

**MINUTES**  
**CLOSTER HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**MONDAY, March 18, 2013 8:00 P.M.**

- A. Call to order** – Statement of Open Public Meetings Act
- B. Pledge of Allegiance**
- C. Attendance Ed Rogan representing Commission; Jayne Rubenfeld Waldron arrived at 8:15 p.m.**  
– Absent: Orlando Tobia
- D. Minutes – deferred to next month; were not distributed in advance**
- E. Open to Public: None wishing to be heard**
- F. Hearings**
1. **COA hearing for the R. Vervalen House 125 Old Closter Dock Road** – Mr. Arias is Sworn in by Ed Rogan, Esqu. Ralph Arias, 125 Old Closter Dock Road – new owner of the house. Mr. Adriance asks that everyone look at the drawings that were sent to them in the mail. Mr. Adriance asks Mr. Arias to describe the project. Referring to the second page, looking at the rear of the property, he is proposing making one bedroom larger over the kitchen. He states that he will keep the same roofline and the same shingles. He will match the exterior clapboard. He will retain the existing two narrow windows and put them into the addition. Currently there is a deck on the rear of the house. Mr. Arias states that the deck will not run through the addition. Mr. Adriance asks if the low roof is to be removed and the addition to be built above. The setback for street frontage is discussed; it will match the average of the homes on the same side of the block. The frames of the windows and the siding is of historic vintage, including louver and bargeboard (rakeboard), noted by Mr. Adriance. Mr. Arias states that he will remove the original details and place them onto the new addition. Ms. Stella states that the addition will be set back and not flush with the front. The roofline will be continuous. Mr. Adriance asks about current eaveline on the south. Mr. Arias states that there will be 1 feet 6 inches “bump back.” The same eave line will be retained east of the small dormer. Mr. Adriance asks about south elevation windows. Page four states “new window.” Mr. Arias states that he will add two windows. The two east windows will be moved. One will be on the south elevation and one will be on the north side. There will be no windows on the east side, second floor. Mr. Adriance asks about “new egress window” shown on the north elevation. Mr. Arias states that the windows are not “new” but are the windows already on the house. Discussion about what constitutes an “egress window.” Mr. Adriance and Mr. Martin discuss the need (or lack thereof) for egress windows under the UCC. Ms. Rothschild asks if the rehabilitation subcode would apply. Further discussion about what sort of windows would suffice. Mr. Martin states that a casement window could be put on the rear addition, so that the window would not be seen from the front. Ms. Stella states that the long roofline would not look appropriate for a gothic house. Mr. Adriance describes the Downingesque style. Discussion about the addition that already exists and how inappropriate it was to have been added to that house (predates current owner). Mr. Adriance states that if the existing east gable end window might extend into the eave of the overhang of the roof. Mr. Adriance suggests a dormer. Further discussion about what changes

will be made to the old addition. Ms. Rothschild hands Mr. Arias the photocopy of Andrew Jackson Downing's illustration of a gothic house, from which this house might have been designed, alongside a drawing of the house from 1976 that was published in the Gurnee book about historic homes in Closter. Mr. Martin states that he has trouble reading the plans from an architectural perspective. He is concerned about dimension and scale. Mr. Adriance states that the Commission is here to assist the homeowner. Mr. Martin asks about the framing above the kitchen. Is the second floor going to be lined up and is this going to change the height of the walls of the kitchen. The zoning requirement is that it be stepped back. Mr. Martin asks if there are beams in the kitchen now. Asks what if the framing isn't sufficiently deep, and will this change the height of the structure. Mr. Martin suggests that more study be done, and that more detailed documents be submitted. Mr. Adriance suggests taking a photograph of the house and printing it out, then drawing the addition next to the photograph of the existing house. It would help the homeowner and also help the Commission be able to conceptualize what is being approved. Mr. Arias states that he is hoping to move his family into the house in six weeks. Mr. Martin asks if the ordinance states that scale drawings must be submitted with the COA application? Mr. Rogan looks to the ordinance. The ordinance does not absolutely require such drawings. According to the ordinance, scale drawings "may be required" by the Commission, as read by Mr. Rogan. Ms. Bouton-Goldberg asks if there is a way that he could meet with a subcommittee to discuss what he can do next? Ms. Rothschild concurs that this would be acceptable, with a conditional approval from the Commission. Discussion. Ms. Rothschild states that the west side elevation will be preserved, which is a positive. Ms. Rubenfeld Waldron states that the Commission does not control the paint colors or interior renovations. Motion by Ms. Rothschild that the Commission give condition approval for the conceptual presentation, based upon the presentation tonight at the hearing, subject to the approval of drawings of the subcommittee of Mr. Adriance and Mr. Martin, Seconded by Ms. Bouton Goldberg. Discussion. Mr. Martin asks if applicants be given more guidance as to what to submit. Discussion about what level of detail needs to be submitted in order for the Commission to understand what is going to be approved. Mr. Adriance states that drawing to scale really helps. Roll Call votes: six "yes" and one abstention (Mr. Martin abstains).

2. **Closter Depot - 1 Station Court** – Proposal for Historic Designation HEARING: Ms. Rothschild states that certified mail notification was sent to the owner of record as per the tax records and Mr. Rogan checks the date and states that the hearing can proceed. Mr. Adriance reads the resolution. Opened to the public, none wishing to speak MSC Ruben Bouton; Ms. Rothschild commends Ms. Bouton Goldberg unanimous.

3. **Harold Hess Lustron** House 421 Durie Ave. – Proposal for Historic Designation HEARING: Ms. Rothschild recuses due to a prior interest in purchasing the property. Ms. Macchiavelli asks for legal counsel as to whether she should recuse, due to her work relationship with Ms. Ringelstein, a co-owner of the Lustron. Mr. Rogan states that she does not, per standard ethics rules. Mr. Adriance reads the resolution. Mr. Adriance opens the meeting to the owners or concerned parties to make comments. Ms. Leslie Ringelstein comes forward, 1 County Road, Closter. She states that she is a co-owner of the Lustron house. She states that she has made an appearance before and explained the situation to this Commission. She states that she has been awarded the proceeds of the sale of the house and asks what needs to be done in Ms. Ringelstein states that the Lustron house was never bought with the intention of keeping the house intact. There never was a restriction on demolishing the house. Everything changed on

January 28<sup>th</sup>, when the Commission decided to place a moratorium on this property for no demolition. It has been on MLS for sale “as is” as a Lustron home. Her sister states that there have been nine queries about the house; 4 from contractors wanting to demolish; since the moratorium has taken place, they are not interested. One person (JHR) wanted to buy as is. At the open house, she states, only curious neighbors and one person interested in historic nature of house. According to Ms. Ringelstein, that person was not interested in buying after seeing the house and its condition. Ms. Ringelstein reviews the process and asks who wrote it and compliments it. Ms. Ringelstein passes around photos of the house and its current condition. She notes that the historic sign does not prohibit demolition. Condition of the front door; condition of the post holding up the porch; side view of house, another side view of house; side view of house with magnification; back view, back entrance, breezeway, another photo of the breezeway, space at front door, cabinetry in living room, kitchen, utility room photos, bath, hallway, closet, bedroom and garage, garage roof, utilities in garage, etc. Commission spends some time looking at these photos. Ms. Bouton asks why photos are blue. Ms. Ringelstein states that the photos were taken with an iPhone. Ms. Ringelstein states that the point of the photos is to show that it is made of stainless steel, inside and out. When it was originally built, it was “lovely and pristine.” Now she states that it is uninhabitable. Over time it rusts. The house has never been repaired and nothing has been done to preserve it in any shape or form. It would need extensive renovation and she does not know if it can be repaired. She wishes to impress upon the Commission what a financial burden the historic designation would impose. She states that this would be a loss to herself and her ex-husband, but also to the town in the form of tax revenue. She introduces Steven Mufson, 79 Everett Street, Closter, NJ. He is her brother-in-law and is in the construction business. He states that the Lustron house is not a house that could just be renovated. He states that an addition, the roof, etc. does not lend itself to renovation. He states that anyone obtaining this house would be “stuck with it.” He states that he knows that the house has great historic features. Mr. Mufson asks Mr. Martin what sort of house it is – disputes that it is a Lustron – states that “it’s just a ranch house.” Further discussion by Mr. Mufson about the deterioration of the house and difficulty to repair it. He asks: Why not take it apart and put the parts in a museum, so that it can be preserved forever? States that it’s a little tiny house for a family and that it is ugly. Mr. Mufson urges the Commission not to make a decision on the house. He states that he lives in that neighborhood, and that it is not a “pretty house.” He states that no one could live in that house. He asks that the Commission consider and think twice about it. Mr. Adriance thanks him for his presentation. Asks if any others from the public wish to speak. None came forward. Mr. Adriance asks for the Commission to deliberate and come to a vote. Asks for motion. MSC Stella, Bouton-Goldberg. Mr. Tray asks a question. Asks about moving the Lustron. Ms. Bouton-Goldberg states that it has been discussed and that it can’t be moved. Mr. Tray asks why it was never brought forward for historic preservation. was discussed. Mr. Kashwick states that it did come before the Commission in 2004 and was voted down by the Council. Mr. Rogan states that the owners did have knowledge. Further discussion about the process. Ms. Bouton-Goldberg states that the owner was aware and appeared at the exhibit at the library; there’s a photo in the nomination report. Ms. Stella explains the path of the designation. The moratorium could be shorter if they (council) vote sooner. Mr. Adriance states that the moratorium could be removed tonight if the resolution is not approved. Mr. Tray suggests delaying for three or four months. He asks how much the house is listed for? Answer is \$389K. Ms. Bouton Goldberg states that the Commission asked the town to buy the property (with Open Space Funds), and that if it did, then grant monies would be available to the Borough for

restoration, since the house is already listed on the state and national registers of historic places. Mr. Adriance states that not every house in town has 5 bedrooms and enough room for 2.5 children. There are situations for lower income people and retirees that are different than those for upper-middle-income families. Ms. Rubenfeld-Waldron asks John if the Council is moving forward with purchasing the house. Discussion about what Borough might do with this house. Mr. Adriance states that what might appear to be dire conditions are not necessarily such. There is a market for antique vehicles, by comparison. They can be lovingly restored, even if appearing rusted. Further discussion. Mr. Adriance asks for further comments. Ms. Bouton-Goldberg reminds Commission about Pat Morillo's devotion to saving the Lustron, and that she really knew her historic preservation and knew what's worth saving. Ms. Ringelstein interjects that the moratorium is for 6 months and not one Lustron lover has come forward. She begs the Commission not to designate the house. She asks that the Commission "keep the moratorium as it is for another four months to try to sell the house, and then have a 'discussion.'" It is a financial loss to her and a financial loss to the town, she reiterates. A brand new, larger more modern home could be built there, with everything brand new. Don't push it forward now. Just wait. Mr. Mufson now begins testimony anew, asking what the Commission looks at. What is it about this house's exterior of the home? Eventually someone is going to change it. How many parts are available? Would there be enough parts for an addition? Mr. Adriance explains that an addition would not have to be built with Lustron parts. The scale and proportion would have to be observed. The wing on the house would have to stand alone and separate. Mr. Mufson states that the components all fit together, from a kit, like a "pine wood derby car." He asks how the valleys and roof would "tie in." Mr. Martin states that it would not need to tie in. Mr. Martin states that Mr. Mufson is missing the cultural point of how this house adds to Closter's history. Mr. Mufson again states that it should be made into a "small historical exhibit" in the library at Closter, and that would be better than keeping the Lustron house standing. Bobbie states that it is a very rare house. "There are rare things everywhere," states Mr. Mufson. Mr. Martin states that the Commission is following its mission and that ultimately the Mayor and Council will make the vote. Mr. Rogan states that tonight is not the designation of the house; it is a hearing proposing designation. Only the Council can vote to designate a property or district historic. Discussion about the moratorium. Mr. Kashwick asks what happens if they cannot sell the property. Mr. Martin says that Commission's mission is the cultural integrity of the town. Mr. Rogan states that the Commission must follow the dictates under five criteria listed in the historic preservation ordinance. The Council can decide the other issues. Ms. Ringelstein states that the economic issues are not being addressed, and Mr. Rogan states that this is not a criteria for designation of properties. "There's a lot of one-of-a-kinds in this world that we have gotten rid of, for good reason," says Mr. Mufson. He further argues that the site isn't relevant and that the house isn't historic in Closter. Ms. Stella states that there's an interesting history behind the setting of the house in that location. Mr. Mufson states: "There's children walking down that street every day. John walks down that street every day. Nobody wants it." Mr. Adriance uses the African American history as an example; the slave house that once stood in Closter was moved to Wyckoff. The building is still there, but the sense of the story of the history of Closter as a progression is not, with respect to this house. So, too, does the Lustron house speak to the history of Closter and the uniqueness of the post WWII housing in Closter. The Lustron house is a unique, architectural structure, different than WWII tract houses. This house became and is a part of the culture of Closter. Roll Call on the motion: Bouton-Goldberg yes, Rubenfeld Waldron abstain; Stella Yes; Tray no, Macchiavelli yes; Martin Yes; Adriance yes. The

motion carries. Discussion about the effect of the abstention, but Mr. Adriance notes that four positive votes are enough to move the nomination along.

**G. Correspondence**

**H. Old Business**

1. Active future proposals for designation
  - 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
2. Pamphlet for Realtors, Public – deferred to next meeting
3. Talks with Toby – Wednesday March 27<sup>th</sup> is the next date. 1 p.m. at the Senior Center.

Don Farrell records these and they are kept in the library archives.

Other: Mr. Martin asks for discussion at the next meeting to come up with guidelines for guidance to be given to applicants. Mr. Rogan suggests that a subcommittee review plans in advance of a meeting to request scaled planes, etc. Mr. Adriance asks if the chair could be authorized to do same. Mr. Rogan says “yes.” Mr. Martin asks that it be the chair plus one board member. Discussion. Motion by Mr. Martin: commission accept procedure by which Chair plus appropriate board members will review applications in order to see if the application is sufficiently detailed for the board to make its determination in accordance with the ordinance. Second: Rothschild. Jayne would like how many people – Stella says one member plus the chair. Martin states two people should be involved. Discussion about how long this process should take; consensus is that it should be done ASAP. Unanimous approval.

**I. Liaison Reports**

1. Council – John Kashwick – budget has passed
2. Planning Board – Irene Stella – no report

**J. New Business – deferred to future meetings**

1. Haring/Trautwein House 485 Piermont Rd.
2. J. Jordan/Parsells House 439 Piermont Rd.
3. Auryansen House 450 Piermont Rd.
3. Goals for 2013
4. Continuing education – report all classes and lectures attended to Jayne
5. Other

**K. Adjournment MSC Rothschild, Bouton-Goldberg at 10:30 p.m.**