

Minutes of the Village of Williamsville Historic Preservation Commission meeting held at Williamsville Village Hall, 5565 Main St., Williamsville, NY, and virtually via Zoom on October 27, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Note: Due to the NYS Covid-19 lockdown directives, this meeting was held in person for the members of the Historic Preservation Commission and virtually via Zoom for all others.

Roll Call: Anthony Bannon, Member
Charles Akers, Member (via Zoom)
James Tamaro, Member (via Zoom)
Mary Lowther, Member (joined at 7:21 p.m.)
Christine Hunt, Member
Thomas Barrett, Resource Officer (via Zoom)

Also present: Deborah A. Habes, P/T Clerk (via Zoom)
Matthew Etu, Trustee Liaison To HPC
Charles Grieco, Village Attorney (via Zoom)

Excused: Susan Palmer, Ex-officio
Wes Stone, Ex-officio

Trustee Etu opened the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

As this was the first HPC meeting after the annual Re-organization meeting held in September due to delay caused by the lockdown, Mr. Bannon asked the new members to introduce themselves.

Mr. Barrett – Expressed his appreciation for being appointed as a resource officer to HPC. He is a lifelong resident of the Village. He is the president of Kulback Construction and has extensive experience in working with SHPO on numerous rehabilitation projects in Western New York. His interest is in historic preservation and adaptive re-use.

Christine Hunt – Has been living in the Village for 25 years. Has an extensive and varied background in law enforcement, labor union relations, and historic preservation. She recently was successful in receiving local landmark designation of her home on Evans Street from the HPC. She is continuing her efforts on the state and national level. She is well-versed in the HPC process.

Mr. Bannon stated he liked the way Ms. Hunt moved her self-nominated application for local landmark status along for her home and was impressed with her leadership qualities. He stated he would like to nominate her as chairman of the HPC due to her experience in managerial and leadership positions.

(Ms. Lowther joined the meeting at this point, at 7:21 p.m.)

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Mr. Bannon went on to praise Ms. Lowther for her many years of experience and leadership in the HPC, as past Village trustee and mayor, as well as president of the Village of Williamsville Historical Society. He expressed his desire to nominate Ms. Lowther as Vice-chair of HPC.

Mr. Bannon asked for input from the members of the commission, and receiving no further comments, he made the following motion:

ON MOTION by Mr. Bannon, seconded by Mr. Tammaro, it was moved to elect Ms. Hunt as Chairman and Ms. Lowther as Vice-chairman of the Historic Preservation Commission, for the remainder of a two-year term, through June 30, 2022.

Motion carried. 5 - 0.

Ms. Hunt and Ms. Lowther thanked their fellow members for their support.

New Business

MoorPat, 78 E. Spring St. – Sketch Review

Trustee Etu informed the members that back in September, the owners of MoorPat indicated they wished to add on to the building's front elevation a canvas-type awning/enclosure to accommodate customers outdoors during the current government/health department restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. He has not seen an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness yet for this proposal, so he believes this to be more of a sketch review of the proposed plans this evening.

Mr. Grieco – With respect to a full seven-member HPC, he added that the code requires that HPC be comprised of 7 members. As of this date, there are only five appointed members sitting on the Commission. For the commission to act, there needs to be a majority of the entire membership (5 out of 7). Need to have 4 out of 5 votes to pass anything.

Trustee Etu added that he has been looking for candidates. Ms. Lowther indicated she had several friends who are interested in serving and will ask them to apply. Mr. Bannon would like them to apply and that any applications be first shared with the HPC members for discussion before appointments are made by the Village Board. Mr. Akers asked that new members be chosen as per the requirements of the HPC code. Mr. Tammaro suggested that may be hard to follow due to the small population of the Village and therefore a limited pool of qualified candidates.

Trustee Etu indicated he would try to fill the positions with experienced people.

Ms. Hunt suggested that she finds all the current members to be very qualified and experienced.

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Trustee Etu asked Mr. Grieco about the status of the right-of-way use agreement between the owners of the MoorPat and Share properties (the plastic surgeons). Mr. Grieco indicated there have been discussions about MoorPat and Share buying the right-of-way from the Village but they have been stalled due to the pandemic. They might be dividing the property between Share and MoorPat but no word has been received. There is a licensing agreement with the Village and MoorPat and Share and to his knowledge nothing has changed.

Mr. Akers – We must do what we can to preserve the front of the MoorPat building. If an awning was installed it would cover the front of the building and alter its appearance. Ms. Hunt agreed.

Mr. Grieco – the Village has a set of design guidelines. Wondered if all the HPC members had a set of the design guidelines. All HPC members need to refer to these guidelines when addressing applications for Certificates of Appropriateness.

Ms. Hunt – She consulted the guidelines. This is not just an awning. It covers the entire front of the building.

Mr. Bannon - MoorPat is proposing the awning/enclosure to be black. Black is not an historic color nor is the material they are proposing.

Trustee Etu – The reason MoorPat is proposing this is because of the current and future restrictions on restaurants/bars on indoor dining options due to Covid-19. Perhaps they could put a covenant on it that it could only be up during the pandemic.

Ms. Hunt – The proposed awning/enclosure does not fit in aesthetically with the surrounding historic buildings such as the Water Mill and Share.

Mr. Akers – This appears to be a similar situation to the Creekview enclosure, which started out as an awning then turned into a permanent dining enclosure after years passed. The proposed plan would destroy the historic context of the MoorPat building and E. Spring Street.

Trustee Etu – Asked if anyone had any suggestions for MoorPat.

Mr. Akers – Suggested that MoorPat add some tables and chairs to the south side of the building and put an awning over them. This would not deter from the historic front of the building.

Mr. Bannon – Suggested asking the applicants to read the design standards and adhere to them and then return to HPC for review. HPC needs to maintain the standards of the HPC code. Colors need to be consistent with the historic palette.

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Application for Certificate of Appropriateness – Cambria Castle.

Various Exterior renovations

Ms. Hunt – This C of A was approved by HPC on 9/22/20. Doesn't know why it is before HPC again.

Trustee Etu – Believes it to be a misunderstanding. The C of A was approved on 9/22/20 subsequent to the plans being submitted to the Code Enforcement Officer. Mr. Masters thought these were new plans, when actually they were the exact plans that HPC had approved and had asked the applicants to submit to the Building Dept. in September. No action to be taken tonight.

1955 Photos of Main Street Buildings Project

Mr. Akers – Spoke to the business owners who reported they have suffered during the pandemic and could not commit to this project at this time. Won't have a photo in every business. He would welcome some help on this project to decide which businesses warrant a photo on display. The Town Clerk does not require they be added to the labels but thinks it should still be added for clarification. Add what was in the building in 1955. For example, the liquor store was a restaurant in 1955.

Mr. Tammaro – What is the total cost to frame each photo? Mr. Akers estimated about \$30 - \$40 each.

Ms. Hunt – Suggested a five-year plan to accomplish this project. Do a few per year.

Trustee Etu – Researched Amazon online prices for framing and came up with info for 8x10 frames and mats for \$30+. He will share this info with Mr. Akers.

Mr. Tammaro, Mr. Akers and Mr. Bannon offered to work on this project and will identify properties and would like to invite someone from the WBA to join them. They will report back to the HPC.

ON MOTION by Ms. Hunt, seconded by Ms. Lowther, it was moved to form a sub-committee consisting of Mr. Bannon, Mr. Akers, and Mr. Tammaro, to work on the photo project.

Motion carried. 5 – 0.

Mr. Tammaro – They will get together in a couple of weeks to work on the project and a timeline. He will reach out to the others and Trustee Etu.

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Historic Plaques

Trustee Etu – The money is still in the budget with enough for five more plaques, so why not order a total of ten plaques. He had reached out to the first five nominated property owners and did not hear back from any of them. The plaques are not even made yet. Ms. Lowther asked if they could wait til the November meeting to decide on which properties to add to the list to make a total of ten.

Mr. Akers – Asked if we could offer to the recipients that DPW could mount the plaques to the wall if they wished for assistance in mounting them, but Mr. Grieco thought there might be some question as to the authority of the DPW to do work on private properties. He will look into it.

Next meeting is November 24th, at 7:00 p.m. We will conduct the meeting whichever way the Governor dictates due to the status of the pandemic at that time. All should check the village website for status.

ON MOTION by Ms. Hunt, seconded by Mr. Akers, it was moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Motion carried. 5 – 0.

Submitted by:

Deborah A. Habes
P/T Clerk

**Next scheduled HPC meeting will be held
November 24, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.**