

Rockland County Historic Preservation Board

May 20, 2024 Minutes

Rockland County Planning Department
50 Sanatorium Road, Building T
Pomona, NY 10970

Members Present: Stacy Alessio, Gillian Ballard, Beth Brown, Mary Cardenas, Claudia Cooney, Marianne Leese, Lisa Levin, Craig Long, Robert Masiello
Members Absent: Peter Scheibner, Charles "Skip" Vezzetti
Staff: Michael Kezner, Rockland County Planning Department
Others in attendance: Elizabeth Aranguiz, Rockland County Planning Department

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

- 1. Introductions:** Board Chair Craig Long welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone introduced themselves.
- 2. Review of February 26, 2024 Draft Minutes:** Marianne provided a minor edit to indicate the house on Kings Highway was located in Tappan. Claudia provided two spelling corrections by email. On a motion made by Mary, and seconded by Beth, the minutes were unanimously approved.
- 3. Properties of Concern:** Mary discussed a parcel in Orangetown located on Greenbush Road where dinosaur tracks were found in the past. She gave a brief history of the 17.4-acre site and mentioned there were several proposals for it over time, including for housing. The current proposal is for a self-storage facility.

Beth commented on the appearance of the John Green house, noting that it looked beautiful. She also mentioned that she and Marianne are working together to update the Tourism Office's history driving map.

Robert told the Board that the Thiells Fire Department will break ground on their new fire house in Spring 2025.

At the September 2023 meeting, Gillian discussed the Ryan Mansion located at 75 Montebello Road. Craig asked if she had any update at this time. She indicated that interior work was ongoing, but that there has been no exterior work done.

Marianne asked about the status of a house located in Airmont behind Ramapo Town Hall. It was previously owned by Ralph and Myrtle Mae Borsodi. Ralph was a nationally known economist, philosopher, author. He promoted back-to-the-land living for New York City commuters. He also created the cooperative communities of Bayard Lane in Suffern and Van Houten Fields in West Nyack. There was a proposal to construct a religious school on the parcel. Craig had not heard anything yet.

Michael presented the Board with three GML letters that the Planning Department had issued since the previous meeting:

- Yosef Emuna/96 Viola Road (M-135F) – a two lot subdivision of a parcel located within the Historic & Scenic Roads Overlay District. A stone spring house was located on the site and will remain.
- Planned Development Districts & Chair Factory District (VH-155) – zoning code amendment to create a new overlay district that would be applied to the Chair Factory Site. It is expected that the site will contain mixed-use housing, commercial, and a hotel. Michael will share more once the site plan application is received.
- Village of Montebello – Rural Preservation Overlay District (M-192.5A) – zoning code amendment to adjust the standards of the Rural Preservation Overlay District to allow for different housing types other than single-family dwellings within the District. Michael spoke with the Clerk from the Village who said the application had been pulled from the agenda by the applicant.

Robert informed everyone that the Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE) would begin installation soon. This project will bring wind power from Canada to New York City. Most of the cable will be buried under the Hudson River, but a portion of it will come ashore in Rockland, due to environmental factors. It will be buried under Route 9W in the Haverstraw area so there will be an impact to traffic during construction.

4. **Old Business:** Craig reminded the Board that the County Certified Local Government (CLG) was being audited for the 2020-2023 period. He stated that the materials requested had been submitted to the State, and thanked Michael for handling this. This also included the annual reports for the same time period.

Michael spoke with Frances Stern, the new Statewide CLG Coordinator prior to submitting the materials for the audit. She said she would be happy to speak to the Board at a future meeting to introduce herself and answer any questions anybody had since the Board has many new members.

Michael showed everyone the Historic Places in Rockland County page on the Planning Department's website and asked if anyone had any input since the last time it was discussed. The Edward Hopper House, Harmony Hall, and Mount Moor Cemetery were all suggested. It was decided that everyone would email their suggestions to Michael to be compiled and discussed at a future meeting.

Beth asked if there was an update on the preparations for the country's 250th anniversary. Craig said that the Governor had appointed members to a State Commission, who recently had their first meeting.

Mary indicated that the Orangetown Museum would be hosting a reading of the Orangetown Resolutions at the 76 House in Tappan to celebrate the 250th anniversary of their writing.

On the same topic, Craig mentioned that he had attended the second annual Rochambeau Festival in Yorktown Heights the past weekend. He explained that it was immersive experience about the Revolutionary War and gave a brief history on General Rochambeau.

5. **New Business:** Marianne asked about the County's acquisition of 101 Old Route 304 in New City. The Peter DePew House is located on the property and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Michael explained that this was a part of the County's Open Space Acquisition Program and that he was in the process of completing the SEQRA review for the acquisition of the parcel. If the County were to move forward, it would likely be a joint acquisition with the Town of Clarkstown.
6. **Next Meeting Date:** The next meeting will be held on June 17, 2024 at 3:30 in the Building T conference room.

Adjournment: On a motion made by Mary, and seconded by Robert, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 PM.