

**TOWNSHIP OF WYCKOFF
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
DECEMBER 12, 2023 MEETING MINUTES**

The December 12, 2023 Historic Preservation Commission meeting was held in the Court Room in Memorial Town Hall. Doug Swenson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Mitchell read the Open Public Meeting Notice: The December 12, 2023 Open Public Meeting of the Wyckoff Historic Preservation Commission is now in session. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting appears on our annual schedule of meetings. A copy of said annual schedule has been posted on the bulletin board in Memorial Town Hall; a copy has been filed with the Township Clerk, The Record, The Ridgewood News, and the North Jersey Herald News – all newspapers with general circulation throughout the Township of Wyckoff. At least 48 hours prior to this meeting, the agenda thereof was similarly posted, filed, and emailed to said newspapers.

Roll Call

Present: Doug Swenson, Patricia Constance, Rudy Boonstra, Curtis Bajak, Steven Zmuda, Beth Van Emburgh, Joseph Cestaro, and Maureen Mitchell.

Absent: Richard Lynch, and Joseph Haftek.

Old Business

Approval of the November 14, 2023 meeting minutes. Ms. Van Emburgh made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Second, Mr. Zmuda. Voting in favor: all.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
NO ONE FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENTED
CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

New Business

There was a discussion about preparing a list of the next group of homes for preservation. Ms. Van Emburgh said she has been working on a detailed spreadsheet which she will share with the Commission members. She also pointed out that the google earth truck recently drove through Wyckoff so the street views of many of the homes have been updated which will be helpful in determining which homes are still worth preserving and which ones have been extensively renovated. Mr. Swenson said he will arbitrarily assign groupings of the homes to each Commission member to review, and we will rely on our Architects Joe Cestaro and Steve Zmuda to assist in making the determinations of which homes should and should not be on the list.

Mr. Swenson said he located a company in Freehold New Jersey called “Old House Guy”. The company does massive renovations of historic homes. Mr. Swenson said he provided the contact information to the owners of 310 Crescent Avenue who are still in the process of trying to replace windows in their historic home.

Mr. Swenson went on to say that in doing some research, he recently discovered that the Synagogue property on Russell Avenue was once owned by the Lemmerman family. In the late 1970's, when the Synagogue purchased the property, they relocated two graves and tombstones on the property, to the backyard of the residential property across the street at 592 Russell Avenue. The graves belong to Conrad Lemmerman, who passed away in 1850, and Maria Lemmerman who passed away in 1851.

Finally, Mr. Swenson said that two longtime historians on the Ridgewood Historic Preservation Commission were recently relieved of their positions by the Ridgewood Village Council. It appears that the reason for their dismissal was a letter they wrote to the State Preservation Office voicing objections to the development of the Schedler property which was approved by the Village Council back in April. It consists of a 7 acre site with a pre-revolutionary historic home. The Town is proposing to remove trees from the site and construct artificial turf sports fields. Mr. Swenson stated that the Village Council denies that the letter to the State was the reason for the dismissal of the two Commission members. Ms. Van Emburgh said the Town is insisting that they plan to preserve the historic home on the site and bring it up to usable status possibly as an event space. Ms. Constance asked if there was any response to the letter from the State. Mr. Swenson said he is unaware.

Other Business

Mr. Zmuda asked if there are any updates on the Ridgewood Water Cedar Hill Avenue treatment facility and if the existing historic brick well houses on the site will remain. Mr. Boonstra said the State is still looking for arrowheads and historic artifacts. He went on to say that Ridgewood Water is in ongoing litigation with the companies that caused the chemical pollution that is necessitating the construction of the water treatment facilities. He added that the existing brick well buildings are to remain, and he has heard that the revised plans for the proposed treatment facility will be more architecturally compatible with the existing structures on the site.

With regard to gathering information on the historic homes in Wyckoff, Mr. Swenson recommended utilizing the Bolger Room at the Ridgewood Library. He said he picked up a brochure entitled "Researching a Home's History" which he will share with the Commission members. He also made an appointment to meet with Sarah Kiefer, the Ridgewood Local History Librarian, to ask her for guidance on finding information about historic homes in Wyckoff. Ms. Constance said they occasionally offer an orientation on researching historic information and suggested that perhaps Ms. Kiefer would be willing to set up a session for our Commission members.

Mr. Bajak said an interesting source of information is the First Federal Direct Tax of 1798 because if you can find those records, people at the time were taxed on aspects of the land and dwellings they owned.

Getting back to Ms. Van Emburgh's spreadsheet, and the matter of whittling down the list of homes, Mr. Cestaro suggested a working meeting where the Commission members can view the photos of each of the homes projected on a screen and work as a group to add or remove homes from the list. He offered to set that up, if it is something everyone would like to do. Ms. Mitchell said she will look into the availability of a projector, a screen, and meeting room availability.

Mr. Boonstra mentioned the rezoning that is taking place on Franklin Avenue near the border of Waldwick, and the church property on Squawbrook Road. There are some old chicken coops on the Franklin Avenue property which we should keep our eyes on to possibly preserve as part of Wyckoff's history. Ms. Van Emburgh suggested that perhaps one of them could be moved to Community Park or the Nature Center.

Mr. Boonstra asked if anyone is familiar with the properties for sale behind the Interstate Shopping Center in Ramsey. He said there are two older homes with stone work and a barn and he is curious about what is going to happen with them. Mr. Swenson said they don't appear to be in very good shape and Ramsey may not feel they are worth preserving. He said he will see if he can find out anything about the properties.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and passed unanimously. The meeting concluded at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Maureen Mitchell
Commission Secretary