

Minutes of the Town of Vestal Historic Preservation Commission 12 November 2012

Attendees: Margaret Hadsell, Susan Halpern Janice Mangan, Jeffery Smith, Nina Versaggi

The meeting of the Commission was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson J. Smith.

Old Business:

➤ **Letter to Town Board**

The Commission met with the Town Board on October 8th to see what the Board plans to do with regard to Code violations in Rivercrest and how the Commission should respond to questions received from the public. A follow-up letter was sent to the Town Board on October 11, 2012 regarding the topics discussed at the meeting. There has been no response to date. J. Smith left a voicemail for Supervisor John Schafer on 12 November and will follow up again.

➤ **Property Markers**

A list of currently designated properties was reviewed to determine the type of marker needed for each of the properties. Estimated prices were obtained from Catskill Castings to determine the size of the grant that would be needed. Three types were looked at:

- The traditional State marker in blue and yellow,
- An oval bronze marker that would contain the same text for all designated at the Local level,
- A rectangular marker with brief text that could be attached to the building or placed on a pole (in the case of the Lustrons).

A discussion followed about whether owners would be interested in placing a marker on the building or somewhere on the property. It was suggested that owners be contacted in advance regarding their interest in a marker. State markers are placed at the roadside, not on private property. Commission members were asked to review the list for continued discussion at the December meeting.

➤ **Hyperbolic Paraboloid Update**

Documentary writer/director, Jake Gorst, has contacted Jim Mowry, architect of the former Ken Wilson building, about interest in interviewing him for a documentary. The interview was postponed due to Mr. Gorst experiencing damage from storm Sandy. It is rescheduled for January.

Roger Luther, photographer and author, is writing an article about Mowry and the "Potato Chip" building. He has gathered information from the historian's office and interviewed Mr. Mowry.

New Business:

➤ **Mersereau House Construction**

Construction was noted at the Mersereau house in early November. The new owner, David Beckwith, had not completed a Certificate of Appropriateness as required. The Code office was notified and the database was checked to determine whether a building permit was issued. It appeared a permit had not been issued and the Code office contacted the owner. J. Smith photographed the changes and M. Hadsell stopped to talk with the contractor working on the exterior. The contractor was asked to have the owner contact the Commission which he did the following day.

The owner completed and submitted a CofA. Commission review found the C of A to be incomplete and will ask the owner to provide additional information or meet with the Commission. Work has continued on the exterior and changes, not appropriate to the period of construction,

have been added.

M. Hadsell will check the Broome County GIS to see if historic designation has been added to the properties designated in June 2012.

➤ **Letters to Locally Designated Properties**

The Commission discussed resending letters to the owners of 2012 Locally Designated properties notifying them of the requirement for completing a CofA before doing exterior work. Owners had received information at the time they were notified of the designation.

Discussion followed about sending a letter to the local realtors or board of realtors notifying them of those properties in Vestal that have been locally designated. It was agreed that a letter would be written. M. Hadsell to contact Karen Klecar to determine which would be more effective.

➤ **Closing of Vestal Museum**

The Museum budget was discussed and it was decided that the VHPC would send a letter to the town board in support of keeping the Museum open. PAST plans to send a letter of support also.

Open Agenda

➤ **Old Village Town of Union Historical Society and IBM Museum**

J. Mangan reported that the Historical Society had received a sizeable endowment which allowed them to purchase the former Burts building on Washington Avenue. Reconstruction is in process to convert the building into a museum for the Society and house the contents of the former IBM Museum of artifacts produced in the Triple Cities. She attended a "sneak peek" of the progress.

➤ **Handouts**

Members received an updated VHPC Chronology of activities
Table of designated properties/marker types for review
Marker Information from Catskill Castings

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m. on a motion by N. Versaggi, seconded by S. Halpern

Next meeting:

The Commission will meet on **Monday December 10** unless otherwise notified.