

MINUTES
CLOSTER HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MONDAY, January 28, 2013 8:00 P.M.

- A. Call to order – Statement of Open Public Meetings Act
- B. Pledge of Allegiance
- C. Attendance:
Present: Jennifer Rothschild, Irene Stella, Bobbie Bouton-Goldberg, Tim Adriance, Jayne Rubenfeld-Waldron, William J. Martin, Francesca Macchiavelli, Orlando Tobia, John Kashwick
Absent: Stuart Tray
- D. Oaths of Office – William J. Martin, Bobbie Bouton Goldberg and Orlando Tobia were sworn in by Attorney Ed Rogan
- E. Election of Officers – Tim Adriance was voted in as Chair; Irene Stella as Vice- Chair, and Jennifer Rothschild as Secretary. Rose Mitchell will continue to serve as Coordinator for the Commission.
- F. Meeting Dates; newspaper – Record and Star Ledger were voted upon as the official newspapers for publication of legal notices. Jayne and Irene comment on meeting dates. Meeting dates as printed in the Borough Calendar are approved.
- G. COA Hearing – 119 Hickory Lane Chicken house (continued from prior meeting) Ms. Rothschild recused. Frank Vastano, Jr. testifying on behalf of Metropolitan Plant Exchange, owner. Sworn in and states name for the record. Address: 119 Hickory Lane, Closter. Discussion about the plans received by the HPC and whether plans distributed are same as applicant's. Mr. Vastano discusses revisions from last time; states that design is same as chicken coop currently in existence, with exception of front of the structure is not a greenhouse. It will now be a shed roof over the interior. Mr. Adriance clarifies that the HPC has no jurisdiction over the materials. Question about the elevations. Windows on second floor are disparate. Owner states that windows will all be 2/2 windows. Chair asks for discussion and questions from the HPC. Ms. Rubenfeld-Waldron asks what sort of siding – answer: natural wood material and the siding on the rest of the chicken coop that will remain, will be restored. Irene confirms that this is not a complete tear-down. Mr. Tobia states that it is a much-improved plan over the first set of plans. Tim agrees. Mr. Martin clarifies question of Tim's recusal and asks for Mr. Rogan to clarify it legally. Mr. Rogan responds that he had looked into it, discussed it with Mr. Radick and looked at the Board of Ethics rules and ordinance, and gives the opinion that there is no conflict of interest. Main concern was that through some ancestral ownership of property that there was a conflict. The code is more concerned with actual conflicts such as property value due to proximity or financial interest personally or via family. There is no such conflict. Mr. Radick was instructed that he could seek an advisory opinion from the Board of Ethics, and he declined to do so. The Board of Ethics also has a provision that Board members have a right to seek an advisory opinion about conflicts. It gives someone serving on a Board an opportunity to gain a somewhat private opinion. Mr. Adriance asks for a motion. MSC Tobia,

Bouton-Goldberg. Mr. Kashwick points out that alternates will be voting. Drawings 11/13/12 dated. And testimony of Mr. Vastano regarding windows. Unanimous approval.

H. Open to Public: Leslie Ringelstein living at 1 County Road, recently divorced from Richard Schmidt, co-owner of the Lustron house. Divorce finalized in March and final decision of divorce includes 50% of property proceeds of sale going to Ms. Ringelstein. She states that numerous appraisals were received for the property. States that property is obsolete and probably will never be able to be repaired. Property is up for sale and she needs to know what she can do to help property to sell. Mr. Adriance explains that this body is under a duty to preserve historically significant buildings. This board has discussed it and has deemed the structure meritorious of preservation. Ms. Rothschild points out that another prong of the consideration is to ask the Mayor and Council to purchase the house with Open Space funding, since then it would be preserved via its status on the state and national registers. Ms. Rothschild explains that the HPC was unaware of plans to sell because of previously stated plans to subdivide the property, etc. Ms. Ringelstein states that it would be a financial hardship on her and thinks that it should not be subject to the moratorium. Discusses history of the property and the request for subdivision that was denied. She states that her sister, who is the real estate agent for the property, has had interest from builders who want to demolish it. She notes the “oversized” lot and lovely location with a park across the street. Ms. Stella notes that it is within 300 feet of a C1 stream. Ms. Ringelstein states that it has been thoroughly researched and is buildable. Ms. Bouton Goldberg asks if a proposal to begin designation happens tonight, does that mean that the property would have to be taken off the market? Answer is no. Ms. Rothschild points out that moratorium doesn’t absolutely proscribe demolition or alteration, but would require review by this board. Discussion about how long the process takes; question about what happens if it’s designated. Mr. Adriance notes that the interior would not be under our jurisdiction and explains that demolition would likely not be approved. Ms. Ringelstein states that the exterior is same as interior in that it is rusted. States that making the outside better would be expensive and there are no funds. States that she cannot afford to have this property sit on the market. Mr. Kashwick asks if anyone from the Borough has approached to buy the house and property. Ms. Ringelstein states that her ex-husband was in charge of that. She states that she has no ill intentions to harm the community. Mr. Adriance clarifies that she is selling the property “as is.” She states that thus far four or five different people have approached the realtor and that all wish to purchase it only as a building lot. Ms. Rubinfeld-Waldron asks if house could be donated and moved. Mr. Tobia states that it’s hard to move. Discussion about dismantling it and relocating it on town property. Response was that there was not such property in Closter on which to put it. Mr. Kashwick states that Borough would likely enter into discussion to purchase it. Mr. Rogan notes that appraisals would need to be done. Ms. Rothschild points out that Borough might be able to seek reimbursement from County Historic and Open Space Funding. She also points out that grant funding would be available to Borough for restoration, should the Borough purchase it. Mr. Martin states that Borough would negotiate like any other buyer and asks if what she wants is an assurance that it can be demolished. She wants guidance and again states that only value of property is in land value (in her opinion). Meeting closed to the public.

I. Minutes – Ms. Stella made corrections moves for approval; MSC Stella, Rothschild

J. Correspondence – see separate sheet – Bergen County awards. Ms. Rothschild asks that everyone think of ideas for awards and discuss at next month's meeting.

K. Lustron – immediate action needed to save from demolition. Ms. Stella states that she would like for the Commission to have a tour of the house and would like to see the documents mentioned about appraisal. Mr. Adriance reiterates the mission of the HPC and states that Lustron has been standing for well over 50 years and is very unique. Ms. Bouton-Goldberg notes Pat Morillo's work regarding the Lustron. Ms. Rubinfeld-Waldron says that the needs of the individual have to be balanced with the good of the community. Mr. Adriance discusses value of zoning generally. Ms. Stella makes motion to designate it for moratorium to research it, market it and do PR. Mr. Adriance states that HPC cannot engage in the sale of real estate. Ms. Stella disagrees. Ms. Bouton Goldberg seconds. Ms. Rothschild asks if she should recuse because has shown interest in property and viewed it on Friday. Mr. Rogan agrees that she needs to be recused. Ms. Rothschild recuses herself and leaves the room. Further discussion of procedure. Mr. Martin states the power of designation lies with mayor and council. Wants to make it clear that we are not designating the property but are recommending designation. Mr. Tobia asks about what happens. Mr. Adriance asks for roll call vote. Unanimous vote to begin the process of nominating the Harold Hess Lustron house for local designation.

L. Open Space Requests for 2013 – Ms. Stella – more street signs and request for Borough to purchase Lustron. Mr. Kashwick clarifies that if Borough were to be asked to purchase it, that uses for it should be proposed. Motion seconded by Ms. Rubinfeld-Waldron. Discussion: Ms. Stella: Open Space should be investigated. Ms. Rubinfeld-Waldron states that funds for rehabilitation and/or restoration would be available for Borough as a public entity. Ms. Bouton-Goldberg states that the Closter Historical Society archives could be stored there. Ms. Stella says that it would entail costs for the borough; Mr. Adriance states that all properties have costs. Ms. Bouton Goldberg points out that it could be a museum, open for historical society, fundraisers. Ms. Stella suggests making it habitable and renting it out - they make a deal for the rent and repairs in exchange for free rent or low rent. Mr. Adriance: 1. Use it for Borough purpose as museum space, storage, archives. The historic community in Closter has no place to put items. 2. Income-producing for stream of rental income continuing as a residence with Borough as an owner. This would be less of a burden on taxpayers. Mr. Martin states that making yet another museum would be a less desirable choice. Ms. Bouton Goldberg states that it could be an office. Discussion of zoning for an office or a museum. WJM states that it's desirable to have someone in place to preserve the property and produce rent. Motion carries. Mr. Adriance asks Ms. Rothschild to put the Open Space requests in writing.

M. Old Business

1. Future proposals for designation

a. 1 Station Court - MS Rothschild, Rubinfeld Waldron to begin the process of nominating the Closter Railroad Depot for local designation ;. Ms. Rothschild reads Resolution. Discussion of hearing date and process. Ms. Rothschild states that nomination report is in draft form and can still be modified up until time it's sent out with notification. Ms. Rubinfeld Waldron asks if use of building would change. Mr. Adriance answers that use isn't dictated by designation. Vote: Unanimous approval.

2. Letter to Construction Code official requesting him to have building department do inspection of Abram Demaree. Ms. Stella moves that it be sent; Ms. Rubenfeld Waldron seconds. Discussion. Mr. Martin says that it should not say “inspect” but rather “visually observe the exterior of -----to ascertain if it’s in violation of . . . “ Mr. Adriance made corrections in ink on printed letter. Vote: unanimous – to deliver the letter with revisions to the Construction Code Official.

N. Liaison Reports

1. Council – John Kashwick – budget is same as last year.
2. Planning Board – Irene Stella - Mr. Banisch has sent recommendations for the conservation zone. No other report.
3. Other – brief reports on topics related to historic preservation only

O. New Business

1. Pamphlet for Realtors, Public – Discussion Ms. Stella suggests that another photo other than Hildebrand Nagle house. Question if pamphlet can be discussed via email. Mr. Rogan states, “Yes,” Mr. Rogan will review the brochure and report back to the Commission.
2. Display cases – no discussion
3. Talks with Toby to resume - Ms. Stella reports that cannot be on Wednesdays. She will report back to the Commission about proposed dates.
4. Goals for 2013 – tabled to next month.
5. Continuing education – report all classes and lectures attended to Jayne
6. Other – Ms. Rohtschild proposes pay increase to \$120.00 per month, For Rose Mitchell and a title change to “coordinator.” Ms. Bouton Goldberg made the motion and it was seconded by Ms. Stella. Unanimous approval.

P. Adjournment – MSC Tobia, Rubenfeld Waldron at 10 p.m.