

MINUTES
CLOSTER HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MONDAY, June 24, 2013
Municipal Chambers, Closter Borough Hall
8:05 PM

A. Call to order – Statement of Open Public Meetings Act

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Attendance

Present: Tim Adriance, Irene Stella, Jennifer Rothschild (8:07), Orlando Tobia, Francesca Macchiavelli, William Martin, John Kashwick , Jayne Rubenfeld-Waldron (8:10)

Absent: Bobbie Bouton-Goldberg, Stuart Tray

D. Minutes- May 20th, 2013 MSC Stella, Tobia - accepted

E. Open to Public: Joel Zelnick 65 Chestnut Avenue – former councilman. He relates that 8 – 10 years ago the Lustron house was a “cause” of his. He states that it’s in danger of being demolished. He spoke with the mayor about the fate of the Lustron. Mr. Zelnick states that the general impression is that “historical” is only related to the colonial era. He doesn’t want to see Closter become like Palisades Park – over-developed. He states that a good press release to all of the news agencies – might bring people to come to support “one of the best examples of the Lustron house.” He thinks that we could put together a good press release. If it’s demolished, it’s really an embarrassment to this town. He states that he was one of the “lone wolves” on the council who voted “yes” at the time that it was presented years ago. Living in Closter, it’s part of the character that makes this town. There are people out there who do appreciate this unique era and the aesthetic, he asserts. He states that it harkens back to the post-war period in America. It’s not colonial, but it has stood the test of time. If people realized that Closter does have something unique, somehow he thinks that it will strike something with someone. Mr. Kashwick asks about Planning Board vote. Irene Stella states that the “second vote” (on the resolution) would take place this Thursday. He states that this is an issue that really needs to be brought out, so that the public can have a fair shake at the outcome. WJM states that the Commission has done its job getting it out, getting it to the Planning Board, and it will go to the Council. Irene Stella states that other things have been done, as well, such as exhibits, researching moving it, etc. Mr. Martin states that the Commission only recommends it to the council. Mr. Adriance encourages all of the Commission members to attend the Council meeting and to express their sentiments so that the Mayor and Council can hear those voices. Mr. Martin states that the Council is the appropriate body to make the decision. Mr. Zelnick states that the Council still listens to the voice of the people, if it’s strong enough. Mr. Adriance restates that anyone can attend the mayor and council meeting, even if not living in Closter, as it’s a public meeting. He states that if someone chooses to do something as a private individual, then the Commission has no control over it. This Commission isn’t charged with a lobbying effort. It’s a matter of educating the public. He reviews the Planning Board discussion, in which a few members did not appreciate the meaning of the Lustron. Bergen County has a wealth of stone houses, but Victorians were rapidly lost. The Commission is always fighting to preserve what we have, historically. Mr. Martin restates that the Commission shouldn’t be lobbying, per

se. Irene Stella states that previous professionals advised that Commission members should be monitoring other Board's meeting. Not lobbying, but clarifying. Irene Stella encourages Commissioners to attend other meetings, such as zoning and planning.

Leslie Ringelstein, 1 County Road, Closter, NJ Ms. Ringelstein states that we all know who she is and know why she is here. She would like to start off by offering this "Committee" an apology for her lengthy discussion and attitude she displayed at the last meeting. She states that "we are five months into the moratorium and there has not been one offer thus far." She wonders where the "Lustron Lovers" are. She states that it has been listed in the New York Times every weekend. There's a big sign on the house. She is here because she isn't sure when the next meeting will be. She was told that they would be hearing the matter before the Council on July 10th. She isn't sure which way it's going to go. She has put forth as much effort as she could. She states that the Planning Board did decide to move the matter forward. She states that the public needs to be aware what is going on with that property. She thinks that the neighborhood needs to know the impact of this designation upon them. She states that there was one interested buyer – United Way. There was an appraisal done on the property and an inspection. After that, there was no feedback to the realtor or to her ex-husband. She states that United Way is interested in purchasing the property, with a concept wherein they would preserve the house as an office, and add low income housing structures. She states that the area isn't zoned for multi-family use. Mr. Martin states that charitable organizations don't get waivers from zoning. Ms. Ringelstein plans to make the neighbors aware of the potential of these plans. She states that Mr. Lignos of the Planning Board says that he's an architect. She asserts that it would be impossible to replace panels on that house. She states that Mr. Lignos stated that creativity could allow other materials. She questions this assertion. Mr. Adriance refers to the Closter National Bank building and its materials. He states that the standard in historic preservation is such that you can use like materials. For instance, you can use PVC and mold it to look like wood. Discussion. She asks if just one corner of the house can be preserved, and does that meet integrity? She states that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the house faces streets, so, according to our ordinance, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the house has to be preserved. Mr. Adriance states that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the house comes under the jurisdiction of the Commission. He states that if someone came forward with a plan for the Lustron, the Commission would review whether the addition was detrimental or would work with the design. Unless you have a specific set of drawings, it can't be answered. She states that she read through our Guidelines. She states that she just wants to know what treatment the house would require. The enamel was painted. Mr. Martin states that it doesn't have to be preserved in precisely the manner that it was constructed. If there are panels that require repair, and if repaired and maintain the appearance of the house, then it might be o.k. Discussion. Ms. Ringelstein states that she has a really hard time with the preservation idea, since this house is in such a state of disrepair. Discussion with Mr. Martin. Ms. Ringelstein has questions about whether something other than steel enameled panels would be acceptable. Mr. Adriance states that if you could use a material that would give the same look, e.g. with stainless steel, and then the whole house was painted, then it might be o.k. She is just trying to convey how surprised she was with the interaction between Mr. Lignos and Mr. Adriance, when discussion about using alternative materials was going on. Further discussion. Ms. Ringelstein states that most of the house has to be replaced. Mr. Martin questions this. Discussion. Mr. Tobia asks if the panels are removable. Mr. Adriance states that the reverse process of installation is used to remove them. He also states that Lustron pieces can be bought. Ms. Stella states that there are clubs that follow Lustrons; Mr. Martin states that there is a conservancy

somewhere in the Midwest. Ms. Ringelstein states that she appreciates that something other than enameled steel could be used. Mr. Martin explains the review process. Ms. Ringelstein states that she “needs to know” what this “committee” would accept. Ms. Rubinfeld-Waldron states that the standard is “in-kind.” Discussion about how hearings would proceed. Ms. Ringelstein thanks the Commission.

F. Hearings – no hearings scheduled . Mr. Adriance reports on the Planning Board approvals of 1 Station Court and the Lustron. Both have been moved to the Mayor and Council. Mr. Adriance reviews the procedure for designation. Ms. Rothschild states that 1 Station Court is on the council agenda for this week, June 26, 2013. Ms. Stella states that she made the point that the Planning Board was supposed to follow the master plan, but that the mayor could not find reference to this concept in the ordinance. Mr. Martin states that it would be in the MLUL. Mr. Adriance states that one has to look at the section of the MLUL relating to the Planning Board. Ms. Stella states that the Planning Board should only make decisions based upon the master plan.

G. Correspondence – Incoming: letter from Dorothy Guzzo thanking Jennifer Rothschild for presenting at the Historic Preservation Conference – Jennifer distributes

H. Old Business

1. Active future proposals for designation – will wait for Bobbie Bouton Goldberg to return – will postpone discussion on these matters.

- a. Closter Borough Hall
- b. Nagel/Auryansen Cemetery
- c. Vervalen House 151 West Street
- d. David Durie House 285 Schraalenburgh Road
- e. St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
- f. High Street District – letter to homeowners
- g. G. Trautwein-Haring Area

2. **Pamphlet for Realtors, Public** – Jennifer explains what has been produced through Francesca’s efforts and William Martin’s design for the front page. She distributes printed copies. Discussion. Mr. Adriance states that he likes the image of the horseman. Discussion about centering the seal and centering the words “Historic Preservation in Closter.” Mr. Martin explains how he designed the seal. Ms. Rothschild explains why the date was there, and asks if it should be removed and the website information centered. Mr. Martin suggests that the date be placed on the back, in Roman numerals. MSC Stella, Tobia get brochure printed in a quantity of 250. Discussion: center “historic preservation in Closter” on the front, place the date on the back of the brochure, and center the website and make it a bit larger.

3. **Talks with Toby** – Mr. Tobia states that he has a lot to say. His last talk was about High Street. He shows a newspaper article with a photo of a house on High Steet, at the corner of High and Perry Streets, with the red barn in the back. Mr. Orlando attended the graduation ceremonies that took place at the Railroad Depot. He describes the event; it was held outside. He was invited, because he gave a talk there. He also was involved in repairing some things there, and they gave him an award. Mr. Tobia states that he would like the next talk with the First Aid and Fire Department. Ms. Stella states that she cancelled the last event due to lack of PR; she wants to sit down and get the dates and subjects settled for the whole year, along with a

poster that could be hung at the library for the whole year. Ms. Macchiavelli suggests that the videos be posted on the website and on YouTube. Discussion about who sponsors the events – Ms. Stella states that it's the Historic Preservation Commission, the Closter Historical Society, the Closter Public Library, and the Closter Senior Citizens Center. Mr. Adriance advises creating a "Talks with Toby" YouTube channel.

4. Cemetery Award – Ms. Stella states that she still has the certificate to be given to the DPW employee. She will contact Bill Dahl to invite him here, or to a mayor and council, so that the certificate of appreciation can be given out, ceremoniously.

I. Liaison Reports

1. Council – John Kashwick – 1 Station Court is on the agenda for vote by the Council, this Wednesday June 26th

2. Planning Board – Irene Stella – Closter Plaza renovation will be presented this Thursday the 27th.

3. Report on N.J. Preservation State Conference - Ms. Rothschild states that Ms. Bouton-Goldberg, Ms. Stella, Ms. Rubinfeld-Waldron and Ms. Rothschild attended, and that she (Ms. Rothschild) gave a presentation on "best practices" and handed out a packet with materials. (distributed two folders that she had prepared for the conference, to the board).

4. Other – brief reports on topics related to historic preservation *only*: Discussion about Rockland County versus Bergen County and Closter, vis-à-vis preserving historic buildings. Mr. Adriance reports on examples in Orangeburg and Piermont of stone houses being lost or severely damaged.

J. New Business

1. Auryansen House-450 Piermont Road – directly West of Sear Restaurant (formerly Peking Duck)

2. Goals for 2013 – Ms. Stella states that we are obligated at the end of the year to report to the Mayor and Council. Mr. Martin suggests that a formal report be created, listing what properties have been considered, etc.

3. Continuing education – report all classes and lectures attended to Jayne

4. Distribution of Agenda – Discussion

5. Other: Wells Fargo mural – Ms. Rothschild explains that historic images will be made into a mural for the Closter Wells Fargo Bank, based upon chosen images from Pat Garbe Morillo's book, Images of Closter. Ms. Rothschild provided digital versions of the photos to the graphic designer working for Wells Fargo.

Ms. Stella states that both the Auryansen House at Auryansen Court and the Demaree House at Schraalenburgh Road, are a mess and should be addressed. Discussion. Mr. Adriance states that it's up to the property maintenance officer to establish whether these houses are being maintained to code. Discussion about what constitutes a property maintenance issue. In the past, the Commission has written to the Code Official about the Demaree House and about Village School. Mr. Martin states that we should appeal to our liaison to inquire about this.

K. Adjournment MSC Rothschild, Stella at 9:20 p.m.