

# Rockland County Historic Preservation Board

September 27, 2023 Minutes

Robert L. Yeager Health Center, Building T

Pomona, NY 10970

**Members Present:** Stacy Alessio, Gillian Ballard, Mary Cardenas, Claudia Cooney, Marianne Leese, Lisa Levin, Craig Long, Robert Masiello, Peter Scheibner, Charles "Skip" Vezzetti  
**Staff:** Michael Kezner, Rockland County Planning Department  
**General Public:** Beth Brown, Rockland County Department of Economic Development & Tourism

**Call to Order:** The meeting began at 3:32 PM.

- 1. Introductions:** Board Chair Craig Long welcomed everyone back after the summer break. Everyone introduced themselves since there were new members and guests.
- 2. Review of April 17, 2023 Minutes:** Marianne submitted edits by email that included minor corrections and a clarification within Section 8. On a motion made by Skip and seconded by Mary, the minutes with the edits were unanimously approved.
- 3. Properties of Concern:** Claudia informed the Board that the John Green House received a \$75,000 reimbursable grant and just finished the reconstruction of the north wall. The John Green House also recently received a \$150,000 grant from an anonymous source to work on restoring the western wall.

Claudia also mentioned that the house at the corner of Route 304 and West Nyack Road has been demolished. This house was discussed at the previous meeting.

Lisa stated that the Montebello Historic Preservation & Parks Commission have not seen anything significant of late. Marianne asked her about the stone walls along Spook Rock Road; she had noticed they were broken in two places. Lisa said they were aware of this and have alerted Village Hall about the matter. The Village is watching the property owner to ensure the wall is rebuilt. Skip said that he was also aware of the issue since Spook Rock Road is a County highway. The Highway Department has cited the property owner since they did not have a permit to alter the rock wall.

Skip told the Board that, as Superintendent of Highways, he made a recommendation to the County Executive's office to enact resolution to the County Legislature to place Scotland Hill Road on the Official County Map as a County highway. The new Highway facility's entrance is off this road, and it meets all the criteria to be a County highway.

Pete caught the Board up on a development proposed for 111 South Liberty Drive in Stony Point. The applicant has proposed an 86-unit, mixed-use development. It is located on Route 9W, so traffic is an issue. Residents in the area are against the

proposal due to its size. The Rockland County Planning Department also issued a disapproval and stated the building should be scaled back.

Robert provided another update on the new park that opened in Haverstraw near Helen Hayes Hospital. The North Rockland football team recently had their opening day on the new field. Phase 3 of the park will include a gymnasium. Pete asked if there were any arrangements for Stony Point residents to have access to the park, as it is currently only for Haverstraw residents. Robert will look into this.

At the previous meeting, a subcommittee was formed to determine whether any sites were missing from the survey of Dutch sandstone houses in the County. Robert has since received a 1975 landmarks map from the Historical Society that details red sandstone houses. He recently drove around Orangetown to see if some of the sites still exist, and will visit the Clarkstown sites next.

Craig showed the Board an article in the Ramapo Room News, published by the Suffern Library, which features Robert's house, a historic structure.

Mary stated that something new was being built by the Stop and Shop on Route 303, but she wasn't sure what it was.

Pete asked Mary about the new Orangetown Town Hall project. She said they were planning to hopefully move offices in October.

Gillian asked about the preservation of the Ryan Mansion at 75 Montebello Road. Lisa said it was presented to them a few years ago, but they only have say over the exterior of the structure. Nothing new has come to them recently, but she knows they have a new architect.

Gillian also said she recently moved to Sloatsburg. There is an old farmhouse near her, but she was unsure how to ensure it be preserved since it is privately owned. Marianne noted that it was the old Johnson house, located in unincorporated Ramapo.

Beth told the Board that within the Department of Tourism, they have been making great strides in bringing tourists to the County. Tourism levels are now back to pre-Covid levels. She also shared that they are always happy to promote historic events and places, and that they would like to work with the local historical societies regarding the country's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

On the topic of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Craig mentioned he met with the County Executive's office who wanted to start planning celebratory events at this time. Marianne noted that the New York State Commission has not yet been appointed so funding would be difficult to obtain at this point. Craig said that the nine County

historians in the Hudson Valley have formed a 501(c) (Hudson Valley Rev 250) to secure funding. The non-profit would be an ongoing endeavor beyond the 250th anniversary.

4. **Old Business:** Pete wanted to provide an update on the Eagle Bay project in Stony Point but was not sure where the US Army Corps of Engineers was in their review process. Claudia said they were still working on it. Pete said that the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has submitted a letter requesting lighting be directed away from the Stony Point Battlefield, security be provided, and that the size of the buildings be reduced to three stories. Scenic Hudson also submitted a letter mirroring some of SHPO's requests.
5. **New Business:** Pete informed the Board that Jim Cropsey had passed away and that there was a nice article about him in the Rockland County Times.

Marianne had discovered two Dutch barns in Clarkstown. One was located on Saw Mill Road. It appeared to be a hybrid – it looked like an English barn but had an H-frame. The other was located on Old Mill Road. She was contacted by the owner who also had an old sandstone house on the property.

Michael let the Board know that the County was beginning work on a new Comprehensive Plan and that they will have a role to play in the process. It is still in the early stages and he will provide more information at a later date.

6. **Next Meeting Date:** The next meeting will be held on October 23, 2023 at 3:30 at the Orangetown Historical Museum.

**Adjournment:** On a motion made by Skip, and seconded by Pete, the meeting was adjourned at 4:39 PM.