



Joint Historic Preservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2020 7:00pm

Remote meeting conducted using Webex

Attendees: Alan Kowlowitz (Chair), Chris Albright, Andrea Lain, Gwen Spicer

- I. Call to Order – Meeting was called to order at 7:05.
- II. Secretary's Report - Motion by Ms. Lain seconded by Mr. Albright to adopt the minutes of the May 4, 2020 Commission Meeting passed unanimously.
 - a. Rotating responsibility for minutes – Ms. Lain agreed to record minutes for the July 6, 2020 meeting of the Commission.
- III. Liaisons Reports
 - a. Planning Board/Commission
 - i. Mr. Kowlowitz noted that the Planning Board was holding a virtual meeting on Tuesday, June 2 and that one or more Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) members should attend.
 - b. Building Inspectors
 - i. Commission members agreed that the virtual discussion held with Town and Village Building Inspectors on Thursday, May 28 was productive. It was interesting engaging in a dialog with the Inspectors and learning about the process of demolition, and it was evident that they were willing to work with the HPC.

Commission members noted that since the zoning form also serves as the demolition permit request form it should be reformatted to make that clearer. Ms. Spicer felt that the form should also ask why demolition was being requested, while Mr. Albright thought that the HPC should review every demolition request and wondered who will decide if a structure is truly unsafe. He also asked how we will transmit our recommendations to the Inspectors if we disagree with the demolition permit. Mr. Kowlowitz noted that the HPC would need to make recommendations based on the standards for historical significance that are currently still in draft form and agreed to draft a memo to the Inspectors addressing some of these issues.

- c. ZBA
 - i. Mr. Kowlowitz asked if HPC members thought it would be valuable to meet with the chairs of the Zoning Board to introduce ourselves and discuss a possible role for the Commission. He noted that zoning laws will be updated soon, and that there are actually two boards, one for the Town of New Scotland and one for the Village of

Voorheesville. He agreed to look into setting up virtual meetings with the Zoning Board chairs.

- d. State Office of Historic Preservation
 - i. Mr. Kowlowitz had nothing to report.
- e. NYS Preservation League
 - i. Although there is nothing new to report since the last meeting, we should keep in mind the possibility of submitting a grant proposal for next year's funding cycle in April 2021.
- f. Follow-up
 - Mr. Kowlowitz will set up a virtual meeting with the Zoning Board chairs

IV. Old Business

- a. Historic Resources Survey
 - i. Progress report – Ms. Spicer sent Committee members links to several websites that list historic resources in the Town of New Scotland, including the Albany County Land Bank and the Clarksville Historical Society. Ms. Spicer noted that, aside from these websites, she has exhausted her resources for uncovering new sites to add to the Survey. She has been adding images to the 90 different sites that have been entered and has been scouring the New Scotland Historical Society's Sentinel for additional structures to add. Mr. Kowlowitz stated that he will contact the Clarksville Historical Society to find out if they would be willing to share their data.
 - ii. Meeting with State Museum staff on archeological sites – Ms. Lain had an email exchange with Nancy Herter of OPRHP about sharing the archaeological site information that can be found on CRIS (Cultural Resource Information System). Ms. Herter had reservations about sharing exact site location data because they would lose control of who sees the info. Ms. Lain agreed to set up a virtual meeting with Ms. Herter and the Committee in the near future.
 - iii. Eliciting help of NSHA and others in developing the inventory – Mr. Kowlowitz will contact NSHA to request aid.
- b. Developing procedures and format of Commission advisory opinions
- c. Draft Policy on Criteria for Inclusion of Sites in Historic Resources Inventory
 - i. Mr. Kowlowitz stated that the law establishing the HPC allows us to interpret a sites' significance in a broad way. In writing our policy, he wants to consider not only the age and architectural significance of a structure but also its irreplaceable historic information and significance in shaping the community's identity and culture. He will send out his draft policy to ask for additional revisions before we put it to a vote.
- d. Mr. Kowlowitz will set up a virtual meeting with John Scherer.

V. New Business

- a. Possible demolition permit for Whitbeck building

The Commission has learned that the current owners of the Whitbeck building on New Scotland will be asking for a demolition permit. According to Ms. Spicer this structure was once a general store and Post Office for the village of New Scotland. It became a gathering place for the town; people went there to buy hay, flour, feed and groceries as well as visit with their neighbors. Built in the late 1880s by J. Whitbeck, the building was bought and operated by the Crears beginning in 1920. When the railroad bridge was built over New Scotland Avenue the portion of the street occupied by the store became a deadend and business fell off. The

building, which has been vacant and abandoned since around 2000, has been documented and is in our Inventory.

b. 1724 Indian Fields Road – Site Plan Review for Solar Project

The Commission has learned that there are plans to build an 8-acre solar farm on the property associated with the historic house at 1724 Indian Fields Road. The house, built in 1874, is constructed of brick with a mansard roof; however, it does not seem likely that the structure will be affected by the construction of the solar farm. The proposal will be discussed at the next meeting of the Town Planning Board, which is to be held on June 2.

VI. Adjournment – Mr. Albright moved and Ms. Lain seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously.