Executive's Office, they would have to go through that office to request funds. A brief discussion followed about previous grants Board members have received for various projects and how they were funded.
- 2. Review of January 23, 2023 Minutes:** Marianne submitted edits by email to correct minor grammatical errors and to indicate that her, Mary, and Claudia all wished to conduct a survey of the Dutch red sandstone houses, not just herself. Pete corrected the spelling of "sports" in his comments under the New Business section. The minutes were unanimously approved with the modifications on a motion made by Mary and seconded by Marianne.
- 3. Properties of Concern:** At the previous meeting, Mary had mentioned a structure was being demolished at the corner of Routes 303 and 340. Michael brought the Planning Department's file on that property and gave an overview of the construction that was proposed for the site. The Department had reviewed it several times since 2009. The most recent review was completed in January 2023. A 10,390 SF shopping center with 52 parking spaces was proposed. The Planning Department expressed serious concerns since nearly 100 percent of the site is located within the 100-year floodplain of the Sparkill Creek.

Claudia informed the Board that the John Green house received a \$7,500 grant to restore the façade of the building. A contractor has been retained to do the work. A brief discussion ensued regarding other work the contractor has completed. Skip asked if they will be looking for sandstone blocks. Claudia stated they were, but she was not sure as to what extent. The rear of the building had been rebuilt with cinderblocks, and they are not sure whether they should redo that if it is not in the front where most people will see.

Robert provided additional information from the discussion at the previous meeting on the park in Haverstraw that was recently built near Helen Hayes Hospital. Phase 1 has been completed and includes several sports fields, two dog parks, and a concessions stand. Phase 2 will be the construction of an indoor recreation center. There will be a Phase 3, but he is unsure what that entails at this time. The site was formerly a corn field on the hospital's property. The Town has been working to build a park on the site for the past 20 years since the farming use ceased.

Robert also provided more information from his previous discussion regarding the Haverstraw side of Letchworth Village. There was a proposal for 250-300 market rate apartments on 23 acres where Legoland was previously proposed. This is considered an Urban Renewal project as a result of a blight study that was conducted. That is the reason a referendum was not needed as opposed to the project in Stony Point.

Finally, Robert noted several different projects that are occurring in the Haverstraw area. The first involved the conversion of the Birchwood Bungalows, an area near Town hall behind the ShopRite, to apartments. Next, he informed the Board about a proposal on Riverglen Drive to convert a single-family dwelling to a synagogue, which included an 8,000 SF addition and a parking area. It was originally denied by the Planning Board but has since been accepted to avoid an RLUIPA lawsuit. Also, the Thiells Fire District is looking for a new property to relocate their main station. They are in contract with a five-acre site. A proposal for a four-story, 55+ apartment complex for that site failed.

Pete discussed the Eagle Bay project. He discussed some of the issues other groups had brought up with the proposal, such as Scenic Hudson and the Rockland County Planning Department. He was in support of Scenic Hudson's letter that made suggestions such as removing the northernmost building and associated parking and planting trees to create a buffer from the Stony Point Battlefield. Marianne thought that the project was already approved. Michael confirmed that the local boards approved the project. Claudia clarified that the US Army Corps of Engineers is still conducting the Section 106 process and is collecting comments from consulting agencies before they grant permits. Craig directed Michael to add the Eagle Bay project to the agenda for the next meeting to provide an overview of the project for the new Board members, and a refresher for others. If the Board decides to take a position or issue comments, they could do it then.

Pete asked Skip about the new Highway Department facility. They are finally getting the steel they need to complete the project. Buildings 1 through 3 are mostly complete. Building 4 is framed and has the electric and plumbing installed. Building 6 and the fuel pumps are complete. A referral has been made to the County Legislature to finish funding Building 8. The whole facility should be open by June. The public entrance will be from Scotland Hill Road. The Rockland County Art in Public Places Committee has commissioned a sculpture that will be placed by the main entrance. Response times for the department have been significantly reduced from this facility as opposed to their current location.

Marianne and Claudia saw a house in the Piermont area located at 91 River Road on the cliffside. A manufacturer of toothpaste tubes previously owned the property and did a lot of work between 1920 and the 1930s, including terracing and installing sandstone walls. The current owner has been removing vines and discovered everything. He contacted the Historical Society to learn more and ask about potential preservation. They gave him the contact information for the State Historic Preservation Office since Grand View-on-Hudson does not have any historic preservation laws.

Lisa stated that she did not have any updates on the Montebello Mansion, which she discussed at the previous meeting. She did note that they will be hearing the Certificate of Appropriateness for the Blind Players Club that coming Wednesday and would update the Board at the following meeting.

Robert mentioned that a house at the corner of Route 202 and Central Highway will be torn down to construct a strip mall. The house has tree beams in the rafters, dating it to over 200 years old.

4. **Old Business:** There was no old business.
5. **New Business:** There was no new business.
6. **Next Meeting Date:** The next meeting will be held on March 20, 2023 at 3:30 in the Building T conference room.

**Adjournment:** On a motion made by Skip, and seconded by Robert, the meeting was adjourned at 4:25 PM.