

MINUTES
CLOSTER HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MONDAY, November 30, 2015

- A. Call to order** – Mr. Adriance read the statement of Open Public Meetings Act and called the meeting to order at 8:06 p.m.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance** – led by Mr. Adriance
- C. Attendance**
Present: Tim Adriance, Jennifer Rothschild, Orlando Tobia, Bobbie Bouton-Goldberg, Susan McTigue, Jayne Rubinfeld-Waldron, Erik Lenander, Sophie Heymann, Planning Board Liaison, Brian Stabile, Council Liaison
Absent/Excused: Joel Zelnik, William J. Martin
- D. Minutes- September & October 2015:** Motion by Ms. Bouton-Goldberg Seconded by Ms. McTigue, to approve the October minutes. Mr. Lenander abstained. Approved.
- E. Open to Public:** None wished to be heard at this time.
- F. Correspondence** – as listed on separate sheet; no discussion
- G. Blanche Ave. Nomination Hearing:** Mr. Adriance reads the resolution aloud. Ms. Bouton-Goldberg moves to accept the nomination, seconded by Ms. Rubinfeld-Waldron, and all vote in favor. The public is invited to speak.

Mark Lupardi, 707 Blanch Avenue, Norwood, speaks in opposition to the nomination. He questions why Blanch Avenue was chosen and why the Hickory Lane nomination was dropped. He also asks why Piermont Avenue or Closter Dock Road were not chosen. He asks how many historical roads in Bergen County and/or the state of New Jersey are designated historic. Mr. Adriance states that these questions are not relevant to this nomination. Mr. Lupardi states that “we don’t know if Blanch Avenue is in the same location as it once was.” He states that he isn’t against historical sites in Closter. He states that only four roadways have been deemed historic in the state of New Jersey. He states that “this is like placing an easement in front of my property.” He refers to the nomination report and questions some of the history written in it. He questions whether he would need to appear before the Commission if he paves his driveway. He states that the current Commission will not always be in place and that this leads to uncertainty in the future. Mr. Orlando states that no one on this board wishes to do anything other than improve the situation. Discussion.

Ms. Rothschild suggests that language regarding the right of way be removed from the resolution. Mr. Lupardi questions why this road should be designated when a lot of it is in Norwood. Mr. Adriance explains the ownership of the public roadway (Borough of Closter owns the roadway). Mr. Lupardi expresses concerns about curbing and the potential requirement that a private homeowner would be required to come before the Commission if changing curbing (etc.). Mr. Adriance proposes adding specific language stating that improvements by private owners along the roadway including driveway apron improvements, sidewalks and curbing not

be affected by the historic designation of the roadway. Discussion about the historic preservation ordinance. Mr. Adriance describes the 1982 Bergen County Sites Survey and 1999 revisions. He states that it is used as a guide by Historic Preservation Commissions in the Bergen County. In the Sites Survey, two roadways, Hickory Lane and Blanch Avenue, were listed as historic roadways. Discussion about resale value of homes along a roadway that is designated historic. Mr. Orlando references the Hickory Lane improvements that were objected to by the homeowners and the fact that the Council listened to the homeowners.

Ms. Rothschild explains the NJ State Historic Preservation Office's answer to her question regarding the legal impact of designation of a roadway (no legal requirement for the borough to appear before the Historic Preservation Commission) and the difference between an easement, which is recorded with the deed, and historic designation, which is a zoning change that is not recorded with the deed. Ms. Rothschild gives Mr. Lupardi a copy of the 1999 revisions to the Bergen County Sites Survey.

Mr. Adriance asks for a motion to add language to the resolution that states that historic designation of Blanch Avenue "does not involve or affect any of the private properties along Blanch Avenue, including encumbrances to private owners regarding curbs, sidewalks and driveway aprons . . ." Ms. Heymann objects to the inclusion of this language. She describes the process that occurred and the objections of the homeowners along Hickory Lane. Discussion about Hickory Lane. Ms. Heymann states that if the intent of the Commission is to memorialize the history of the roadway, despite changes that have occurred, then that language should be included. Mr. Adriance proposes further language to the resolution.

Motion on additional language to the resolution: Ms. Bouton-Goldberg makes the motion, seconded by Ms. Rubenfeld-Waldron; unanimous approval.

Anthony Lupardi, 71 Blanch Avenue, Closter. He states that people in Closter have said that this designation of the roadway "doesn't make sense." He says that real estate people have stated that he should not allow this to go through. He states that he is against this and that most of the people living on the street are against this. He states that he takes offense at a comment that he attributes to Mr. Adriance at the previous meeting. He references Hickory Lane and why the designation did not go through and a comment that Erik Lenander had made at the last meeting regarding the reason that the council didn't proceed with the nomination of Hickory Lane. Discussion about why the Council might not have referred the Hickory Lane nomination to the Planning Board. Ms. Heymann states that she imagines that if the Hickory Lane nomination were brought back to the council at this point, that the council might view it more favorably.

Ms. McTigue makes an overall statement about the value of the nomination reports. She states that even if they are transformed into an article on the internet or in a magazine, the publication will help preserve the history. The term "designation" of this roadway sends up a red flag. If the whole point is to memorialize the importance and historical significance of Blanch Avenue, then it has already been done. It should be published somewhere. The effort to designate a roadway is causing difficulties.

Ms. Heymann states that the intent is to make the public aware of the history. She states that to designate it when it's a roadway does not make sense if it's not the intention to maintain the

status quo. If it's only to draw attention to the historic fabric, then the nomination for designation is not necessary. Mr. Adriance recaps these statements. Ms. Bouton-Goldberg states that she isn't comfortable with this new direction at all, because the Environmental Commission supports historic designation of the roadway, as do other people with whom she has spoken. Ms. Bouton-Goldberg states that she added footnotes to the nomination report and that she would also like to submit the application to the state for inclusion on the register. If it isn't designated, then it won't get the recognition it deserves. She recounts all of the people who have come forward and she wants their historical recollections and intentions to be honored. Further discussion. Mr. Lenander asks that the public be allowed to continue speaking.

Mr. Lupardi suggests that this history just be written up in a history book. He states that it's unnecessary to designate the roadway that has been changed so much. To designate it as a historic road doesn't make sense. He suggests placing an historic road sign.

Mr. Lupardi asks how many people signed the road petition. He asks how many of these people were from Closter versus Norwood. Mr. Adriance states that the borough of Closter didn't exist at that time. Discussion.

No one else from the public wished to speak.

Mr. Adriance asks the question as to whether there is a means to acknowledge the history of the road without designation since this particular designation effort was not intended to preserve the look of a particular period. He states that the problem with a plaque is that it disappears. Ms. McTigue proposes publishing a small volume about Blanch Avenue.

Mr. Adriance explains the resolution and how it proceeds. He states that we could ask the Council to recognize the historic importance of Blanch Avenue. Mr. Adriance explains the history of Piermont Road and references Closter Dock Road, and why this road is different. Mr. Tobia proposes that the nomination remain just as written. Discussion.

Ms. Rothschild explains the difference between listings on the state/national registers versus local designation via zoning, and she states that Commisison also has duty to promote listings at state/national level. She suggests that we could present a new type of resolution that asks the Closter Mayor and Council for historic recognition and that we make a request for historic markers to be paid out of the Borough's Open Space fund. She also suggests that Blanch Avenue be placed in historic element of the master plan.

Mr. Mark Lupardi suggests that two markers should be requested for both ends of Blanch Avenue in Closter.

Ms. Heymann states that when we go to the Council to sk for historic recognition and to ask for a marker, that the nomination report be placed on the Borough's website and that a way be found to publish it. Discussion.

Mr. Adriance asks for a motion to ask the Closter Mayor and Council for historic recognition of Blanch Avenue. This would entail creating a letter to the council "we are embarking upon

recognizing an historic resource and historic recognition of Blanch Avenue.” It would not be requesting a designation in the sense legality requiring numerous hearings. This historic recognition won’t have the legal standing to encumber anyone or anything.

Prior motions are withdrawn with respect to amendments to the resolution to propose historic designation.

Motion by Ms. McTigue, seconded by Ms. Bouton-Goldberg, to create a letter to the Closter Mayor and Council requesting historic recognition of Blanch Avenue and to disseminate the information and make a request for two historic markers. Unanimous approval.

Mr. Adriance states that with respect to historic designation of Blanch Avenue, the matter is rescinded and closed; it is no longer going forward.

H. Old Business

1. Reports on active future proposals for designation – discussion deferred due to the late hour

- A. Nagel/Auryansen Cemetery
- B. High Street District
- C. G. Trautwein-Haring Area
- D. Blanche Avenue
- E. MacBain Farmhouse

I. Liaison Reports

- 1. Council – introduction of Brian Stabile
- 2. Planning Board
- 4 Brief reports on topics related to historic preservation *only*

J. New Business

- 1. Brian Stabile is introduced as Council Liaison and he makes comments. He speaks of the history of Closter in relation to the history of the country. He states that he is excited to embark on this adventure. He states that he is also liaison to the Environmental Commission and the DPW and serves on the Finance and Ordinance Committees. Mr. Stabile says that he can be reached by phone or email and welcomes our communication.
- 2. **Closter Plaza Sign** – discussion about the letter to the developer recommending that they preserve the existing Mid-Century Closter Plaza sign. Ms. Rothschild suggests a new, shorter letter that attaches the old letter and that we state that we agree strongly with the Planning Board recommendation that this sign remain *in situ*. Ms. Rothschild makes a motion that this letter be sent; seconded by Mr. Lenander and approved.
- 3. Ms. McTigue states that she attended the joint board meetings of the boards in Closter. There, it was mentioned that boards should stay on top of details of the decisions that were made.
- 4. Ms. Heymann raises the issue of the historic lamp that was once in front of Borough Hall that is now in the American Legion Park. She recommends that it be moved back to Borough Hall and that the Commission should so petition the Council.

5. Permit for monopole (cell tower) equipment at Borough Hall: Does the Commission need to approve? Discussion. Ms. Rothschild reiterates what the State Historic Preservation Office said about Borough-owned properties that are designated. The municipality isn't required to seek Commission approvals unless it is specified in the ordinance, which it is not. She recommends that we tell them that a hearing before the Commission isn't required, but that it is to their benefit to seek the input of the Commission, so that if a set of drawings is submitted to the Commission then we will provide an opinion. Discussion

6. Lustron House – Ms. Bouton-Goldberg asks Mr. Stabile to follow up with the Lustron recommendations and to urge reconnection of the utilities of furnace, electric and water. Mr. Lenander states that an ordinance for \$5000 to be spent on the Lustron was introduced at the Mayor and Council meeting on Nov. 9th and that the final hearing is scheduled for Dec. 9th. Ms. Rothschild encourages Commissioners to attend the Mayor and Council meeting on Dec. 9th.

2. Closter Historic Society update – Susan McTigue – no report

3. Talks with Toby – Susan McTigue – no report

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

K. Adjournment: Motion by Ms. Rothschild, seconded by Ms. Bouton-Goldberg to adjourn - 10:15 p.m.